

## The cry of Maria

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### Abstract

The environmental disaster that occurred in Mariana (MG) which produced a gigantic mudslide of mining waste can be seen as an expression of the *putrefactio* (putrefaction) which exists with relation to the ethics and values in the Brazilian culture. The accident happened in a city which has a female name demonstrating the repressed and ignored aspects within the Brazilian soul, which are represented in the form of mud. This article analyzes the event and proposes an invitation for society to use this mud to shape a new consciousness. Maria cannot be ignored. We must rediscover our identity and our destiny through the study of our history, our mythology, in the confrontation with the shadow and in the contact with our collective unconscious, and with the help of the *anima*.

### Descriptors

soul, femininity, unconscious, environment, ethics.

### Conflicts of Interest:

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## O clamor de Maria

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### Resumo

O desastre ambiental do vazamento de lama com rejeitos de mineração ocorrido em Mariana (MG) pode ser visto como expressão da *putrefactio* (putrefação) existente em relação à ética e aos valores do povo brasileiro. O acidente aconteceu em uma cidade com um nome feminino, na qual aspectos repressados e ignorados da alma brasileira irromperam em forma de lama. Este artigo analisa o acontecimento e propõe um convite para que a sociedade utilize o barro a fim de dar forma a uma nova consciência. Maria não pode ser ignorada. Por meio do estudo de nossa história, nossa mitologia, no confronto com a sombra, no contato com nosso inconsciente coletivo, com o auxílio da *anima*, tem-se a chance da redescoberta de nossa identidade e de nosso destino.

### Descritores

alma, feminilidade, inconsciente, ambiente, ética.

## El clamor de Maria

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### Resumen

El desastre ambiental producido por una avalancha de lodo conteniendo residuos mineros acontecido en Mariana (MG) puede ser visto como una expresión de la *putrefactio* (putrefacción) existente en relación a la ética y a los valores del pueblo brasileño. El accidente ocurrió en una ciudad con nombre de mujer, en la que aspectos reprimidos e ignorados del alma brasileña estallaron en forma de lodo. Este artículo analiza este acontecimiento y hace una invitación a la sociedad a usar el lodo para dar forma a una nueva conciencia. María no puede ser ignorada. A través del estudio de nuestra historia, nuestra mitología, en la confrontación con la sombra, en el contacto con nuestro inconsciente colectivo, con la ayuda del *anima*, existe la posibilidad de que redescubramos nuestra identidad y nuestro destino.

### Descriptorios

alma, feminidad, inconciente, ambiente, ética.

## Introduction

On November 5, 2015, occurred what is considered the worst environmental disaster in Brazil and the world's largest accident of dams: the disruption of the *Fundão* dam in the city of Mariana (Minas Gerais state), which made the Bento Rodrigues district get drowned in a sea of mud and waste from the mines, and also affected the districts of Águas Claras, Ponte do Gama, Paracatu and Pedras. Full mud tailings dyed the waters of Rio Doce (River Doce), reaching the ocean, the city of Barra Longa and over more than 40 municipalities in eastern Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo states. This accident left one person missing and 18 dead, causing the destruction of fauna, flora, villas, and of the dreams and tranquility of the inhabitants of the place.

Studies consider the possibility of a new rupture of the dams that are still standing and the responsible mining company says is working to strengthen the remaining reservoirs.

These accidents reminded us of the “mud tsunami” (Marques, 2016) that we have analyzed in relation to *putrefactio* (putrefaction), the encounter with the shadow, existing on the ethics of the Brazilian people. Powerless, we witnessed the results and news of investigations about corruption in our country. Executives, owners and contractors get arrested. The Brazilian company Petrobras was sucked and its shares plummeted. There are corrupts and corrupting people, promiscuity between politicians and businessmen, and inflation dominates the scene. We are living a moment of crisis, a social and economic depression, with obvious effects on the areas of education and health. People are dying without hospital assistance and we are embarrassed to witness the inhuman queues and poor conditions of hospitals and service centers. The population suffers the occurrence of microcephaly in areas as a result of the proliferation of Zika virus.

Anyway, we are plagued by a sea of mud with deadly waste. Narcissus cannot see anymore his face reflected in the waters because they are muddy. Thus, we need to make the abolition of egomania. We can no longer dissolve ourselves in the waters as a result of our isolation and our fascination with ourselves. We need to commit ourselves to humanity, solidarity, dignity, elegance and ethics. But not with utilitarianism, greed, speculation, trickery, speculation; or with the mentality of colonized people, with the “fix”, or with the cleverness in its negative sense.

### The feminine aspects of the individual and collective soul

The mud explosion happened in Mariana. In Mary the mud blew. What would the meaning of all this be?

