

The Sorcerer, the Madman and Grace

Are Archetypes Desacralized Spirits? Thoughts on Shamanism in the Amazon

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Can (Amazonian) shamanism hope to offer some insights on Jungian psychology? Can it answer questions plaguing contemporary Western culture? Because Amazonian shamanism is so much older than the Jungian school of thought, does shamanism have more to offer humanity in terms of self-knowledge? Does the concept of individuation make any sense when applied to the different ethnic groups of the Amazon region?

To begin with, is it even possible to establish a fruitful dialogue between these two approaches to understanding human nature? No, strictly speaking, a dialogue is not possible simply because, if Jung and his disciples are wordy and long-winded (no offense intended), shamanic traditions are never written down, and shamans themselves are silent guides whose teachings are passed on through practical experience, not verbal discourse.

I therefore find myself in the privileged yet uncomfortable position of speaking on behalf of a silent shaman, though I am not in any way an expert on Jung either. This being the case, I must beg your indulgence, as well as that of the members of the Amazonian tradition of which I speak, for any translation mistakes or any inadequate linguistic approximations to which I may have to resort. To avoid these inaccuracies, any verbal discussion of the subject would necessarily have to be accompanied by the living experience of the initiation process itself within a shamanic context, if only to allow the language of the shaman its full gamut of expression. And perhaps the true Jungian, as Jung himself said,

is the person who ceases to be so by seeing the individuation process through to the end, thus distancing him- or herself entirely from the master, thus making Jung “vanish” altogether.

If I feel authorized to write on this subject, I owe it to a life-changing experience that took place at the very start of my work with Amazonian healers. During a session with ayahuasca, the vision-inducing plant of the central Amazon region, I found myself, in a vision, standing in the presence of a group of anthropomorphic beings who sat, like members of a jury, facing me in a semicircle and who introduced themselves as “guardians of the forest.” I did not experience this as a remote vision but as an actual real-life occurrence in three dimensions, as a scene in which I was physically present. They asked me why I had taken ayahuasca, and I replied that I wished to learn more about this cure. After confabulating among themselves, the central figure turned to me, saying, “You are authorized to enter this territory,” and added, “Your path leads you through here.” To my amazement, he then showed me a scene in which I saw myself treating drug addicts. This is precisely what I have been doing to this day, although for three years I resisted the calling—which I considered an unattractive and difficult prospect, far removed from my initial goals.

This risky incursion into the shamanic practices of the upper Amazon involves experimenting with induced altered states of consciousness during which the “self” is displaced from its habitual position at the center of being. In such a state, other dimensions of the real emerge, both about an interior world and the world of invisible nature, accompanied by paranormal phenomena and extrasensory experiences in which the body is very much an active participant. The silence of the shaman about the emergence of this new cartography, this abundance of surprising new experiences and novel information, forced me to seek out personal adjustments to incorporate these new findings and re-establish some sense of order, helping to dispel the dangerous interior chaos I felt. Even if undeveloped, my two pillars of knowledge had until then been made up of the psychological propositions of Carl G. Jung, on the one hand, and my Christian upbringing, on the other.

At the risk of oversimplifying things or creating a caricature, let me now briefly describe my view of shamanism and its context. I will refer exclusively to the shamanic practices of the upper Amazon region of Peru, where I have been active for thirty years, without trying to include all the different strains of shamanism present in the Amazon as a whole, much less of those found in other parts of the world as well. I will trace different paths that, taken together, help illustrate how such a vast and complicated subject calls for a “complexity of thought” (Morin 1990) and cannot be encapsulated in a brief synthesis—which, at this stage of my research, would be pretentious, at best.

OBJECTIVES OF INITIATION AND INDIVIDUATION WITHIN A TRIBAL OR SHAMANIC CONTEXT

Is it relevant to talk of individuation in a tribal or shamanic context? Individuation in such contexts cannot be taken separately from the personal objectives of each individual or from the aims of the survival and well-being of the group. Human beings do not aspire merely to personal and individual accomplishment but also to the fulfillment of a collective destiny so that each member contributes toward and shares in the benefits of the achievements of the entire group.

Initiation is traditionally the means whereby initiates can define themselves and find their rank within a community. Rites of passage, particularly those between childhood and adulthood, guide the individual and define qualities of a man or woman in a group and grant the non-fertile the chance to bear children, thus helping to increase the size of the community. Through it, individuals can find their true vocation, determining their role in the collective struggle for survival and development, whether as artisan, hunter, warrior, *cacique* (leader or chief), or shaman.

In a way, this collective dimension goes against the grain of personal individuation, which could lead to an individual becoming too different from the rest of the group. Indeed, from the perspective of a wise reciprocity at work within the community, individuals are not expected to distinguish themselves too much or rise too far above their peers. This sort of distinction or differentiation could be seen by other members as a kind of loss of identity in the community, entailing a rejection of the principle of reciprocity, possibly leading to imbalances. Gaining unwarranted status or power in the group can also give rise to envy among members, which is especially detrimental to harmony and cohesion within the group. Envy, manifested through aggression, can lead, in turn, to social disorder, making the community more vulnerable by menacing its stability. Violence, outwardly projected, would eventually revert to the group, threatening to destroy it by starting a cycle of vengeance or a vendetta.

As a result, the specific role of the shaman—potentially a dangerous being—must be strictly monitored and regulated by the community. He will have to account for his actions and, if he is found guilty of abusing his power or committing any misdemeanor, he will be punished and sometimes even sentenced to death. In this way, allowing for variations between different ethnic groups, several control mechanisms are set up to prevent any transgression on the part of these otherwise much feared and admired members of the community. For instance, the shaman must earn a living just like anyone else in the tribe and cannot dedicate his time fully to his main line of work; he must obtain permission from the *cacique* before conducting any activity of a shamanic nature; and he must abide by all

applicable rules and prohibitions regarding diet, sexual activity, and so on. Also, any misfortune might be attributed to the shaman, since he is responsible for protecting the group and maintaining the general harmony, inasmuch as it is his duty to establish a connection between the community and the invisible world.

The shaman's journeys to the invisible world during his duties are thus not so much a personal process of individuation as they are a means of acquiring powers and allies, which will allow him to best serve the tribal society of which he is a valued member.

Nowadays, even in the Amerindian communities of the Amazon region, shamans have a hard time finding pupils or disciples. The young are put off by the dangers surrounding the shaman's activities, which can include attacks by evil spirits as well as by other shamans, and by the eternal pall of suspicion under which the shaman lives. He is, after all, a wizard, and any trouble within the community can potentially be traced back to him. Young people are also wary of the long and arduous period of apprenticeship required of the post, not to mention the restrictions that come with the job: strict diets, abstinence, and little in the way of material reward. The attractions of modern life have only aggravated the problem: young villagers dream of city lights far more than they do of the demands of the priesthood or of shamanic trances.

THE TRIBAL CULTURAL HORIZON

Shamanism belongs in the context of the tribe (and the component clans and extended families), where the main referent is the community itself. This means that the individual's needs and duties come second, the priority resting with the social group of which he or she is a member. If the sacrifice of an individual is deemed necessary for the well-being or survival of the community, then it is accepted¹ not only by other members of the community but often by the victims themselves, for whom dying for the greater good constitutes both a duty and an honor.

In this context, everything that lies outside the community is potentially a source of danger, threatening its integrity, whether from the visible or the invisible world. The union of the group is therefore reliant on the development of a system of alliances and defense against the outside world, whose perils can come in the shape of hostile neighboring tribes or entities from the invisible world.

The tribal structure is based on a foundation myth of justice.² The integrity and harmony of the community are maintained through fixed mechanisms that can re-establish the internal balance of the group following exchanges with the outside world. This balance can be upset in any number of different ways, whether through individual or collective misfortune: disease, accidents, famine, scarcity of game, and so forth. The spirits of the wild boar or deer must be appeased through ritual before tribesmen set off on a hunt in order to compensate the animal community for its

imminent loss. If one tribe abducts young girls from another tribe, the latter must reciprocate, thus redressing the balance and making things fair and even again. If a present of great value is offered to someone who has no means of offering a gift of equal worth in return, this is seen as an act of humiliation, perhaps even as a declaration of war. Reciprocity in acts of exchange constitutes the basis on which harmony is maintained in these societies.

The same is true for the tribal shaman. In the eyes of the community, his job of keeping in check the attacks of shamans from enemy tribes constitutes a legitimate form of defense. His offensives in the invisible world are absolutely justified, answering the need for a just reciprocity, which forms the basis of all relations with "the other." Shamanic wars are thus as rife as intertribal wars. They involve essentially a bellicose form of shamanism in which the main goal is to obtain the greatest possible number of weapons in the fight against enemies, becoming more powerful than them in preparation for any act of aggression. Reciprocity can thus take on the guise of vengeance, with violence gauging its efficacy within a cyclic dynamic without beginning or end.

Within such a system, the projection of the individual or collective shadow toward "the other," if this other belongs to another tribal community or another family, is perfectly legitimate. Evil comes from outside the community, and, when seeking its source, it is to the outside that Amerindians will spontaneously turn, and it is there that they will try to vanquish it. This being the case, the individual is little inclined to look inwardly when trying to discover the source of his or her sufferings.

The result is that, for the shaman, any healing activity carried out on a member of his community inevitably entails an offensive act against the outsider or supposed adversary. Medicine and sorcery go hand in hand and are often indistinguishable.³ The master healer can form alliances with both good and evil spirits, the former to heal, the latter to defend the members of his tribe.

In the current context of tribal disintegration in the face of globalization, modernization, and cultural interchange, magic has grown in importance because "the other" can now be anybody from the whole outside world and because tribal regulations can no longer provide clear-cut answers. Acts of vengeance in the invisible world are often surrogates for expressions of sorrow, since subjects find themselves unable to put their suffering into words,⁴ especially in cases where the conflict is of an amorous nature.

THE WESTERN CULTURAL HORIZON

While the cultural horizon of the tribal world is based on the myth of justice, that of the West rests on the myth of love. The lamb follows the ram, from whom he is descended and from whom he has inherited certain traits. Outside love is a universal society⁵ where every "other" becomes my brother. Justice gives way to and

is superseded by love. Tribal society, the clan, and the family have become a part of the larger family—the entire human race. Violence can no longer be projected toward the other with any sense of legitimacy, whatever or whoever the other may be. Deprived of this freedom to project their shadows outward, subjects are forced to find it within themselves by turning inward. The outside sources of suffering lead subjects back into themselves and to their manner of dealing inwardly with this projected aggression. This looking inward allows Westerners to identify the unconscious dimension hidden within themselves, which secretly stimulates them and sometimes manipulates them without their knowledge.

In this way, the Western individual has come to realize that his worst enemy is himself, or rather, a part of himself of which he is not conscious. This dynamic gives rise to the notion of the individual which has become so central that the acknowledgment of his dignity will take precedence over his duty to the community and its preservation. For political constitutions of countries in the West individual dignity and well-being represent the ultimate goals of society. A country is capable of spending a great deal and going to great lengths to save a single person.⁶ This mutation means universal Western society is structured round a hierarchy of values which stand in almost diametrical opposition—at least apparently—to those of tribal societies, where the life of the group takes precedence over the lives of each of the individuals who comprise it. The shadow is, to some extent, individualized, privatized.

