

intuitive or depicted with symbols. St. Francis and Mother Teresa, for example, are symbols on which we can reflect and meditate in order to really see through and hold the energy of humility. Each definition distorts. Only he who guesses it, going into these or other symbols (searching his own symbols on which to reflect), can capture its fragrance, colour and energy.

Piermaria Bonacina

ROBERTO ASSAGIOLI AS A MAN

As many of us know, the “at the Source group”, which I’m part of, has been working for some years in organizing, classifying, digitizing the scattered set of Assagioli’s writings, the autographic ones above all, which lied in the Psychosynthesis Institute’s basements.

The purpose was to let it be within reach for everybody. This demanding and frustrating job, as for its technique and organizing problems, got up to an affair which stirred up all of us.

We had the opportunity to get inside the great work of Roberto Assagioli, first on his Conscience.

By handling, reading, trying to interpret and to understand the characters of the small sheets of paper, where he used to write his thoughts, we can perceive a living, intimate presence.

A presence which sets up an inner dialogue with our Conscience, more and more increased and strengthened. A Conscience which is getting more and more involved in new comprehensions and intuitions.

His thoughts, his enlivening writing, the inner smile, the sympathy, his childish, authentic, mystical open-heart, the deep, joyful, hopeful research, his tension towards soul service, his humble compassion, the subtle fire, the inclusive attitude, his esteem for the work of others, the interdependence and brotherhood, his large, eclectic deep knowledge, his planetary and open wide acquaintance, his vision, personality and soul, the loving purpose of supporting the human fulfilment, his own life, which could testify he had some hard experiences and painful

moments, the simplicity, the empathy and loving contact in all senses, his learning ability in every occasion in order to train new different qualities, the respect for the other, the continuous inner work, where the acquaintance comes out from the inside experience, the meditation, the reflection, the insight and thanks to the direct contact with the inner realities, turning into a concrete action.

Everything gradually becomes alive inside ourselves, it directly evokes our soul’s qualities.

It doesn’t belong to Assagioli the presumption of some spiritualists, nor the cold knowledge of the occultists, he doesn’t care for the detachment from the events of the “poor ignorant men “, who need to be enlightened by an advanced soul.

He doesn’t undertake the mission of inculcating a new, complicated, obscure knowledge, which can be transmitted as an absolute Truth and which can sometimes burden with mental overtones inside Consciences weakened by life obstacles. They are eagerly looking for any solution....

Assagioli: our Friend, our Brother, our Father, our Teacher

Assagioli is a Man.

Thank you, Roberto !

As a group, we are trying to organize some meetings in order to diffuse this experience to other people

Luce Ramorino

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SO THAT ULYSSES CAN RETURN...

Telemachus was standing and deeply breathing the air coming from the cliffs. His bare feet had sunk in the earth while his eyes were following a small flock of seagulls coming from west and their cautious retreat from the black heaps that were covering the horizon.

In that same moment his every single thought was entirely absorbed by the odd stillness, by the suspension of the present moment that could erase every distance and quieten the waves surrounding the ship of the future and his heart could finally remain almost still, yet simply free to beat.

He dried his face and neck with a slow and delicate movement of his hands while the water vapour from the cliffs were reflecting in the air the last rays of the setting sun that had almost completely disappeared under the heaps which now appeared charcoal gray. The reddish-orange sun was diluting the blackness of the sky.

Thus the red beats of his heart were slightly clearing the dark presentiments, the darkness of the anguish that was bringing him and burying him in other worlds every time he dared to think about the future.

And yet everything was flowing like an underground

river, like a slight earthquake worked by Poseidon that was confused with the shivers on the skin as a result of the air cooling.

In that autumn sunset the needful time and space were suspended in the emptiness over the cliffs and the water vapour made even more immaterial the distance between Telemachus and the horizon, between that young man and the unknown face of his father Ulysses.

The love between a father and a son was the primal feeling of the soul and the centerpiece of the ancient Greek society.