We can venture some thoughts and for that we turn to aspects of the feminine of our individual and collective soul. James Hillman (1984) in his book "The Myth of Analysis" points out that we will only get ourselves rid of repression and neurosis when we successfully resolve the repudiation of femininity. What aspects of the feminine erupted in the form of mud?

The *anima* is the archetype of life, as Jung puts it, and plays an important role in the human unconscious. Everything that is touched by it becomes numinous, dangerous, magical. It is therefore a powerful construct that claims to be considered. The instinctual forces, if not taken into account, revolt when their fascinating aspect is neglected. It is also representative of what man cannot handle and of the collective unconscious.

Jung (2000) also states that in a state of possession the *anima* loses its charm and values, getting mediocre, also losing the connection with the unconscious. "Turned out, the anima is fickle, excessive, capricious, uncontrolled, emotional and sometimes demonically intuitive, unkind, evil, lying, witch and mystical" (p 129; OC IX/1: 223). It has a considerable possessive power, and provokes fascination. As we can see, the unconscious has a feminine quality (Jung, 2000, p. 175; OC IX/1: 294).

Let us remember that the function of the archetype is to offset the one-sidednesses of consciousness. Then, the integration of the shadow may cause a change in personality.

The integrated shadow, serving as a resource for us to illuminate our collective consciousness in the alchemical *nigredo*, the *putrefactio*, is a prerequisite for the revival. Clay, the primordial material from which our Western culture reveals that man was created, also has its dark side when we attribute it to the degradation, process in which we face the corruption and decay, but a process that can also be transformed into a succession of changes, into a more numinous evolution, which seeks for new ways, for new steps toward health.

We are engaged in a mud that can either form enlightened individuals, caring citizens, ethical people and governments, or destroy us through corruption, negative cleverness, unemployment, hunger, crime, vulgarization of the soul and shame.

In this case, we could reflect how the explosion of mud would help us build a better Brazil. The mud used as a material to form again; the *nigredo* transmuted to reach the *albedo*, or purification.

The mud invaded the waters of the Rio Doce, which flowed into the ocean. We have the opportunity to unite the opposites for the development of our consciousness.

As Jung says (1990, p. 28; OC XII: 18), “the univocal meaning is a sign of weakness... only the paradoxical is able to cover the plenitude of life. The univocal and no contradiction are unilateral and therefore do not contribute to express the unreachable”.

Mud, the shadow flooding the district and mixing with the river water and the ocean. How does that touch our soul? What is the meaning of this paradox? If we do not accept the experience of the opposites, how can we experience totality? Let us remember that the *Self* is constituted by the union of opposites and that it is both conflict and unity. What is the fate that our cultural *Self* can point out for us to get out of this *nigredo* situation?

Here we highlight the wounded feminine that violently erupts, with mud expressing its anger. The anger against corruption and impunity, fear of unemployment, of hunger and of abandonment. Hence, the cry of Mary. All this invites us to look at our roots that, as a result of disrespect, were sunk into the unconscious. We should also review our history and our culture to better understand what is happening with the mangled soul of Brazil. We can rediscover our identity and our destiny through the study of our mythology, in the confrontation with the shadow, and in contact with our collective unconscious, represented by the *anima* (Briza, 2006).

Disappointment, bitterness, anger, rejection, distortion, moods, depression, inflation, and irresponsibility: Mariana, the *anima*, manifested itself in the most hostile manner. We need to reinforce it, as a mediator of the unknown. Otherwise, we will suffer disasters. No wonder that a number of natural catastrophes have names of women. For example: Linda, Patricia and Katrina hurricanes. Based on an article published on the BBC Brazil site (2015), by researchers at the University of Illinois, hurricanes with female names kill more people than those with male names because they are often taken less seriously and, as a result, there is less preparation to face them. And again, a study published by the scientific journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2014) stated that while each male name hurricane causes, on average, 15 deaths, female name ones can reach up to 42 deaths.

In many ways, we notice that the feminine side, the *anima*, must be taken seriously. We must rescue her through the resurrection, from what will come after the catastrophe, from the transformation of *nigredo* in *albedo*, from the

purification and union of all colors. We must allow mud to give shape to a new consciousness.

Let us remember that myths speak out of our national character, our origin and survival.

### The Saint of muddy waters and other feminine manifestations

We can mention here Our Lady, who emerged in Porto Iguaçu on July 17, 1717, when the frontiersmen got into the interior in search of gold and precious stones.

Fishermen João Alves, Domingos and Felipe were very discouraged because they were not able to fish for their livelihood. João took a headless saint, covered by mud and moss, that had curled up on the net. Soon after, a head came. That was how Our Lady Aparecida of the muddy waters of the Paraíba river emerged (Penna, 2009).