It thus follows that this process will lead to a decrease in the practice of magic among more Westernized tribes. Once they lose their legitimacy, shamanic practices become the focus of vehement—and sometimes violent—opposition by the Christian churches. The notion of pardon takes over, indicating that vengeance has been renounced and the cycle of violence is broken. It gains the upper hand precisely in answer to unforgivable faults,⁷ and the meting out of justice is left to divine providence. Only then can pardon cease to be humanly unjust and give way to divine love, thereby re-establishing the balance of justice. Solomon's judgment in the Old Testament prefigures the emergence of this kind of wisdom: one which, in the name of love, appears at first to deny justice, only to then restore it entirely, thus revealing the transcendence of love over justice.⁸ This episode illustrates, within the context of the Jewish tribe (which lies at the very root of Western culture), the shift from the myth of justice to that of love, of a tribal society toward a universal one.

TWO FORMS OF THE UNCONSCIOUS FOR TWO CULTURAL HORIZONS

The different cultural horizons of the tribal world and the West reveal equally different shadows, each consequently placed in quite distinct locations. The tribal

shadow or unconscious is to be found in nature, in the cosmos, outside the individual, while for the Westerner, the invisible and the unconscious are found within himself.

Amazonian shamanism makes great use of vegetal preparations that can transport the subject to the world of invisible nature, there to explore its mechanisms and meet the beings who inhabit it. The drinking of brews thus prepared is governed by strict rules, particularly about diet and sexual activity. These sophisticated techniques serve to broaden the human perceptive spectrum, enabling the shaman to pass beyond natural sensory limits and glimpse things that would otherwise go unnoticed by ordinary perception. In this way, the subject can view never-seen colors and hear never-heard sounds. This perceptual expansion is not limited to the five ordinary senses alone; it extends to the proprioceptive senses (senses that recognize the body's schema from within, for instance), as well as psychic functions (memory, concentration) and those labeled paranormal (clairvoyance, clairaudience, psychokinesis, telepathy, etc.).⁹ As the initiate develops these extrasensory faculties, his dream life becomes highly active and he begins to experience paranormal phenomena. At first, these experiences—which last throughout the initiation period—can be quite chaotic, until the initiate learns to master them and to impose some sense of coherence. The shaman's role in controlling this psychic production is of the utmost importance. He does this by ritualizing the induction process and intervening directly in the “energy body” of his patient or disciple. I will return to this subject later.

It is important to establish from the outset that these experiences of the external, invisible world reveal a living, inhabited universe. And it is interesting to note that this conclusion, arrived at empirically, from first-hand experience, is shared by Amerindians and Westerners alike, revealed to them in the same way as a microscope reveals to any observer the reality of a world that is invisible to the naked eye. In other words, these are objective realities, which will later, of course, be interpreted in varied ways according to the cognitive capacity, cultural background, and personal outlook of each individual subject. From this point of view, “animism,” in the sense of the attribution of a living soul to natural phenomena, is not merely a belief but, rather, an acknowledged, verifiable fact, established by those who have taken the trouble to explore this world—the “otherworld.” Every element in creation possesses a “mother” (*madre*) that represents its life-giving soul. This matrix has form, energy, and intelligence and can communicate with human beings through this shared dimension. This matrix or “spirit” is differentiated according to its evolutionary degree in nature as well as to the creation of specific qualities in each element. In this way, medicinal plants possess a more differentiated spirit than those of ordinary plants and, in the essence of their species, plants that can be used for initiations, the psychoactive plants, are distinguished by their higher level of differentiation. At the top of the Amazonian plant hierarchy are coca, tobacco,

and ayahuasca, along with plants of the genus *Datura*. The spirits of these natural elements are collective, but they can also possess different degrees of differentiation. Thus, *pachamama*, or the earth spirit, can take on the specific form of a particular mountain, for instance, in terms of height or shape or exceptional placing, which will allow an extraordinary spirit (*apu*) to be recognized. Vegetal subjects are therefore relatively undifferentiated within their own family; each tobacco plant, for example, is not seen as an individual with a single spirit of its own but, rather, possessed of the collective spirit of the tobacco plant in general. These spirits present a differentiated personality and give rise to similar representations, even across different cultures.¹⁰

The universal nature of these figures from the invisible world has led some rationalist Westerners to interpret them as facets of the collective unconscious, projections of the inner world common to all human beings, denying them all objective external reality. This kind of logic is no more consistent than one that would deny the existence of trees, the sun, or the sea simply because these elements are often employed symbolically in dreams, in psychotherapeutic processes, or in artistic creations. Because a physical or psychical object serves a symbolic purpose is no reason to declare it nonexistent. Is this not rather an instance of a priori rationalism, through its obstinate reductionism, denying a vision readily available to anyone willing to take the trouble to seek it out?¹¹

This is the same logic which classifies these vision-inducing brews as “hallucinogenic.” To take the inexistence of the invisible world as a predicate, as a non-demonstrable preconception, entails the denial of any form of perception not prompted or stimulated by an object that is not readily detectable by one of the ordinary senses. According to this view, the initiate, during an altered state of consciousness, sees nothing real, nothing material, which leads to the conclusion that he must therefore be hallucinating. This kind of materialist reductionism is wrong for three reasons. First, it is wrong because psychic objects are just as real as those in the material world, and they can and do interact with the objective world perceived through the senses. Psychosomatic symptoms are proof of this: stress can provoke perforations in the stomach’s mucous lining, trigger asthma attacks, cause high blood pressure, eczema, and so on. Second, it is wrong because this logic is based on the unfounded denial of the existence of the otherworld and its nonhuman inhabitants—although it not only fails to demonstrate this but also systematically ignores all evidence to the contrary.¹² And third, it is wrong because our organism itself secretes psychoactive substances very similar or sometimes identical to those found in the sacred plants of shamanic tradition.¹³ The structural community that our organism shares with other species should be enough to call into question the purported toxicity of the first people’s vegetal brews.¹⁴

That the Amerindians’ observations are valid is substantiated in clinical practice, where we see that their model is a close fit with the real world. Their

therapies are not only effective but also reach out beyond the Amerindians cultural frameworks.¹⁵ Certain writers are willing to concede, at the most, that shamanic therapeutic practices may occasionally yield results within the limits of the local culture, meaning that we are thrown back on phenomena such as suggestibility and community identity to explain the surprising outcomes that can be achieved. This roundabout way of denying the global character of shamans' empirical knowledge is nevertheless disproved by clinical facts. The effectiveness of these practices is most clearly seen in cases when they have successfully treated pathologies that have proved unresponsive to the conventional allopathic approach or when the latter is very costly in either financial or human terms. In all probability, this denial points to a blind spot in the Western conceptual model.¹⁶

Although the reality of psychic evidence is generally recognized by psychotherapists, this recognition is not extended to nonhumans. Thus, the threshold of symbolic representation is never crossed, thus avoiding the need to verify the existence of nonhumans and their interaction with human beings.¹⁷ According to this view, it is possible to ask whether nonhuman representations might belong, at most, to a collective subjective dimension but never to an objective one. Nonhumans do not benefit from a personal form of existence but merely from a degree of autonomy that varies according to the level of unconsciousness of the human being observing them. Beyond unconsciousness—and thus differentiation—these individual or collective psychic powers may have more freedom, but they nonetheless retain their fixed links with human activity. For Amerindians, by contrast, these powers are actual entities, creatures as real as human beings, inhabiting a spiritual dimension with no corporality or material existence. Nonetheless, these entities can be perceived by humans under anthropomorphic or zoomorphic guises. On a certain level, these beings form organized societies, such as the water spirits who live in underwater villages of sorts.¹⁸ Sometimes a close bond is forged between these spirits and human beings, as in the case of the pink porpoises that inhabit the region's rivers and try to carry humans off to their watery world, sometimes to mate with them.¹⁹ Another case is a story that was told to me of a man who became lost in the forest and was followed by a deer, which guided him to a beach on a lagoon where he was finally rescued. Sometimes children get lost in the forest, carried off by spirits living there; when they return weeks or months later, they possess special powers.²⁰ Such encounters between humans and nonhumans are generally considered dangerous, while any sexual contact between the two life forms is deemed a transgression. Formerly, at the highest levels of shamanism—nowadays almost extinct—was the *sumiruna*,²¹ a shaman who was able to enter rivers and live among the water beings, only to re-emerge days later, completely dry.²² Similar tales are still told daily, pointing to a cosmic vision that is not merely a symbolic one but, rather, is one that closely engages with the sensible world

and can materially affect humans beyond the changes brought about by inducing altered states of consciousness.

We may thus draw a comparison between Western reductionism, for whom nonhumans are nothing but projections of our inner world, and the reductionism of the shaman, for whom psychic and emotional problems are caused by evil spirits and nothing else. Good and evil spirits coexist in this invisible world, the good helping humans in their affairs and the evil hindering them, assuming roles not unlike those of angels and devils. They can manifest themselves naturally or by means of possession: in the latter case, the preferred host is an animal through which the spirits can make themselves visible to their human interlocutor. The healer seeks to form alliances with good spirits, while the sorcerer seeks the collaboration of evil ones. In keeping with the myth of justice described earlier, more often the Amazonian medicine man will assume the roles of both healer and sorcerer in his attempt to bring about a balance between these opposing forces.

The invisible world is also peopled by the spirits of the dead. Close relatives or ancestors, the spirits of healers or well-meaning people, can project goodwill and kindness to provide help to those in need. Other spirits are dangerous and malevolent, from which people need protection. Journeys to the world of the dead are usually considered dangerous, and several rituals exist that are designed to stop the dead from interfering in the world of the living.

These different regions in the invisible world are ordered according to a specific, strict hierarchy that extends to the spirits themselves. Spirits, good or evil, are creatures and not divinities. The divine in the most general form of the Creator is deemed unknowable and unreachable unless mediated by the nonhuman or through sensory manifestation, and cults and rituals address these natural and supernatural intermediations.²³

THE SYNTHESIS OF WESTERN AND TRIBAL UNCONSCIOUSNESS

It seems to me that these two dimensions of the invisible world and the unconscious are not opposed: they complete one another while remaining distinct:

1. The personal unconscious is that of the inner depths, from which emerges subjective information relating to personal or transgenerational history.
2. The otherworld is extrinsic to the subject, transcendent, involving the world of the spirits and archetypes, providing forms to the visible world and information about what comes from above, which is autonomous in relation to the subject and is thus objective.

Both these views of the invisible are joined in the human heart (and body)—since human beings belong to both dimensions—and can form connections with the conscious mind by way of symbols, mainly through the human body’s symbolic functions.²⁴ Ritual, through symbolic language, joins these two dimensions, subjective and objective, not by blending them but, rather, by differentiating between them. Madness would lie in confusing the two, as when the transcendental archetypes of the otherworld are appropriated by the subject, assuming them to have arisen from his or her own inner depths, or else when these transcendental archetypes take active possession of the ego. (“You have to conquer ayahuasca,” say the shamans.) Through analogy, manifestations from the lower world or the subjective world echo those from the objective upper world, which means that they are similar but not identical.²⁵ To say that something “is like” something else is very different from saying it is “the same” as something else. In other words, things that are alike are not identical. Two twins may resemble one another in almost every particular, but nonetheless, they remain two distinct, separate beings. Analogy reveals a relation of meaning but does not invalidate the hierarchical position of the “high” in relation to the “low,” nor does it obscure the primacy of the upper world—which is *princeps*—over the manifest world of the senses. This notion of the superiority of the invisible world over the tangible, created world is also found in ternary anthropology, with its concept of “forms” (Fromaget 1999), in Platonic thought, in the Christian concept of the Word or *logos* (“*In principio erat Verbum*” [John 1: 1–3]), as well as in numerous mythologies that situate the origins of culture in the far-off mythical times of the founding heroes.