According to Plato's *The Republic* the political evil of the Tyranny was originated due to a reversion toward pre-civil (or pre-paternal) forms of personality.

On the other hand, the whole Hesiod's *Theogony*, as a first systematization of the various mythological traditions, is the story about the relationship between the divine patriarchy (Zeus, Poseidon and Hades) and their children as a way of legitimization. Those can be also subdivided into: favourites (Apollo and Hermes), rejected (Ares, Hephaestus) and attended (Dionysus, also known as Bacchus) regardless of the fact whether they are divine, semi-divine or humans.

It appears as if people have always felt narrowed between their inside world made of archetypes - universal models that can be activated inside of everyone of us and can govern our emotions and our behavior, and the outside world made of stereotypes - expectations of uniformity with external social and cultural models.

As for my simple and personal experience of a father I was impressed by an old image years ago that I now recall.

It is taken from the film *Captain Hook*, in which the actor Robin Williams is an old Peter Pan, fat, clumsy and identical to his missing father who only thinks about work. He has difficulties and it takes him much time to regain the joyful part of himself that keeps him present and relaxed at the same time when he is together with his children. He needs to formulate a happy thought in order not to helplessly fall down on earth and fail but it appears an impossible task for his rusty imagination. He is about to fall down when he unexpectedly finds out his happy thought... "I am a father!!"

One year later I was facing a critical period and a ra-

dical change in my life when one day I witnessed the following scene: my children, two boys at 5 and 7 were duelling with plastic swords and the younger one suddenly stated with an epic tone while looking at me:

"...here it is my sword, I am a knight and you are the King...and if someone tries to take away your crown I will cut their head!" I was definitely left speechless, not just because of the timing and the content adherence to my life crisis but mostly because of my elder son's retort: "of course not, nobody can take away his crown... and guess why? Because we are the crown!"

I used to recall this memory many times both in work relations and friendships, in simple acquaintances and even in front of the lost eyes of a father overcome with the burden of responsibilities which were perceived as immense in comparison to his own capacities. Also in cases of angry, hostile and revengeful teenagers, angry and unsympathetic ones who have withdrawn into narrow-minded and silent self-mutilation. In any case, this memory helped me to keep the I-Oneself path clear and enlightened, the path as the only dimension that enables the humans to transcend the anxiety originated by the contradiction between the inside world of archetypes and the external stereotyped models namely those that belong to the spirit of the age that is nowadays a series of individual and common myths. All of us, more or less consciously, refer to those myths such as the myth of youthfulness, of intelligence, of power, of happiness, and also the myth of maternal love, of madness and psychotherapy, the myth of globalization, of market, of terrorism, of war, of security, the myth of race.

We also know that "if someone is not strong enough to face a crisis and thus reject the ideas-myths that have led them through their life so far, they will not feel the peace but will rather be exposed to their restlessness and the less they understand the more they feel lost."

Homer's works *Odyssey* and *Iliad* inform us about two mythical father figures that partly belong to the historical dimension - Ulysses and Hector.

Ulysses is strictly human, therefore imperfect, ambivalent and even unfair, just like us, he feels divided between an urgent, vital and pre-paternal need and the faith in the future, namely between the desire of adventure and the engagement of return to his family. His real power is his presence rather than his craftiness and heroism, whereas his failure is his absence.

Hector reminds us that the real courage is affording in all seriousness not only the battles but also the feelings and the memories.

In *Iliad*, Book VI, Hector meets his wife Andromache and their baby boy Astyanax. It is clear that some paternal archetypes meet and contradict each other and this is also known as "Hector's act" which is also the title of the wonderful book written by the Jungian psychoanalyst Luigi Zoja .

Luigi Zoja observes: "On the one hand, Hector's unwillingness to wear the suit of armor may show him as a

redundant father, as much similar as the mother. On the other hand, the events tell us that the son searches for other male figures that wear armor equipment. Perhaps the father's contradiction will never be solved and it is the exact reflection of his deep personality: the father must take off his suit of armor in order to be recognized by his son. But first he must put it on. (...) The most best father is Hector, he is complete as well as complex. (...). A paternal specificity is revealed: "he can stay with his son when he wears his suit of armor, namely he can be a father when he is a warrior ." It is clear that to be a Warrior here means to be able to deal with the reality and the difficulties in life, it is an evolutionary stage through which the I-experience is further fortified and therefore it can be transcended.