When morning came, the nets got filled with fish. Plenty came. Silvana, João's mother, stuck the head in the body of the saint with beeswax and, in 1946, the two pieces were put together with a pin of gold, emerging the myth of Aparecida. She brought the compassion, the depth, the life of the unconscious and the mercy that was lacking in the psyche of the people.

Rescuing the body and head and fitting them also symbolizes our heroic effort for the individuation process. It also corrects the mutilated feminine, which can thus give life to love and solidarity. Then, the Aparecida found covered with moss and mud, represents this feminine principle (Mary) that brings energy and consistency to our country.

If we consider the State as "head", perhaps we might look at the Mariana disaster as an opportunity to review our values, incorporating the positive side of the feminine and establishing a new consciousness, of new ethical standards, both individual and collective (a fight against corruption and the "fix"). Then, Aparecida will take forward the headless mule in all sectors.

Considering the people as a body, we can see how this principle can also help us reach the union of these two elements.

The emergence of Aparecida brought fertility and wealth. In this way we could enrich our nation with the regeneration of an ancient wound. In our imagination, among others maimed figures, we have the headless mule, the father's wife, which can be interpreted as the spayed and castrating *anima* of our colonizers, also representing the lack of awareness, the blindness, the lack of ethical values of those who disembarked and colonized our land. They lost their heads and were maddened by the abuse of power and by the blind greed. This continues today. The current Pope Francis (2016, p.117) launched a book entitled "The name of God is mercy", in which states that "corruption is the sin which, instead of being recognized as such and of

having made us more humble, became a system [...], a way of life". Wicked life.

From the African branch of the Brazilian colonization emerged the figure of Nanã, the mother of the *orixás*, linked to life and death, to health, to motherhood and to fertility. The Lady of swamps, of rain, of marsh, and mud.

It was she who gave *Oxalá* the mud from the bottom of the pond where he lived, from which her husband shaped the man who, with the breath of *Olorun*, walked.

This *orixá* assists the difficult transitions in life and can produce both wealth and poverty. Its attribute is the positive, receptive and liberating energy, that allows forgetting the past, for us to direct ourselves to the future with awareness and clarity. Sometimes it is dangerous and vengeful; sometimes it is sweet and accommodating. Her land turns into mud, from which we are born and die. It is the "Great Mother", from whom everything is born and to whom everything returns. Owner of the wisdom and righteousness that comes from nature, acts strictly, providing safety, but not accepting betrayal. In the religious syncretism, it is represented by Saint Anne, mother of Mary. Again, we see here the power of mud, as destruction, but also as a possibility of giving rise to a new form, a regeneration, through the sacrifice that will provide a transformation and integration from the primitive, chaotic, unconscious world, to the illumination of consciousness.

According to the transcript of sacred texts, the angel Gabriel announced to Mary of Nazareth that she would be mother to God's son (Alvarez, 2015). She was chosen, she did not choose, but she accepted the mission. She stood next to Christ during the crucifixion and, despite her broken heart, understood the significance of that sacrifice without any reluctance. That is her greatness and also her sacrifice: renunciation and immolated soul. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, she did not seek for safety and refuge at her home in Galilee, but remained among the apostles and the women of her community. The first pillars of their churches were built. It is estimated that she died at around 59 and tradition maintains that she went to Ephesus accompanied by the apostle John, where she died in a stone house. Only many years after her death and assumption, she reappeared being recognized as Our Lady or Mother of God. Many miracles were attributed to her.

### Final words

Death, mud, bleakness, sacrifice, faith, miracle, mystery, despair, hope, rebirth, and life: Mariana mud invites us to rethink Brazil with the loving and compassionate gaze of Mary.

This gaze requires a new attitude from us. We cannot alienate ourselves from the individual and collective soul. In a creative way, we must face the irrational, the shadow, transforming the libido of unconsciousness and inconsequence in a renewal of consciousness, respect, and ethics.

Aparecida and Nanã suggest us that to be fertile, we need to join the parts of our individual and collective body, in a work of transformation of the soul and of respect for the feminine, for the *anima*, phenomenon of life that experiences the mystery and makes the connection to the *Self*.

Through reflection and insight, we can decide what we will become from now on, respecting our roots and enhancing our values. Our act of choice goes beyond the scientific thinking and is also born from intuition, feeling, and experience.

The cry of Mary is an invitation to the transformation of *nigredo* in *albedo*, in a sacred *opus* (work), respecting the paradoxes, causing the necessary changes toward a healthier and more prosperous nation, in an attempt of *coniunctio*, union.

May we reap from mud the lotus flower, the renaissance flower, the flower of energy, fertility, clarity, elegance, purity, wholeness and grace.

May we get in touch with the collective unconscious, searching in the released nets an image of faith in the feminine pole and a meeting of its needs. May we not be neglectful and recognize Mary.

Hail Mary!

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