In the same way that information from the upper world is conveyed through representations, in the sphere between the real (objective truth), which derives from the upper world, and its subjective apprehension in the lower world, there exists a gradient of interpretation and distortion that inevitably leads to a progressive approach to truth and so to its possible falsification. This is the same sphere that allows for the distinction between the immutability of God and the evolution of the *Imago Dei* as perceived by humans. Authentic mystical experiences help to reduce this sphere, this hiatus, this subjective distortion, and so representations can come closer to being “presentations,” in the sense of evidence that lends itself neither to interpretation nor to distortion, since it has an objective existence: “It is thus.” And so, God becomes the “I am” revealed to Moses (Exodus 3: 14).²⁶

One can doubtless see the need, within the traditions of the initiation ritual, for a metalanguage that can “say things without saying them,” like the parables of Jesus or the *ikaros* (sacred chants) of Amazonian shamans. In this way, analogy and ambivalence make it less likely that the information will be reduced to a single, clear-cut interpretation. For instance, no Christian takes the following statement by Jesus literally: “And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee” (Matthew 5: 27–32). Nonetheless, a reductionist approach is often employed by

those desperately seeking facile, clear-cut answers in the hope that they will serve as guides to life, replacing the need for the exercise of their own judgment and free will. By confusing the image with the thing signified—or, as Korzybski puts it in his course on general semantics (Korzybski 2009), mistaking the map for actual territory—literal interpretation of this kind can lead to sectarian fanaticism.

SUPPORT DURING SHAMANIC INITIATION AND THE RISKS INVOLVED

The shaman is in effect a specialist who can navigate the invisible world and return from it unscathed in body and mind. His expertise rests on three pillars: the ritualistic function; corporal intervention; and a referential cosmic vision.

The Ritualistic Function

The shaman's journeys to the invisible world are supported by a ritualistic framework that serves as the interface between the two worlds and helps to guide him in his "voyage" to the "other side" and to find his way back afterward (Mabit 1999). In exercising the ritualistic function, the shaman determines his objectives in advance, makes sure he has permission to cross over to the otherworld, and invokes the aid of necessary protectors. The ritual reveals a doorway that serves as both an entrance and an exit. From a therapeutic point of view, the ritual constitutes a symbolic framework that both restricts and integrates the altered state experience.

Through its symbolic function, ritual establishes a coherent balance between this world and the otherworld, activating the order of the universe within the precise framework of its intervention, thus turning it into a reality. One must obey these strict albeit intangible laws, which make the ritual a sort of "technology of the sacred," laws without which it could not become operational (Apffel-Marglin 2011). These laws are not arbitrary, personal creations introduced for aesthetic reasons or merely for play but, rather, are passed down to the shaman from the otherworld. Breaking these laws can have serious consequences for the physical, psychic, and spiritual health of the shaman and his patients.

Corporal Intervention

The human body here assumes a symbolic function, representing the macrocosm, given that the body possesses three dimensions: the physical, the psycho-affective, and the spiritual (Mouret 1990). Through the principle of analogy, the subject's body relates back to the realities of the invisible world, while the shaman, acting

upon the body, intervenes at the same time on the different levels or dimensions of the "I." Thus, the activity of the shaman includes intervening in the workings of the physical body (e.g., through massage), the psycho-affective or energy body (through exhaled smoke energized by the appropriate chants and applied to the different energy points of the patient),²⁷ and the spiritual body (through invocations, sung prayers, or *ikaros*). The psychic disturbances of a patient can sometimes be caused by problems relating to energy and, as a result, may require no psychotherapeutic verbalization during treatment but, rather, an intervention on the energy plane to alleviate the symptoms. These disturbances can also be spiritual in nature, caused by contact, infestation, intrusion, or even possession by an evil spirit, in which case liberation or exorcism techniques are called for. These three sources of disturbance can occur in combination, as in the case, for instance, of a sorcerer who makes a victim unknowingly drink a preparation of toxic plants activated by magic ritual.

In this context, it becomes essential to purge the body. Purgative plants are ritually activated to the level of the three bodies; for the patient, cleansing takes place simultaneously in all three planes: the physical, the psychic, and the spiritual. The patient's organism is purified of toxins, and at the same time, he vomits his "bad thoughts" and "bad feelings," expelling as he does so the evil spirit that has taken hold of him. Clinically speaking, the speed and efficiency of these methods, when properly applied, would surprise any Western doctor.

Referential Cosmic Vision

From infancy, a young Amerindian grows up hearing descriptions of an active, organized, operational otherworld. Legends, anecdotes, myths and tales make sense of this world and its manifestations. The otherworld soon becomes tangible through dreams, extrasensory perception, paranormal phenomena, and synchronicities that, unlike in the West, are not censored. The young initiate thus comes into possession of a conceptual framework that allows him to situate his experiences in the map of the collective invisible. On a journey to the otherworld under an altered state of consciousness, he finds a series of references and landmarks that in no way contradict ordinary waking reality. The gap between ordinary and extraordinary consciousness does not represent an insurmountable, senseless boundary for him. The coherence achieved brings peace and helps to re-establish a sense of harmony. When a patient's internal order is in tune with the transcendent order of the universe, this is a sign of healing or indeed good health.

On the other hand, for a contemporary Westerner, the disappearance of a coherent, tangible cosmic vision is promoted through modish relativism by the "masters of suspicion," who have been engaged since the Renaissance in the task of emptying the universe of all its meaning and sacrality.²⁸ The absence of collectively

accepted points of social reference that individuals can claim as their own, which can guide and support them through their rites of passage, means that most Westerners have been cast adrift and left to their own devices. In this self-referential dynamic so typical of the current era, these devices run the risk of feeding on the individual's inner demons, his or her own unconscious impulses and projections. As for the body, it is reduced to its basic animal functions, dispossessed of its psychic and spiritual dimensions, while the mind, isolated and closed off, is surfeited with an overflow of data, a chaos of information it cannot possibly hope to assimilate without its original referential framework. The spiritual dimension, neglected because it has been labeled as nonexistent, lies fallow or is confused with the play of mental activity and introspection without end. Journeys to the otherworld undertaken in denial of the mind's transcendental nature, when embarked on for purposes of recreation or mere "aesthetic" appreciation, particularly when making use of drugs, dispense with ritualistic preparation and ignore the great powers involved. In this context, rituals become individual, subjective creations, doubtfully inspired,²⁹ and neglectful of what is really required of them. Never has the phrase "sorcerer's apprentice" described so many apprentices so aptly and all at the same time.

The individuation process involved in psychotherapeutic treatments often comes up against this *schize*, the split in the psyche, to a degree of dissociation that is more or less important,³⁰ encapsulated in endless mentalizations, disconnected from the body, and deprived of the spirit. According to this ancient clinical practice,³¹ these psychic problems can result, at least partially, from physical and energy-related intoxication, from a spiritual infestation by one or more entities from the otherworld, or even from the patient's being when it is caught in a limbo between the dimensions of "this world" and "the other." The scant regard for the body in traditional psychoanalytical practice, which sometimes goes so far as to forbid its involvement in the treatment altogether, delays the healing process, significantly reduces the therapy's efficacy, and prevents it from attaining its full potential as a cure. As far as the spiritual dimension is concerned, the failure to detect a parasitic infestation by a toxic or malevolent entity altogether impedes the patient's liberation.³² If this "evil" is judged to be a component of the patient's shadow, regarded as something that belongs to the self, this is tantamount to self-condemnation by the patient. There is no way this shadow can be assimilated other than to justify the pattern of a transgression authorized in the name of a relativism that allows the patient to exercise this exogenous evil guiltlessly, as something his own and unpardonable. This, in turn, entails the suppression of all morality and the distinction between good and evil. Clinical practice seems to demonstrate that the suppression of the moral conscience, which is innate and intrinsic to human nature, results only in increased aggression and violence, often manifested in harmful behavior toward others or in self-harm. Self-destructive behavior of this kind can take the

shape of addiction, anorexia, bulimia, and suicidal impulses, and sometimes it can appear in the form of autoimmune or psychosomatic disorders.

In my own clinical experience, infestations³³ are remarkably frequent, but generally pass unidentified as such, even by religious practitioners, who often refuse to discuss the subject, as they find it extremely disturbing. Treatment of infestations in the West suffers from the double handicap of not being considered either by priests or by therapists. Members of the church, when they do not simply deny the existence of evil³⁴ altogether, tend to severely understate its influence, attribute it to psychopathological disorders, or, at best, deign to recognize it only in extreme cases of possession. Their usual reaction is to send the sufferer to a psychiatrist in order to rule out the possibility of mental illness, which hardly ever happens due to the general climate of ignorance about infestations under which psychiatry labors with relation tantamount, in practical terms, to a flat denial of its existence. The 1994 nosography set down by the psychiatric diagnostic manual DSM-IV (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, American Psychiatric Association 1994) furnished a clear diagnostic framework which classified all “spiritual symptoms”³⁵ as forms of mental illness,³⁶ although the issue has begun to raise a lot of debate, stimulated in great part by ethnopsychiatric observations (van Duijl et al. 2012). Some recommend containment through prayer, while others suggest the use of neuroleptic or antipsychotic drugs. The chemical straightjacket does, in effect, serve to “contain” the problem but does little in the way of liberating the victim; the drugs tend to become a permanent presence in their lives, together with the many side effects they produce.

SOURCES OF INFESTATIONS

Infestations are numerous because their sources are likewise numerous, and members of modern society are particularly vulnerable to them. The lack of spiritual protection plays a decisive role: people cannot defend themselves against an ignored danger. Ignorance or outright denial of their existence makes Westerners easy prey to malevolent entities.

We cannot hope to cover the entire subject here, but we can single out a few important aspects taken from clinical practice and from Amazonian practitioners’ empirical observations, as well as from my own experience over the last thirty years. Shamanic ritual practice reveals that every infestation takes place inside the victim’s body, which is a physical–psycho–spiritual unity, and that the most common kind of infestation affects the energy plane. By opening and activating the energy body, shamanic practices can stimulate the emergence of everything the energy body contains, right down to its most secret depths, and thereby make this content perceivable. Perception via the five more common senses, as well as

the psychic functions, becomes heightened, in both the patient and the shaman. In other words, the energy content emerges and becomes momentarily amplified, enabling it to be identified. The links and intricacies of causality or resonance between the different spheres of the individual thus find an outlet and begin to make sense.³⁷ In any case, a kind of intervention on the energy plane has been undertaken following an act or situation that has in some way violated the integrity of the individual's body. This violation is not necessarily violent in nature; it can happen just as well through seduction or trickery. The individual may likewise have made him- or herself vulnerable to these intrusions through ignorance,³⁸ curiosity, or quite often as a result of reacting inadequately to deeply affective or existential problems. We often discover the origin of transgressive impulses and delusions in heartache. In a sense, these wounds have already dealt a blow to the individual's integrity, paving the way for an invasion by evil spirits. If the resulting pain is not eased by the balm of requited love itself or healed by the power of pardon, or even by cathartic expiation, it can easily create an opportunity for seduction by a vengeful spirit. The wounded individual desires to wound in return.

If we draw up a rough catalogue of the sources of infestations, we immediately see that they can be classified into consensual infestations, on the one hand, and nonconsensual ones, on the other. Among the latter, we find the inherited, transgenerational infestations, which deserve a separate discussion.

Infestations with the Explicit or Implicit Consent of the Individual

The most frequent kinds of infestation are the result of an active collaboration, often unconscious, between the individual and spirit entities.