In fact, the Warrior's power is physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Buddha's origins come from a family of "royal warriors" and he excels at the martial arts which he stops practicing after he has entirely mastered. The Warrior's task is to gain self-affirmation, to become self-confident, brave and respected. These qualities set in contrast to those of the Orphan that forms the Warrior's shadow. The Orphan is the disappointed idealist and the higher his idealization is the more painful his fall is. It is especially expressed during the adolescence when the teenager realizes that his parents are not omnipotent and therefore they cannot preserve him from the vicissitudes of life. However, his disappointment urges on the decision to leave his home, to become a Wayfarer and to experiment, to forever lose the old certainties while passing through the dark night of the soul in order to reach and develop his self-confidence.

The initial transformation from Wayfarer into Warrior, that is nowadays unknown to the most part of the teenagers and young men, who atone for the nonexistence of blessing and promoting fathers but have known benefactor-fathers instead, lavishing their assets, is the stage of transition that enables the access to the archetype of the Martyr.

In fact, during the initial transformation one had to feel the suffering, to bear wounds and frustrations, defeats and future failures while gaining identity and sense of value for oneself and for others.

To become a model through distinguishing oneself from the system of infantile relationships and its referring values, which is first of all the repetitive granting of the mother's breast, is the foremost task for the development of the human being.

The initiation of the Martyr enables the transformation of the Orphan's narcissistic selfishness in order to abandon his infantile desires and to reach a kind of genuine and long-lasting delight. This is the meaning of the Renunciation in Buddhism.

However, without the realization of the Warrior first, it is impossible to access the mystery of the sacrifice intended as *sacrum facere* (to consecrate). And if one previously does not head for the doubt, the risk, the sense of

guilt and expiation, and one's own solitude on the way of the Wayfarer, as Luigi Zoja argues, one will probably remain in the position of the psychic infant that is nowadays widespread and stimulated by wild consumerism. Without the knowledge of the ambivalence between giving and receiving, which is the condition to become moral humans, the young people do not have other models to refer to than themselves and their coevals. They remain suspended in everlasting present and cannot find any cultural trace, in the so called adult world, that can represent the real success such as the realization and the enjoyment of ethic and worthwhile goals in which the individual fulfillment becomes interest and a function of the common good.

Today Hector's act, which appears as elevation, benediction and initiation of the son, as well as expression of the paternal need to shed his life from a juridic, theological and anthropological point of view, has rather been displaced by various aspects of paternalism presented as historical etymology, namely with Piero Gobetti's words – (1924) one of our Founding Fathers of the Republic – as: "a governmental form that gives the power to an absolute sovereign whose favorable measures toward the nation are considered as personal acts of benevolence regardless of the acknowledgment of the nation's rights." The benefactor-sovereign replaces the blessing father, whereas the charisma ceases to represent the inflow of energy that descends from the Self to the personality and transforms the energy into self-sacrifice for the outside world and thus becomes a means for the increase of the self-empowerment.

The current events as well as the events of all ages, often show the grotesque union between the paternalistic aspect and the bloody violation of human and civil rights by the worst tyrants.

If You is not entirely acknowledged by other people there will be no rights, no aspirations and no abilities for the realization of a person who can and will.

What Martin Luther King used to argue in his lectures is nowadays extremely relevant. He used to reassert on every meeting with his confraternity that: "freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

The psychological and symbolical aspects of our consideration clearly show the struggling and assertive will, concerning the matter of human rights and those of the soul, that is essential both in the territory of our personality and society and the world we live in.

Since the instincts, the impulses, the desires and the emotions tend to be expressed and need to be expressed, the ability of expression in an appropriate and constructive way is now of the greatest importance more than ever. One must attempt to directly express oneself, must symbolically act and possibly transmute the combative and aggressive energy.