Unprotected induction (without ritual or with badly conducted rituals) of altered states of consciousness through drug use leaves the patient's energy body exposed and permeable. The more frequently one is exposed to this "contaminated" environment through such experiences,³⁹ the greater the risk of contagion spreading to other participants. Spirits can move from one body to another or poison another body through contact with the diluted energy bodies left exposed by drug taking.

A similar process takes place during sexual intercourse when the energy bodies of the sexual partners, under the effect of intense vibration, experience intimacy at the level of fusion. The quality of the energy body of an individual will determine the possible outcomes of potentially contagious exchanges. Ritual and religious traditions promote the sacralization of unions in order to prevent mutual adulteration by the energy bodies involved, as well as by the inadequate overlapping of the physical, psycho-affective, and spiritual bodies (the latter corresponding to the energy body). Ideally, the spiritual body should govern sexual encounters.

Ritual transgression plays an important role in exposure to infestation by voluntary actions. Within the scope of this type of transgression, all voluntary actions

converge toward the forced attempt to contact or penetrate the spirit world. The individual's motivations and objectives greatly influence ritual practice; if they are not clear or morally sound, or if they are deficient in any way, the ensuing experience may prove highly dangerous. Therefore different traditions rely on a precise liturgy and require thorough, painstaking preparation in order to direct ritual practices and to purify the intentions of the participants.⁴⁰

It is important to point out the risks involved in joining so-called initiation groups that use different rites. The candidate is invited into the group through ritualized symbolic practices. The initiation rite creates a bond of spiritual dependence not only with the group as an institution but also with the spiritual entities that preside over its formation. The bond created by initiation in a sense connects the initiate with the master spiritual power of the *egregore* (collective group mind) through the chain of successive initiations.

By contrast, in trying to avoid the long and arduous work of individuation, contemporary Western thought reveals the magical, childish dimension upon which it is based, aggravated by a desecralized society that trades on illusion. We may ask whether the shamanic quest of certain Westerners does not stem from this postmodern social childishness and Rousseau's myth of the "noble savage," on the one hand, and from the supposed magical thinking of shamans, on the other. The shaman, considered a lunatic by the intelligentsia of the 1950s, has, just a few decades on, been upgraded to a sage, a master.⁴¹

Infestation without the Individual's Explicit Consent

There are numerous ways in which infestation can take place without the individual's consent or active participation, although this does not mean they are any less toxic. Infestations can occur passively through direct contact with locations, objects, or even animals that have been infected. These receptacles of evil spirits may have become infected when placed in the presence of malevolent entities or after being possessed by spirits of the dead. This can also happen when the victim is in a place where some form of spiritual transgression has taken place (where magic has been practiced, for instance, or where an act of sexual abuse has been committed), or when an act of violence has led to someone's sudden death (e.g., as in the case of murder). These acts may cause the victim's spirit to be cast adrift, so it latches onto the location.⁴² In other cases, these receptacles have been "charged" intentionally through ritual practice with the express purpose of harming those with whom they come in contact. This type of evil practice has long been a staple of sorcery the world over.

Sexual abuse is not only a violation (sometimes nonviolent) of the physical body but also of the energy and spiritual bodies as well. The abuser, taken over by an entity (an unclean spirit), transmits this entity to his victim. This is why sexual

abusers themselves were so often the victims of sexual abuse during childhood, something that cannot be explained by psychic mechanisms of confused identification with the modes of affective relations,⁴³ since subjects are aware of the transgression involved and refuse (or at least hesitate) to identify themselves with these mechanisms and put them into practice.⁴⁴ The a posteriori proof of real infestation—not just of the symptomatic manifestation of secondary processes stemming from psychic troubles—can be given once the therapist or the shaman is able to free the patient by acting directly upon his or her energy body without the need for the patient’s conscious acceptance or participation in the process. Treatment can thus be done remotely without the patient’s knowledge or presence through simple, unspectacular rituals and techniques, sometimes even in a language and culture that are foreign to the patient, where the possibility of suggestion is minimal or indeed nonexistent.

Transgenerational Inheritance

The most difficult sources of infestation to identify are those passed down to the patient via transgenerational inheritance. In these cases, patients are already infected from birth. In their eyes and those of the people around them, the disturbing manifestations seem to come not from outside but, rather, from the ‘inner character’ or nature of the victims themselves. In other words, their deviant behavior is attributed to inborn personality traits. Western medical practitioners will search for clues in the patient’s genetic makeup, in disturbances during pregnancy or labor, while the psychotherapists will explore the possibility of psycho-affective disorders having been passed down to patients by their ancestors or in the psychic context of their birth. Even if these physical and psychical conditions do in fact exist, they do not in any way preclude the possibility of infestation, which not only takes advantage of these deficiencies that facilitated the process of intrusion but also, in their turn, can be the source of these problems, even on the physical plane. More frequently, anamnesis is unable to identify traumatic occurrences in a victim’s experiences dating from the act of conception, which might explain abnormal behavior or impressions that fall outside the scope of what is considered normal (Mabit 2008).

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN JUNGIAN INDIVIDUATION AND AMAZONIAN SHAMANIC INITIATION

This brief description of the epistemological framework of shamanism in the upper Amazon of Peru and of its comprehensive concept of the universe, which contrasts

so starkly with Western thought, allows us to detect certain similarities between the Jungian individuation process and shamanic initiation.

In both cases, it is a *process* that presupposes or determines a sequence of stages, slow and drawn out, comprising a succession of “little deaths” that gradually lead a person out of the shadows and into the light (Mabit 2000). An essential value is attributed to self-experimentation, and the results of this labor will correspond to the degree of personal dedication invested by the individual in the enterprise. In this context, real and relevant commitment is essential, while facile, effortless “magical” solutions are illusory. Individuals must therefore place themselves in the role of active protagonist in their own evolutionary process or apprenticeship, a process in which a master or teacher helps to channel the “energies” that have been mustered and to ensure their proper integration. It is taken for granted that such masters, in their role as guides, have undergone initiation themselves and can “lead the way,” and that they will not take their pupils along paths that masters have not already explored beforehand. From one point of view, this pupil-teacher relation must consider mutual exchanges happening not only on the psychic plane but also on the energy plane, with the master taking responsibility to metabolize any of the student’s or patient’s processes that may have been triggered by the cure. The master is also expected to curtail the overeager and overabundant intentions of the pupil by establishing measures of containment and integration, which form the basis of both psychoanalytic cure and shamanic ritual. The master at the same time channels, guides, controls, and teaches, not in an academic sense but, rather, by working within a dynamic relationship involving full commitment to accompanying the pupil at every step of the latter’s meandering, personal journey, a journey that is unique in every way.

Each process, too, is unique, and it demands that the master go in search of his or her own self together with the pupil, with the advances of the former matching those of the latter’. In fact, the pupil meets transcendental dimensions in a unique fashion through paths that are particular to each individual and often surpass those of the master. Therefore the master cannot intervene as a teacher in the *ex cathedra*, dogmatic sense but, rather, as a companion with his or her own particular connection with the otherworld. In other words, the master’s role is to facilitate the pupil’s entry into the “mystical dimension,” understood as a first-hand consciousness or knowledge of the transcendental presence, which is neither intellectual nor speculative in nature but, instead, experiential.⁴⁵ The approach to this transpersonal dimension, in both the Jungian and shamanic contexts, is marked by reaching beyond the limits of the conventional space-time continuum, where the invisible world manifests itself through dreams, visions, paranormal phenomena, extrasensory experience, and synchronous events that bear a particular significance for the individual. Activation of the energy plane of the initiation process opens the doors to other dimensions, and the role of the master is to maintain a sense of coherence

and to avoid any outside interference, any confusion in the process of integration, or any inflation of the ego, all of which could lead to chaos and dissociation. In effect, the phenomena of consciousness no longer have to do with physical laws on a molecular or even atomic level but, rather, with those on the subatomic or quantum level.⁴⁶ The master cannot rest contented with a materialistic reductionism or even with a certain reductive psychology but must instead possess the necessary instruments to enter the otherworld through actively symbolic, operational pathways. Indeed, the energies thus mobilized are endowed with a numinous quality, *tremendum et fascinans*, capable of robbing the individual of freedom through the sheer power of fascination, terrifying or alienating the self beyond recall. The danger of the powers invoked is recognized by both types of guide, the analyst of our psychological depths and the shaman. With no safety net, the occupation of the individual by forces from the invisible world risks becoming all-out expropriation or possession. It is at this point that the shaman could turn into a sorcerer and the psychoanalyst, in his turn, could play at being a “sorcerer’s apprentice.”

In relation to the individual, this unconscious or invisible world is peopled with autonomous nonhumans, Jungian archetypes, the “mothers” of plants, or spirits of nature. They intervene during the therapeutic process, whether as allies or adversaries, as protectors or guardians of the threshold. In any case, they take part in a possible structuring of the individual, who in turn is called upon to confront these powers and to adequately integrate or interiorize them. These powers of the invisible world play a fundamental role as teachers,⁴⁷ offering potential nourishment to help build up the individual. This invisible world is therefore clearly distinguishable from an unconscious serving merely as a region of repression and shadow in the classic Freudian sense.

The transpersonal dimension, in both cases, leads to the establishment of an inevitable bond with the past, a return to the legacy left by the individual’s ancestors. This inherited capital, for better or worse, must be carefully managed in order to be recognized, accepted, and eventually purified. The individual’s identity cannot be established outside this heritage, personal family history, and cultural and spiritual background. Managing this heritage entails, ideally, recognizing and paying homage to the spirits of one’s ancestors (gratitude), giving thanks for the life one has been given, and, at the same time, freeing oneself from negative ties associated with behavior patterns or psychic configurations connected with traumatic events in the lives of these ancestors or of the community to which they belonged.⁴⁸ Ancestors and the dead in general can appropriate living people and interfere in their affairs, sometimes even to the point of feeding off experiences in their daily lives. The individuation process, like the shamanic ritual, must take this essential dimension into account and come up with solutions that can pacify these relations.

Both the Jungian and the shamanic approaches propose establishing a dialogue with the invisible world through a symbolic metalanguage that is essentially

transcultural, a language that aspires to be universal. Metaphor and analogy are vital tools in the management of the therapeutic or initiation process. Both paths embrace the notion of transcendence, of spirituality, of the otherworld, and both accept the idea of a coherent reality beyond the manifest world. They also have in common the fact of not being religions but of serving as paths to knowledge, particularly self-knowledge, that are essentially therapeutic in outlook. In this respect, they are medicinal in the broader sense: neither is intent on founding a religious institution of any kind. The modern misappropriation of both psychoanalysis of the depths (Maxence 2004, 2012) and shamanism by churches or sectarian groups⁴⁹ seems, therefore, to go against the original intention of both these approaches.⁵⁰

In this way, the Jungian individuation process and shamanic initiation converge on many issues. One might even be tempted to associate them more narrowly by describing them as two versions of a single or similar path: one Western, the other Amazonian. However, upon closer inspection, it will become clear that there are as many fundamental differences between the two as there are similarities, ruling out any such facile analogy.

FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JUNGIAN INDIVIDUATION AND SHAMANIC INITIATION

When compared from the perspective of the Western and tribal cultural horizons that, respectively, gave birth to them, the Jungian and shamanic models present some glaring differences.

Individual and Community

Shamanic initiation cannot be understood separately from its ultimate purpose, which is to re-establish order and balance within the heart of the human community to which the shaman and his pupil belong. The principle of justice and reciprocity embraces the entire community, as well as creation as a whole, at least in its closest manifestations. In this sense, one cannot really speak of “individuation” because the individual does not fully exist outside the group. A member of such a group does not strive to become different from the others in the community but, rather, to blend in and become as intimate a part of the group as possible, assuming its function and rationale as his or her own. It would practically constitute a breach of the law for a member of the community to seek individuation by turning away from the extended family, and such a pursuit would not fail to provoke strong reactions among other members, since it would imperil the integrity and coherence of the group. By contrast, it is perfectly possible, from a Western, individualistic point

of view—desirable, even—to strive for some form of personal, individual differentiation. Every Western individual feels free to choose this path irrespective of the expectations of the family, whether nuclear or extended, or indeed of professional, spiritual, and social milieus. The title of Jungian analyst confers a certain social status, and even if Jungian thought remains largely marginalized by dominant academic currents, this does not in any way threaten the integrity of its supporters and practitioners.

Time's Arrows

On a deeper level, however, these two processes are situated in diametrically opposed projections of time. In the tribal context, time's arrow points from the present back toward the past. Knowledge considered desirable to an Amerindian man or woman is that pertaining to the group's origins, the ancestors. They aspire to a reconnection with the ancestral lineage, trying to reach as far back as possible to a distant past where they may find the source of primal knowledge. The flow of time draws them further and further away from this primordial wisdom, as it does every successive generation, hence they 'respect' those placed chronologically closer to this source and ascribe fundamental importance to maintaining traditions and preserving the purity of the knowledge or science handed down from the dawn of humanity. From a Western viewpoint, the Amerindian moves backward. The Western man or woman, by contrast, faces forward, looking ahead at things to come; for them, time's arrow points from the present toward the future, and novelty excites great interest and fascination. Their expectations target a time ahead based on the principle of the evolutionary process, of progress, while with every passing moment the past loses its potential and becomes something of no consequence. Success, therefore, in the Amerindian case means rediscovering the past, while in Western case, success means discarding the past—or, put in a slightly different way, Amerindians try to retard the degradation caused by the flow of time, while for Westerners, its action is both welcome and wholesome.

Up to this point, one could still argue that these apparent differences or oppositions might be overlooked from a perspective that sees time as a spiral, its flow moving back toward the past in its horizontal rotations while simultaneously tracing a line forward to the future on the vertical plane. In the same way, a patient undergoing treatment may return to the past in order to assimilate the "knots" in his or her personal history, thus making it possible to forge ahead and progress toward a future cure. In the end, these regressive phases form part of the general forward thrust of personal progress into the future. We may equally well consider that in the furtherance of individuation, the patient's projections and phantoms weigh less on the group, and, in finding his or her true vocation, the patient also becomes of greater service to the collective well-being.

Word and Body

However, I find it more difficult to assess the comparative effectiveness of the instruments which, in Western and tribal therapy alike, enable therapy to proceed. On the one hand, psychoanalysis places too much importance on the spoken word, to a certain extent neglecting the body, while, on the other hand, shamanic initiation has as its starting point, and, above all, the bodies of the individual and of the shaman, with the use of the spoken word reduced to a minimum. Ever since I began my apprenticeship with Amazonian shamans, this point has seemed to me to be the cornerstone of initiation (Mabit, 1988). The Word of the Christian lamb, the offspring of the Jewish ram of justice, institutes the spoken word as the founding principle (“In the beginning . . .”), and this informs Jungian thought and practice, having their roots in Christianity. For the shaman, in contrast, it is the body that is the custodian of knowledge stretching backward in time, from the individual’s personal, biographical memories to ancestral memories, and further back to human and even cosmic memories. The spoken word can be contaminated by the mind, by illusions, by phantoms, while the body cannot lie. The unconscious inhabits the whole of the body in its furthest recesses, not only the brain, as Westerners generally believe. The body has become the laboratory in which we conduct experiments and verify the information received during altered states of consciousness, whether natural (dreams) or induced. The relative lack of importance attached to the body in analytical practice paves the way to psychic and even spiritual disorientation. The body needs to be purged of its various loads or interferences that inhibit the emergence into consciousness of truth-bearing memories. While it is true that psychoanalysis and even psychocorporal approaches can certainly enable awareness to develop, they cannot, however, reach the deepest levels of somatic memories that constitute the true encoded revelations of the Life we carry within us. The bodies of plants, judiciously energized through shamanic ritual and technique, can reach the human body directly at its deepest levels through the common physiological structure that we share with all created beings.

The body can also become subject to invasion. The practices of sorcery are founded in part on this ability of the body to be contaminated in its different dimensions: its physical dimension (through sorcery by contact); its energy (through sorcery at a distance by shooting magic darts or *virotas*); and its spiritual dimension (through magic spells, spiritualism, occult practices, etc.). These practices achieve effects that do not depend on belief or nonbelief in the phenomena but on the operation of universal laws of energy to which all human beings (and all created beings) are subject. Ignorance of the laws in no way protects people from their effects but, rather, makes them more vulnerable.

The potential of the corporal dimension is particularly visible in the case of the individual’s psychic personality during sessions with ayahuasca, when it takes

on an animal form. On these altered states of consciousness, the individual feels inhabited by a particular animal figure; he feels he has become that animal, even while retaining human awareness. He adopts the animal's movements, postures, reflexes, and instincts, even though the animal in question does not belong to his habitual environment. The experience is one of exaltation, in which the subject feels himself as strong as a bear, as agile as a feline, or as keen-sighted as an eagle. For the individual, the zoomorphic energy manifests itself as a constituent part of his deep and therefore unvarying psychic personality. Furthermore, these appearances often surprise the individual without corresponding to his personal phantoms or to his natural preference for one species over another. This experience is impossible to produce simply by imitation. Rather, it denotes unsuspected relationships between the human species and animals. Here we have reached a point that is very distant from abstract symbolism or imagination.

Integration and Cosmic Vision

This is an issue that has been mentioned above. Interiorizing the initiation process is made easier for Amerindians by their ability instantly to place their extraordinary experiences within a shared cosmic vision that provides them with landmarks and maps of the invisible world. For Westerners, partially divorced from their Judeo-Christian symbolic roots, the experiences of contact with the unconscious require the presence of a translator, a role that analysts may play if they have not become cut off from their roots. For a Westerner, it is at this point that the spoken word reasserts its importance. The blurred outlines of the average Westerner's spiritual landmarks tend to make this integration more difficult. While the Amerindian view of the world lends a global coherence to everyday life and to non-everyday experiences of awareness, the Westerner, living an everyday reality which is dissociated from the otherworld, will readily interpret a non-everyday experience in an irrational manner, whether as a sign of madness (denial) or as a sign of being divinely chosen, which in turn can lead to a dangerously inflated ego. In fact, Jung recognizes the danger of identifying the "I" with archetypal content, even though this inflated psyche may only be temporary in the course of assimilating the dimensions that arise from the unconscious. If the "I" is identified with the self, it loses its limits and fails to recognize the autonomy of unconscious forces.

Meanwhile, for the Amerindian, this map identifies independent spirits that can be harmful to the human soul and whose assimilation is thus unacceptable, unless it occurs for him to turn into a sorcerer or to become possessed. On the psychic level, the cause of the infestation or possession needs explaining in order to prevent it from recurring. It must certainly not be tolerated but calls for exorcism. The shaman will seek to discover sources external to the individual (spells, infested locations) and the means within the individual (improper behavior, transgressions)

that have allowed the invasion to take place. While shamanic approaches seem to parallel those of Western psychotherapy, they involve ritual procedures that have the purpose of simply expelling the intrusive entity. The fact that most Westerners do not recognize the existence of malevolent spirits, or fail to distinguish them from unconscious psychic powers, may lead to a dangerous mix-up, closing the individual in upon him- or herself in a mental prison from which they can only escape if worse comes to worst either by dissociation (madness) or by identifying with the intruder (possession). Apart from these two extremes, the danger is still present, though more manageable, and less obvious. An instance of this, in my view, is the New Age spiritual narcissism, which is part and parcel of these seductive infestations shared by many people, but usually not identified as such, thus slyly poisoning the human soul. The question of detecting the material, tangible character of the spirits can clear the way for grace, a better option than the senseless extremes of insanity, on the one hand, and becoming a sorcerer, on the other.

Autonomous Powers

The fundamental difference between Amazonian shamanism and the Jungian approach undoubtedly lies in the definition and detection of fully autonomous invisible dynamic forces of the invisible unconscious, independent of the individual.

For Amerindians, the natural world is clearly peopled with entities that are created beings, generally invisible to anybody in an ordinary state of awareness, having substance, intelligence, a will, and the ability to communicate, which are fully autonomous in relation to human beings and which, though incorporeal, have substance. This otherworld is very much alive, active, and able both to communicate and interfere with human beings. These beings are differentiated by hierarchical levels: some of them, inferior to humans, may become either allies or adversaries, depending on how they are treated (the “mothers” of plants are a case in point), while others are superior to humans and are necessarily either benevolent (angels, good spirits) or malevolent (devils, evil spirits).

In the same way, the everyday perception of archetypes by Jungians confers upon them a degree of independence from humans, even though they do not clearly recognize them as spirits. Now, the very notion of the archetype in Jung seems to have arisen from Lévy-Bruhl’s translation of what he calls “collective representations” or the symbolic content of “primitive” cosmic visions. As early as 1917, the Protestant theologian Rudolf Otto attributed a numinous character (*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*) to these “representations.”

Overall, archetypes are defined as being contained within the psyche, which, in the final analysis, grants them neither full autonomy nor an existence of their own. Thus, according to Jung ([1927] 2001, 31), “the archetypes are inherited with

brain structure,” though he also maintains that they predate the psyche and may be assimilated to “psychoid entities.” This means they can only be activated by psychotherapy, which removes the sacred in the full meaning of the term. In this context, shamanic rituals of curing or sorcery must either be inoperative or require “belief in them” by the subject. This brings us back to the issue of suggestion, though certainly in a more sophisticated form than in Bleuler’s definition of hysteria but, in the end, equally lacking spiritual density. Western rationalist, positivistic thought is so deeply rooted that the very reality of the spirit world immediately smacks of brimstone. Not even the main current of Jungian thought can easily overcome this taboo. Without claiming to be familiar with the full extent of Jung’s prolific output, it nevertheless seems to me that his approach seeks the approval of the scientific community, which necessarily prevents it from crossing the threshold into an area in which it would be possible to fully assert the reality of the existence of nonhumans as entities in their own right without being dismissed out of hand, inviting the supreme insult of being labeled as mysticism.⁵¹

And yet, Marilyn Nagy has pointed out that, in a letter to Fritz Kunkel, Jung specifies, “In each individual case I must of necessity be skeptical, but in the long run I have to admit that the spirit hypothesis yields better results in practice than any other” (cited in Nagy 1991, 86, n. 18). Nagy sees a parallel with Kant’s statement: “I did not dare to deny completely the truth of the various ghost tales; on the contrary, I have always maintained a certain reserve and a sense of wonder toward them, doubting each story individually, but attributing some truthfulness to all of them put together” (cited in 1991, 86, n. 18).