It is here appropriate to recall the paternal principle as a regulating element, a holder of Logos and spiritual

uprightness, a Warrior and a Martyr that allude to the realization of the Wizard which actually is not the one seen through the eyes of the Orphan (namely as a shaman, a witch, a preparer of magic potions that can heal or make someone die, make them win or lose a war) but is simply ourselves.

The Wizard stops struggling and learning for the empowerment of the self to reach the worldly aims. He does not act selfishly. The initiation of the Wizard makes us discover that the Universe is not static but is a constant performance and everyone is involved in this magic.

Let us now return to the original Unity, to the dissolution of the dualism between I and World. Let us return to the child, before the differentiation of I-Object and after we have completed the mindful task to go through all previous stages.

Thus we can finally approach the natural and universal meaning of our being in the world and into the world and especially for the world and we can overwhelm every kind of separation from our deep, authentic and wonderful human nature.

In conclusion, the pursuit of the father, which is a living matter as well as an old and archetypal one, highlights that if the father becomes more and more abstracted, “either as human being or as principle that enables his son to become a father as well”, there will be a strong and urgent need to find him and to model oneself after one’s father. We like Telemachus, want to know who our real father is, who has chosen us and not simply brought us into being, and as the master Thich Nhat Hanh says: “The son needs the father in order to gain access to his origins and the father needs the son in order to gain access to the future and thus to the infinite.”

So if we are fathers, we must learn how to draw the bow so that Ulysses can return.

Stefano Pelli

WHEN GOING TO HELL DOES NOT FRIGHTEN

Working in Groups on the Divine Comedy

The project of a psychosynthetic reading of the Divine Comedy originated from Roberto Assagioli’s suggestion.

He saw Dante’s poem as an ideal path overcoming one’s limitations and weaknesses, and as an opening to goals of spirituality and eternity.

He recommended the Divine Comedy exercise as a useful stimulus to retrace the steps of one’s life and inner journey, thanks to the universal value of Dante’s path, symbolically representing that of the whole humanity.

Assagioli said that in this work Dante used symbolism with full awareness.

The centre of its symbolic meaning is a comprehensive

picture of a complete psychosynthesis.

The first part - the pilgrimage through Hell - shows the exploration of the lower unconscious.

The second part - the ascent to the Mount of Purgatory - refers to the process of moral purification and of gradual awakening of consciousness through the use of active techniques.

The third part - the rise in the varied heavens of Paradise – paints in an unsurpassed way the stages of superconscious realization, until the final vision of the Universal Spirit, of God, in which Love and Will are merged.

This is the essential meaning, but there is also a wealth of special symbols.

The main theme or leitmotif of the Comedy is that at first there is a descent, and then a double Ascent. (1)

Inspired by this vision of the poem, Assagioli examined the second canto of Hell underlining and highlighting the symbolic elements of the story and deepening its moral and spiritual aspects. (2)

About the exercise on the Divine Comedy, he wrote that it “should be used only with subjects that have a sufficient level of culture and a spiritual aspiration. They are asked to read the poem carefully in the light of its four meanings and of its symbolism, trying to identify themselves with Dante. This exercise can be used as a group exercise...” (3)

It is clear that for Assagioli the main reason of interest in the Divine Comedy lies in its symbolic meaning, explicitly mentioned by Dante himself in the poem, in the Convivio and the Epistle to Cangrande.

From this point of view we can understand Assagioli’s polemic against Croce, who gives an essentially aesthetic assessment of the Divine Comedy as a “theological novel” with an unpoetical structure, in which episodes of high poetry are inserted like vegetation covering a ruined castle. Croce’s distinction between poetry and non-poetry applied to the Divine Comedy saves and exalts its lyric parts and considers indifferent for an artistic evaluation the religious content of the text and its moral edification. (4)

These two antithetical visions give an example of the different possible readings of the text according to the attitudes and interests of those who approach it; in our case passion for the transpersonal and spiritual research