Other statements by Jung show evidence of his feeling of hesitation about making a definitive decision, as, for example, when he says that “the appearance of the archetypes has a clearly numinous character which, if one does not wish to call it ‘magical,’ must be called spiritual” (Jung [1947] 1970, 185). He distinguishes between archetypes and archetypal representations, attaching to the former a character that cannot be known except by their indirect effects ([1942] 1962, 261). This once again denies a mystical dimension such as I defined it above, a dimension that presumes the possibility, by grace, of direct and immediate knowledge of transcendence. If spirits occupy a transcendent plane in relation to human beings, it is conceivable that they may be accessible by direct experiential knowledge, taking as a starting point the human spirit rather than human psychism, which can only reach, at best, as far as the representations. Jung’s archetypes correspond to the notion of spirits found among the first peoples, since he recognizes their capability for inducing psychophysical phenomena of acausal coincidence (synchronicities) and triggering parapsychological abilities in the individual. The archetype may have a personal dimension, such as the self that directs our destiny or brings an “atmosphere for the I.” It can equally represent a pattern of animistic transformation punctuating the major phases of a lifetime (birth, puberty, old age, death), thus

drawing close to Stanislaw Grof's (1983) notion of complexes or perinatal matrices in the case of birth. The archetype can also represent the deep structure of the relational dimension established between two human beings (such as master–disciple, executioner–victim, lovers). In this last definition, the notion reappears of “mystical participation” so dear to Lévy-Bruhl, which once again sends us back to the spiritual dimension that is ever-present in an underlying form, although in the end it is neither fully explained nor clearly recognized. For Jung, however, the archetypes are not directly knowable other than by their effects. Consequently, they “do not belong to the order of direct experiential experimentation: they are of the nature of a postulate” (Biju-Duval 2001, 159).

What we see as Jung's hesitant see-sawing between a predominantly psychic notion of archetypes, having a scientific character, and another predominantly spiritual notion of a metaphysical order emerges very clearly in the question of the constellation of archetypes. Possession, observed in clinical cases that Jung did not neglect to mention in the service of psychiatry, is interpreted as the crushing invasion by an animistic power that originates when an archetypal psychic power buried in the depths suddenly rises to the surface of consciousness and emerges into the open. This power belongs, in a way, to the individual and comes “from below.” For the world's great religions and for shamanic traditions alike, this invasion comes “from above” and is a manifestation of a human spirit being captured by another spirit. It is no longer a simple case of parasitism or of an infestation but of a capture that annexes the subject's will. He has no choice in the matter, and the invasion is effected without his consent. Exorcism is then called for, but Jung, in accordance with his conception, does not propose performing it: how is it possible, in fact, to expel a “force” that properly should belong to the individual, even though it is in his deep unconscious? Jung, in contrast, returns to the notion of possession seen from a different angle, this time more clearly psychic, when he considers that every human being is to a greater or lesser extent possessed by one or more archetypes, belonging to the order of “genies” (daemons), which may call the subject to certain vocations and to which he may declare his allegiance if he so wishes. For Jung, it is a matter of choosing, in a way, the “deity” to which the subject will submit, or, alternatively, the “dominant representation” he or she decides to subscribe to. This time, the subject's will power is called upon. Responding to an appeal, or following a vocation, has as its purpose the supreme welfare and liberation of the individual and, therefore, cannot be considered a form of alienating capture. This inspiration presupposes “inspirers” that elevate the subjects and “pull them upward,” allowing them to overcome their limitations in a way that is completely distinct, and even opposed, to the lowering and crushing effect of possessive invasions, which “pull downward.” This elevation represents a possible and desirable—or even necessary—outcome of the individuation process, while infestations of any kind, all the way up to full possession, degrade people by

pushing them toward regression. The upward-pointing arrow tends toward a differentiated infinite, while the downward-pointing arrow takes them back toward an even greater nondifferentiation.

In his 1935 lecture, Jung evokes the “world of subtle bodies,” where beings live who may possess a kind of corporality, and where immaterial beings may also be, the border between them being difficult to pinpoint (Jung [1935] 1989).

In the recently published *Red Book*, Jung (2009) records his conversations with spirits in the course of exercising his active imagination. In this surprising passage, the spirits demand—though without any great expectations—to be recognized as wholly existing beings:

- E [Elijah]: “You may call us symbols for the same reason you can also call your fellow human beings symbols, if you wish to. But we are just as real as your fellow men. You invalidate nothing and solve nothing by calling us symbols.”
- I [Jung]: “You plunge me into a terrible confusion. Do you wish to be real?”
- E [Elijah]: “We are certainly what you call real. Here we are, and you have to accept us. The choice is yours.” (Jung 2009, 187)

Despite these warnings, it seems clear to me that Jung never crossed this threshold. The proof, as I see it, seems to reside in the fact that if he had granted his recognition, it would necessarily have entailed putting in place a ritual formality on psychoanalytical consultations. This was not the case, as the initial therapeutic contract (detailing the length and frequency of each session, payment, couch or no couch, etc.) does not count as a ritual framework.

Jung does, however, recognize a natural disposition for religion in the human soul, “a current which deserves to be channeled and tamed through the symbolism of belief and ritual” (Jung [1934] 1970, 20), so as to avert the danger that this power might attack secondary, everyday objects (idols), which would then suddenly be raised to the category of the sacred. In this passage, he goes so far as to argue the necessity of religious institutions, justly stipulating that they must make possible, without obstruction, a true religious experience (Jung [1938] 1949). This accords with what I was saying earlier about mysticism as an individual experience being right and necessary in every process of individuation or personal evolution, and that it should therefore be “democratized.”⁵² Jung goes so far as to recognize a “pontifical” quality in dogma on account of its mediating ability to make the archetypal experience of the religious symbol situated in the human heart readily intelligible. This allusion to the magisterium of the Catholic Church should, however, not be seen as a concession to the revelation of which it claims to be the guardian (the deposit of faith), since he goes on immediately to specify that dogma, creed, and liturgy embody in a delicate and subtle manner the experience

of many human souls who have traveled the paths of religious quest and, in this sense, have purified themselves individually in order to express an objective truth about the collective psyche (Jung [1938] 1949). God remains unreachable or else is reduced to this objective truth, in which case revelation is the fruit of individual or collective human effort aimed at uncovering the hidden depths of the psyche. The death sentence that “the masters of suspicion” have passed on God remains in force and has not been questioned other than in terms of the psychic consequences arising from the replacement of God with megalomaniacal science or totalitarian politics claiming to create an earthly paradise. Jung remains within the bounds of psychism and only concedes to the churches a role for them to play in mass psychism, but for him, God does not seem to be equally necessary for the elite of the initiated—to which, judging by the evidence, he himself belongs.

It is my understanding that ritual is a symbolic formulation that cannot be freely invented but must obey the rules of universal symbolism transmitted by the spiritual world, specifically through the proceedings and traditions of initiation. It is only on this condition that the approach to the spiritual world may become fully coherent and operational and may protect the person from numinous powers that dwell in him, such as regressive and incestuous tendencies toward nondifferentiation. In the absence of this condition, the doors to the spiritual world will not be fully opened, and grace will not abound.

The Jungian archetypes thus present themselves mainly as profane, desacralized spirits, flattened by an impoverishing psychic reductionism.

DISCERNING THE SUBSTANTIALITY OF EVIL

These thoughts on a vast subject lead us to a few brief considerations on the question of the reality of evil in Jungian thought.⁵³

The reality of spirits, whether good or evil, as autonomous material beings, extends to the recognition or denial of the material or substantial existence of God and the devil or Satan. In Jung, we find here once gain the same poorly defined borders mentioned above in connection with the psychic and spiritual dimensions. Jung certainly does not deny the reality of good and evil, but he confuses them on distinct and hierarchically segregated levels of reasoning, as Giegerich has shown (2010): the level of logical thought and judgment, that of empirical reality, and that of metaphysical substantiality. As principles governing our ethical judgment, good and evil are seen as being complementary and opposite in the same way as light and dark, or high and low (Jung 1951 [1986], 273). He then interprets the Christian principle of *privatio boni* as a way of denying the opposing poles of good and evil and asserts that the Christian cosmic vision is described as monistic, but in reality, it conceals a de facto dualism ([1951] 1986, 278). He interprets this

definition as an attempt by the Catholic Church (specifically through St. Basil) to defend itself from the dualism of the Gnostics and Manicheists. He displays a strong aversion to the concept of *privatio boni*, which he criticizes for being an indirect way of emptying evil of all reality, although it can be empirically observed and its influence on the human soul is plainly visible. “Only the unconscious is oblivious to good and evil,” he adds (1951, 65). *Privatio boni* harks back to the Christian concept of the *summum bonum* in which God is defined as the supreme good, and this, Jung says, seems to leave the human being as the only one guilty of sin, of the fall, and of evil. Toward the end of his life, however, Jung realized that these categories of principles of ethical judgment, “pushed to their furthest ontological roots, deal with divine aspects, with the names of God” (1959, 425), and recognized that his earlier “critique of the doctrine of *privatio boni* is valid only within the bounds of psychological experience” ([1951] 1986, 65). Furthermore, he finally stated that, “if one wishes to see the principle of evil as real, one must also call it the Devil” (1959, 432). While it is true that the principles of *privatio boni* and the *summum bonum* become absurd when reduced to the psychic dimension, they nevertheless retain their consistency in the spiritual sphere. The mystery of iniquity, which determines that Satan is a creature that rejects its own nature in a sort of ontological self-contradiction (Giegerich 2010), can only be conceived after free and sincere attachment to love, not as an object but as the very essence of the divine. As a result, the devil (or devils) ceases to be a “person,”⁵⁴ and this insensate choice no longer rests on logical reason.⁵⁵ Jung similarly takes an empirical attitude toward the question of evil and makes a point of specifying that “this does not mean that I am relativizing good and evil in themselves; I can clearly see that this or that is evil” ([1959] 2001, 426).

When Jung turns to the question of metaphysical substantiality, he appeals above all to Old Testament sources when discussing God—or at least the *imago dei*—while, by contrast, he too often approaches the figure of Christ from a modern standpoint. The animistic figure of Satan evolves step by step from the Old Testament and seems to cast doubt on its substantiality unless one admits while one may not confuse the immutable deity with the *imago dei* in constant movement, which is the understanding or apprehension of God in accordance with the current state of spiritual evolution. Similarly, it would be wrong to confuse Satan with the *imago diaboli*. Satan holds untold powers, and Jung rebukes present-day Christianity for presenting an overly benign picture of evil, reducing it to “a little prank-playing trickster.” If the Christian message, under pressure, has in a sense flattened itself in order to get under the door of modernity, as some criticize it for doing, it still remains true that the substantial existence of evil has been constantly reasserted by the magisterium of the Catholic Church.⁵⁶ The combat in which exorcists are engaged remains fully relevant today (see, e.g., Amorth 2010). Elsewhere, Jung, once again referring to modernity, says that “the symbol of Christ

is incomplete as a totality in the modern sense, because it does not include the dark side of things, but expressly excludes it as a Luciferian counterpart" ([1951] 1986, 54). Jung is indeed intrigued by the difficulty of discovering the shadow in Jesus. Considering that he is Christ and has a divine nature according to Christian tradition, this ought to reinforce the concept of the *summum bonum* if Jung had not already rejected it and reduced Christ's real substance to a mere "symbol." As Giegerich (2010) rightly points out, the theory of *privatio boni* presupposes an evolutionary leap in thought and understanding in which good and evil are not in opposition to one another but, rather, are now seen as two among the many points on a single, integrated continuum. Jung's discrepancy on the question of evil seems to stem from the fact he established a direct connection between, on the one hand, the unreality of evil as a metaphysical substance in its own right in *privatio boni* and the *summum bonum*, and, on the other, the automatic elimination of evil from the domain of logical judgments and empirical reality. In fact, this connection is not necessary. Jung, once again, has stepped outside his role as a clinical psychologist by risking metaphysical propositions that he had hoped to elude. To apprehend the real, one should not attempt to turn it into an abstraction.

The question of the opposition between the symbolic and the real looks like a wrongly formulated question: "The question therefore is not one of symbol or reality but, rather, of symbol and reality, since invisible reality can only be expressed in symbolic terms" (Laurentin 1995, 13).

Discernment therefore remains a central question for identifying the dimension of evil to which one wishes to refer; to draw a distinction between, on the one hand, the phenomenological level of evil and its representations on the psychic (and even physical) plane, and, on the other, its ontological status on the spiritual plane as a spiritual entity, without denying its status as a creature, and not a deity. Jung implicitly recognizes this when he describes human discernment as limited, since the certainty of judgment is an attribute of the deity alone. The apodictic certainty of judgment in humans is a symptom of madness. This is more reason to appeal to the need for revelation as a source of discernment. Christian tradition has contrived to produce a list of criteria for spiritual discernment, which would doubtless advance this necessary differentiation.⁵⁷ The latter may prove complementary to the process of discernment between "dissociative crisis" and "spiritual emergency," as proposed by Stanislas Grof (1983), or in other words, the differentiation between pre-personal experience (prior to the constitution of the self) and transpersonal experience (a mystical event situated beyond the everyday awareness of the self), as suggested by Ken Wilber (2007).

The horizon of modernity converges with Jung in the sense that the Judeo-Christian myth, when it concerns the reality of Satan and the devils, corresponds to the evolutionary state of primitive, rudimentary, outdated thought patterns that can now be discarded. The present-day collective psychic state is said to

transcend this mythical thought pattern, which has now become obsolete, corresponding to the psychic and cultural needs of a past era.⁵⁸ Any practitioner who dares to affirm the reality of devils comes across as an animist at best or, at worst, a slave to medieval superstitions and magic. At the same time, whether Christian doctrine is true or not, Jungian theory does not fail to point out the psychic risks that arise when Satan is cut out of the Western animistic world view as an archetypal image having the capability to symbolize the dark side of the collective psyche. Without Satan, the psychic energy of this archetype of the dark side of the self is said to invade the individual, who may be plunged into negative hubris. One may question whether the massive collective emergence of satanic elements in Western society is a sign of the return of the repressed.

In the face of this double denial of the divine and the ontological reality of evil and its manifestations in the form of devils and evil spirits, altered states of awareness described in Eastern traditions of spiritual contemplation (Wilber 2007) parallel those proposed both by Christian tradition, on the one hand, and by shamanic practices, on the other. In some of these heightened states, awareness ceases to be limited by the self, and the individual can then consent to being overcome or inhabited by a oneness that is luminous, benevolent, absolutely good, and just. This nondual experience, in its verticality, goes beyond that which is seen as the horizontality of the *coincidentia oppositorum* in which good and evil are placed in juxtaposition without ever giving way to a transcendent third term. These mystical experiences, as I have had occasion to stress earlier, do not arise from a process of conjecture but operate beyond the reach of the techniques used, starting with the incarnation of the individual and as a grace bestowed. It is therefore, to a certain extent, the divine spirit descending into the manifest world and into the subject's body. Far from a case of the addict fleeing from the harsh realities and sufferings of this world below, or a "mysticism that arranges the subject's departure from his own body," it is rather "a mysticism of divine indwelling in the suffering body of the witness" (Marguerat 2012, 486).

In this context, the experience of the divine is not a response to a theoretical, intellectual, or abstract postulate, nor is it an attempt to prove a metaphysical truth; it is, rather, an offer to live it. If we postulate the existence of a wholly good God without the slightest trace of evil, it follows that each and every individual has the chance to experiment and verify its validity by adopting a methodology and precise conditions, among which, by necessity, must be sincerity of heart. In this place, in the presence of the deity, struggles and conflicts die down and even disappear altogether. The fact remains, however, that although this immersion in the "kingdom of heaven" requires welcoming and submission on the part of the individual invited to forget him- or herself and demands a certain degree of effort, even suffering, it is not a "thing" to be obtained or a goal to be achieved but a free gift of divine grace.

This grace proves to be perceptible and tangible, entering the individuals' body as a gratuitous and merciful inflow.

CONCLUSION

In the face of everyday spiritualism disguised as materialism, Amazonian shamanism has the potential to make a significant contribution to facilitate a much-needed return to the body and to the earth—in a word, to incarnation. The West is thus called upon to renounce its own modern magical thought and to consent instead, through pragmatism and the practical wisdom of ancestral traditions, to a true re-enchantment of the world that is neither factitious nor dangerous, as John Paul II, states.⁵⁹ In the context of the end of an era and of the human age,⁶⁰ this desacralization can result in two “heresies” which are a mirror image of one another, angelism (removal from the body) or animalism (profanation of the idolized body).⁶¹ Both give way to spiritual infestations while denying the reality of spirits and the possibility of their intervention in human life. Amazonian shamanism reminds us of that reality and offers to provide treatment of this parasitism to rid oneself of them and to bring the sacred back into the core of matter and the manifest world. Individuation in the Jungian sense shows a lack in this regard, arising from its denial of the reality of spirits, which it reduces to mere symbols of the psyche, even if collective. The expertise of the shamans in the controlled inducement of altered states of awareness, within the constraints of just and established ritual practice, can equally facilitate the process of individuation by opening the way to mystical and transcendental experiences. This ritual opening broadens the concept of the environment to include the otherworld in its psychic and spiritual dimensions by, once again, forging the links of vertical integration with our ancestors and horizontal integration with our contemporaries.

The two earlier foundation myths of Aries-justice followed by Pisces-love give way to the tentative emergence of the new foundation myth of Aquarius-freedom, destined to absorb and thereby replace these earlier myths in a coherent manner. The body (incarnation) and the word (logos) are called upon to fertilize and explain one another, particularly within a ritual (liturgy), where the Word incarnate announces the coming of the Spirit, which is the source and breath of freedom.

True individuation, which allows itself to be inspired, reintroduces the dimension of the mystery of grace to the heart of the human being so that it can “lay itself open to something greater than itself,”⁶² leading to a humbled and active fellow feeling with differentiated nonhumans and humans.⁶³ This can greatly benefit from the contributions of shamanism to save us from the daunting choice between becoming either mad or sorcerers by delivering us to freedom.

NOTES

1. In the context of the tribally based Jewish world, this thought pattern gives rise to the argument put forward by the High Priest, Caiaphas, when he demands the death penalty for Jesus: “It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not” (John 11: 50).
2. Once again, this is seen in the Old Testament, where the Jewish tribes worship a god of justice, even a god of law enforcement or a god of vengeance.
3. Describing the Candoshi, Alexandre Surrallés (2013, 129) gives the following explanation of “thinking with their hearts”: “The Candoshi have the ability to think/love the strategy of an act of war because, when they prepare an attack on an enemy, they do so in terms of vengeance, and ‘to love’ means ‘to avenge the loved one unceasingly.’”
4. I have mentioned elsewhere the urge for liberation of and through the spoken word as a means of overcoming the collective depression prevailing on our “Sad Planet.” Several studies have confirmed this (e.g., Pepper and Cunningham 2004) by demonstrating that in non-Western cultures verbalization therapies produce excellent results (see Mabit and González Mariscal 2013).
5. Or “catholic” in the etymological sense of spatial and temporal plenitude, of cosmic universality, in which the term “other” includes not only other human beings but every element of creation.
6. Instances include the U.S. Embassy hostage crisis in Iran in 1979 and, more recently and more eloquently, Israel’s extraordinary mobilization to secure the release of a single soldier, Gilad Shalit, held captive since 2006.
7. For excusable misdeeds, an apology is sufficient.
8. When two women appeal to Solomon, each claiming the baby as her own, he recognizes which of them is the child’s true mother because she is moved by compassion, or, in the words of the King James Bible, “for her bowels yearned upon her son” (1 Kings 3:26). The Hebrew word here translated as “bowels” is *rachamim*, a form of the word *rechem*, whose literal meaning is “womb, uterus.” The plural form seen here is the so-called plural of plenitude, signifying a mother’s feeling of tenderness, pity, or mercy toward her child. The same word is used elsewhere to designate the entrails of Yahweh, the entrails of the Lord, the very source of all mercy.
9. Harmine, the active principle in *Banisteriopsis caapi*, the plant better known under the name of ayahuasca, was initially named telepathine when it was first isolated in the laboratory, until scientists realized that it is in fact the same active principle already known from *Peganum harmala*, or Syrian rue, a plant occurring in the Mediterranean.
10. One example in the Amazon region is the sprite with one leg shorter than the other, known by the Quechua name Chullachaki (literally, “unequal foot”). The sprite plays tricks on human beings, like the Dahu of rural areas in France. The sirens of the Amazon sing as seductively as their African sisters or as the ones whom Ulysses had to deal with in the *Odyssey*.
11. Thus, for example, the anthropologist Jean-Loup Amselle criticizes the use of ayahuasca and speaks mockingly of “shamanic faith” while loudly proclaiming his own “atheistic faith” and boasting that he never once took part in a session of that kind during his four months of field research in the area (spread out over a four-year period) (Amselle 2013). This is an echo of the senior ecclesiastics who mocked Galileo’s Copernican model of the solar system and who, when urged to observe the planets for themselves, declined his invitation to put their eyes to his telescope.
12. The energy body has been dismissed as nonexistent (and is still dismissed by conventional medicine), but it can be visualized and measured by the Kirlian method or by Konstantin Korotkov’s

bioelectro-photography. The extraordinary quantity of data on paranormal phenomena is simply disregarded by most members of the scientific community who, not knowing how to handle it, arbitrarily put it aside.

13. DMT (dimethyltryptamine) is one such substance. It is found both in the ayahuasca beverage and in the blood and cephalorachidian liquid of mammals, secreted by the pineal gland, known in Eastern traditions as “the third eye.”
14. This toxicological nonsense of “intrinsic toxicity” did not prevent the toxicologist Laurent Rivier, for example, from saying, in the course of a presentation on the hallucinogenic plants of the Amazon region, that “certain among the so-called depurative plants are known to be highly toxic” (Rivier 2002).
15. This is what we seek to demonstrate at the Takiwasi Center when treating drug users from all cultural backgrounds, drawing on resources from traditional Amazonian medicine, and when dealing with a pathology that has defeated Western medical practice (see Giove 2002; Mabit 2007).
16. In particular in the case of degenerative diseases, autoimmune diseases, and mental health issues such as drug addiction (see Mabit 2012).
17. Significantly, anthropology has recourse to a subterfuge of the same kind when it draws a distinction between an “emic” approach (from the Indians’ viewpoint) and an “etic” approach (a neutral description of the facts as observed by the anthropologist), thus dodging the question of the real existence of the nonhuman independently of the human. Under the “emic” approach, the interpretation of the Natives is presented (spirits exist objectively) while the anthropologist refrains from giving an opinion or evaluation of the truth of that interpretation, which is held to be “symbolic.” Under the “etic” approach, the anthropologist describes the outward observable facts, lacking the ability or the will to verify the dimension of the phenomena that is not directly observable. This methodology introduces a blind spot, an unexplored and unverified area, convenient for rationalist thought, which thus justifies its refusal to reconsider its conceptual framework and consequently permits itself to engage in interpretation without confronting reality.
18. The discovery of this kind of relationship between humans and nonhumans tends to shift the borders between nature and culture as proposed by Lévi-Strauss, while giving rise to new philosophical propositions within the field of anthropology, such as that of Philippe Descola (2005) and, above all, the “perspectivism” of the Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2009), who goes so far as to propose, by adopting the viewpoint of the shamans, a conception of the world in which the humans see animals as humans while the animals see humans as animals. This relationship has been replicated by David Dupuis in the context of the treatment for drug addiction offered at Takiwasi (see Dupuis 2009).
19. There is a remarkable physiological similarity between the sexual organs of this aquatic mammal and those of human beings.
20. My wife, who is a medical doctor, was consulted in the case of a child from the town of Tarapoto who had undergone an experience of this kind.
21. Literally, “underwater man.”
22. These facts were related to me by elderly healers who had been personally acquainted with such cases, although they had not themselves attained the same level. I also heard a similar account in Gabon in 2001.
23. This discretion or lack of a direct invocation or words addressed to the deity has led some observers to believe that the pantheon of many early peoples was limited to these mediators whom they deified, a practice classified as animism or, in a restrictive religious view, idolatry.

But the Amajun, for instance, practice this form of “animism” while according recognition to a higher being, a creator named Arutam. This “primitive monotheism” is observed worldwide, even though in many cases it has subsequently changed into polytheism.

24. According to Michel Mouret (1990, 37), “The human body fulfils a psychic function of integration with the world order. The abdomen corresponds to symbolic integration with the vital forces, the thorax to that with the rational forces, the face to that with the spiritual forces, and the cranium to that with the archetypes contained in the very shapes observed in the world.”
25. The analogy principle is already found in the Wisdom of Solomon, which asserts that the visible realities enable the observer to discover the invisible realities: “For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen” (Wisdom 13: 5).
26. See also Revelation 1: 8: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”
27. The energy centers correspond to the famous chakras of the energy body in Eastern traditions.
28. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were also the beginning of something new, as the philosophy of Descartes shows, besides inaugurating the scientific revolution. The world was entering a new era, as though the world spirit had vanished, and the ancient world ontologies had foundered. Modernity was emptying the world of magic. Modern man, despite his wealth and his vast culture, began to suffer from a spiritual emptiness. Modernity focuses only on economic and political problems (see esp. Shayegan 2001 and Apfel-Marglin 2011 on these issues).
29. Who are the “inspirers” behind the proliferation of the rituals of spiritism, occultism, and outright satanism?
30. The concept of dissociation is seen in the diagnostic classifications of borderline, bipolarity, psychosis, and schizophrenia.
31. This has been verified by our practical experience over the course of three decades.
32. “The awareness of continuity between the subtle world of the spirits and their incarnation in living beings constitutes the basis of the shamans’ knowledge . . . Modern materialism fails to grasp the reality of the subtle world, and that is the reason why it has fallen victim to it” (Daniélou 1992, 26, 29).
33. For the sake of simplicity, I shall here use this term alone, in accordance with Church practice on the subject, although there are several degrees of differentiation and gravity among the forms of parasitism on the part of malefic entities such as obsession, oppression, and possession.
34. This is in conflict, however, with the Gospels and the Magisterium.
35. This is illustrated by the saying, “If you speak to God, you may well be a holy man, but if he gives you an answer, you are surely a madman.”
36. I might add that spiritual infestations affect mental health and, conversely, psycho-affective disorders provide a doorway by which such infestations can enter. In consequence, it is altogether theoretical and illusory to split up these disturbances, assigning them to mutually exclusive categories. One may ask to what extent this medical *schize*, projected onto infestation patients, may contribute to the proliferation of schizophrenia diagnoses. It should be mentioned, however, that the DSM-IV recognizes the existence of “unspecified dissociative disturbances” such as Dissociative Trance Disorder (DTD), defined as the replacement of the subject’s personal identity by a new identity that is attributed to the influence of a spirit, a divine entity, or a deceased ancestor, often in association with episodes of amnesia. In Asia, it is known by a variety of names: in Indonesia, as *amok*, a term designating a state of trance marked by aggressive outbursts; in Malaysia, as *latab*; among the Inuit, as *pibloktog*; and in India, simply by the English word *possession* (see Canonne 2013).

37. For example, a physical symptom may be found to have a psychological origin, a mental pathology may have a spiritual cause, a physical malady may involve psychological and/or spiritual causality, and so on. Thus, a young girl who, for several years, has been undergoing treatment for rectal bleeding discovers that her chronic condition is connected to the activity of a grandmother who is an abortionist, or a man obsessed with thoughts of death finds a link with spiritist games that he played as a teenager, which he had forgotten or believed to be innocent.
38. The idea that a person's innocence will automatically afford him protection is a widespread error nowadays, not least as the outcome of the New Age doctrine that suggests that good intentions and strength of character are all that is needed. However, we have known for a long time that the road to hell is paved with good intentions, just as we know that a child who unwittingly drinks poison or who finds a hand grenade lying around and pulls out the pin enjoys no immunity from the consequences of his action.
39. For instance, at "raves" where drugs, chaotic sexuality, distorted sounds, and satanic symbols combine to leave the individual vulnerable.
40. Any attempt to identify this ideally non-infested human being, meaning one who is perfectly free from any deterministic influence external to his human nature, unavoidably begs the question of how this "human nature" is to be defined.
41. "With Kroeber, Linton and La Barre I assert, therefore, that the shaman is psychologically ill" (Devereux 1976, 16).
42. I have known the case of a student who in his free time was employed as a night watchman in a Peruvian university, and who became infested by the spirit of a deceased child. During the period of terrorism in Peru, a family that included a young girl had been held captive and subsequently murdered in the place where he spent each night.
43. A classic explanation which considers that the subject, having established a connection between amorousness and violence, and not having developed any other mode of amorous expression, reproduces the sole mechanism known to him for expressing his feelings.
44. One of my patients, an adult male, presented recurring obsessions with sexual abuse of his sister. The obsessions, which had begun at a young age, caused him great distress and he resisted them strongly. Conventional psychotherapy had produced no effect. The therapeutic process incorporating Amazonian practices brought to light an incestuous family context, which was resolved by a spiritual liberation approach. It emerged that a "spirit of incest" had been infesting the family over a period of several generations.
45. "Since Thomas Aquinas, mysticism has been described as *cognito affectiva seu experimentalis* (affective or experiential knowledge) of God. This knowledge of the deity is neither intellectual nor speculative, but experiential. A mystic experience is an immediate experience of divine transcendence" (Marguerat 2012: 478).
46. The theory of "agential realism" is relevant in this context. Developed by Karen Barad, a physicist, the theory is discussed by Frédérique Apffel-Marglin (2011, 55–63).
47. It should be recalled that the shamans' term for psychoactive plants is "master plants" on account of this teaching function, and that ayahuasca has been awarded the title "master of masters."
48. It is interesting at this point to establish a connection with the concept of the "structure of sin," boldly proposed by John Paul II, which "draws together contributions from (spiritual) history and sociology, on the one hand, and, on the other, social ethics," since "demonic action cannot be unaware that it also operates on the collective level and over the long term" (Ide 2011).

49. Especially in Brazil with the churches of São Daime, União do Vegetal, Barquinha, and others, which now have numerous offshoots in the northern hemisphere, including Japan, and in Australia.
50. Richard Noll (1997) rebukes Jung for believing himself to be the “Aryan Christ”: “It is in the spirit community that most meet Jung, and there are those who see in the personal myth that provides the framework for *My Life* a present-day gospel laying the foundations for a new religion,” while Denis Biju-Duval (2001) writes that “since the 1950s, Jung has been unafraid to set himself up as the prophet of the Age of Aquarius . . . That explains how easily Jung is made use of nowadays by the New Age movement.”
51. Biju-Duval (2001, 156) cites Jung on the epistemological limits necessary to science, and adds, “While it undoubtedly has access to the mental image of God in man, it can have nothing to say about God in himself, about God as a hypostasis outside the mind.”
52. Daniel Marguerat, an academic at the University of Lausanne, uses the term “the democratization of mysticism” to convey the idea that, “in Paul, these formulae of indwelling are not restricted to an elite of charismatic performers but characterize the condition of every believer” (Marguerat 2012, 490–91).
53. For the writing of this section, I am deeply indebted to the ideas put forward by my friend, the psychologist Camilo Bautista Barrionuevo Durán, both in private conversation and in his master’s thesis (2012).
54. “Some theologians use the expression ‘non-person,’ which may have given rise to a certain misunderstanding, enabling the notion to gain ground that the devil is *something*, not *someone*, that he is no more than an abstraction corresponding to something like the extinction of the self or that Evil, unlike the way in which it is usually represented, is not *something* but *nothing*. It is not an evil being, which is the Manichaean view: that would be a contradiction in terms, since being is good, inasmuch as it is being. Evil is the lack of being. It cannot be spoken of except in imagery and metaphor” (Laurentin 1995, 94).
55. “How was it possible, how did it happen? This remains obscure. Evil is not logical. Only God and good are logical, are light. Evil remains mysterious” (Benedict XVI 2008, n.p.).
56. “According to Sacred Scripture, particularly the New Testament, the dominion and influence of Satan and other evil spirits extend worldwide” (John Paul II 1986, n.p.).
57. Father René Chenesseau (2007), an experienced exorcist, stigmatizes equally those who see devils everywhere and those who see them nowhere, while admitting that every case needs investigating.
58. Even an André Gide, however, is not deceived: the devil, he says, “knows he has no better hiding place than behind such rational explanations, which relegate him to the plane of the gratuitous hypothesis. Satan, or the Gratuitous Hypothesis: probably the alias he prefers” (Gide [1927] 1959, 466).
59. John Paul II has said that, in the human dimension of the mystery of the Redemption, man finds again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity . . . [Man] becomes “newly expressed” and, in a way, is newly created. He is newly created! . . . The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly—and not just in accordance with immediate, partial, often superficial, and even illusory standards and measures of his being—must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death, draw near to Christ. He must, so to speak, enter into him with all his own self, he must “appropriate” and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself. If this profound process takes place within him, he then bears fruit not only of adoration of God but also of deep wonder at himself. (John Paul II 1979, n.p.)

60. According to the Shivaist tradition of cycles governing the evolution of the world, the close of the present cycle of humanity is described as the twilight of the Kali Yugā (the age of Kali or the Iron Age), a period of conflicts, wars, genocide, malpractice, aberrant philosophies and social systems, and malignant developments of knowledge falling into irresponsible hands. Races and castes become mixed. Everything tends to be leveled out, and such a leveling in every field is the prelude to death. According to the Lingā Purānā, “The men of the Kali Yugā are governed by the lowest instincts. They prefer to choose false ideas. They do not hesitate to persecute the wise” (cited in Daniélou 1985, 211–12, who further presents a compilation of this tradition). On these points, see also Shayegan (2001).
61. On the three temptations of Jesus, Hadjadj comments, To state the case briefly and thus, for the moment, oversimplifying, the issue here is flesh and Spirit. The bread is flesh without Spirit. The angels are Spirit without flesh. The kingdoms of this world are flesh virtualised by a worldly spirit, combining to produce an alluring contradiction: prayer as spectacle, faith as entertainment. (Hadjadj 2009, 46)
62. Fabrice Hadjadj restates the necessity of this tearing apart:

Whoever elevates self-mastery to the rank of the supreme moral imperative falls into “the greatest of all vices”: lacking all knowledge of that love which takes us out of ourselves and makes us weep “despite ourselves,” he rejects the morality of mercy (Hadjadj 2009, 216).

He further comments,

Not having the last word, allowing oneself to be torn apart by transcendence, to be drawn out of one’s narrow clarity into a blinding light—that is the meaning of the first commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” . . . Leaving idolatry behind involves leaving pride behind and, consequently, a departure for which the initiative is not our own: an act of grace, the flash of a revelation (2009, 265, 269).

63. I mean that they differentiate, given that devils and angels are both nonhuman but the former, unlike the latter, lead to nondifferentiation.

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