

Narrating, Hearing, Adjusting, and the Art of Connecting with Others and the Community: Woody Mary (XyloMaria), the Example of Incest and Sexual Abuse in the Fairy Tales: A Gestalt Approach

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The aim of this study is to demonstrate how fairy tales reflect social reality and how they can be used in therapeutic sessions. They represent the safe way people in urban societies have chosen to communicate thoughts, fears, instincts, and passions by using symbols. They create a new safe field to make contact about the here-and-now process, projecting on the heroes' behavior personal meanings.

Methodology: The fairy tale of Woody Mary (XyloMaria) is analyzed as a case study according to Gestalt's theory approach.

Results: Several aspects of Gestalt theory are analyzed: resistances, cycle of contact, stages of neurosis, co-creation of the field, phenomenology, polarities, and unfinished business. A case study where Woody Mary has been used will be briefly presented and the impact to the client will be discussed.

Conclusion: This study illustrates the way folk tales visualize through symbols and metaphor the inner human process and help them through the path of projection to come to awareness by bending the resistances of consciousness. Narration and fairy tales in the process of psychotherapy function as an experiment, according to the Gestalt approach, and act experientially and for this reason liberates emotion and facilitates

awareness, paving the way for healing and change. Further research implications are discussed.

Keywords: fairy tale; fairy tales in psychotherapy; sexual abuse; gestalt psychotherapy; cycle of contact; stages of neurosis; resistances.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to demonstrate how fairy tales reflect social reality and how popular narrative discourse texts can be used in therapeutic sessions. Fairy tales, both popular and inspired by only one person, can heal a person's soul as they carry out powerful psychological work at the subconscious level.^[1] Fairy tales represent the safe way people in societies have chosen to communicate thoughts, fears, instincts, and passions by using symbols. They are formed with the assistance of a live audience, which largely determines their content, thus recreating collective fantasies, reflecting representations of both collective and ideological character, and are being retold by the whole community.^[2] This dimension of the fairy tale, i.e., the ability for a person to exit, for a while, his or her real life and routine and enter a magic world, a world that allows the unconscious to be expressed and relieved in a safe way, is negotiated by

modern research on different psychotherapeutic approaches, like psychoanalysis^[3], Gestalt therapy^[4-5] and dramatherapy.^[6-7] Brigitte Brun and her colleagues argued that: “the fairy tale is a potential vision of the human being and its relation to the world. For centuries, this vision has given strength and confidence to the listeners because they have felt the inner truth in it”.^[8]

In addition, popular narrative discourse, especially folk tales, as a product of collective imagination, reflect and represent collective imagination, emotions, and social thought. They refer to deeper, more profound, and more primitive emotions with which the person is not in conscious contact; in that way, they contain universal motifs and themes. In this collective cultural product, explicit and implicit or hidden desires, forbidden urges, and social and personal fears are recorded through a symbolic code. Fairy tales introduce the community to the world of magic in a simple and straightforward way. The main feature of the narrative is its liveliness and vividness, enriched by metaphors, to visualize the internal process. This is how people speak about what they see, hear, feel, think, and do through symbols without discussing at all about their own experience. Fairy tales have a simple literary structure and therefore express complex developmental, social, and personal dynamics in an easy way and reflect individuals’ projections and interpretations^[9].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethnographers vividly describe that in traditional rural societies, in the evenings, when the sun went down and there was no other way of entertainment, they organized night gatherings, with the central figure of a man storyteller or, more rarely, a woman storyteller. The folk tale was not only the privilege of children, but it was intertwined with the entire community population. “The Greeks put into their fairy tales so much of their character and thought, that what for

other people was an entertainment for children, in Greece was an occupation of adults [...]”^[10].

Traditional group narrative creation is the condensation of the social attitudes, beliefs, representations, or prejudices that the popular creator has formed from the image he has created of the community, where he lives, and which he ultimately expresses. Despite its apparent simplicity, group creation retains the interest of both the listener and the researcher due to its richness in symbols and the power it emits. Furthermore, the fairy tale ignores what is impossible, just like nature's laws are ignored. In fairy tales, anything is possible; when human power is not enough, magic and miracles mediate. The fairy tales are presented as indifferent to a specific place or time, vaguely placed in the past, and describe a dreamy, peculiar, and different world from that of everyday life. The narrator does not care whether what he is telling is natural or supernatural, believable, or unbelievable; he almost always states that it is a fictional, false narrative, as at the end he says: “truth or false that is what fairy tales are”.

The popular narrative discourse operates with symbolism and metaphors, activates the dream world, and acts within the framework of the collective imaginary. It is understood that the symbolic character of the folk tale is inextricably linked to the imaginary, as symbolism “sensitizes” everything abstract or specific envisioned by the community. The activation of popular poetic imagination has no local or temporal starting point, although there have been many theories that have sought to trace their origins. “In place of time and space comes the concept of essentiality”^[11]. The fairy tales are presented as indifferent to a specific place or time, vaguely placed in the past, and describe a dreamy, peculiar, and different world from that of everyday life. The narrator does not care whether what he is telling is natural or supernatural, believable, or unbelievable; he almost always states at the end that it is an

imaginary false narrative^[12]. Young and older alike listen, with pleasure, to this popular narrative, that is created with poetic imagination from the world of magic or may even be related to wonderful events that do not adapt to the conditions of real life without considering it believable^[13].

On the other hand, fairy tales are holding on to the world^[11], they represent social life in detail and, of course, interpersonal relations with magic and symbols to represent, in fact, intrapersonal processes. Fairy tales are not only interested in nature, animals, fish, and plants; they also talk about human states, human emotions, hostility, friendship, love, and social institutions, like family or marriage, in a way that manages to escape the convention of reality in its everyday dimensions, although closely related to it. In that way, fairy tales manage, through the process of the magical and the symbolic, to overcome everyday life and leave it behind. An imaginary world is being recreated that does not know the middle and usual measure of people, activating the imagination of young and old. Everything ranges between two polarities^[12] and in that way, the contrasts of small - big, smart - foolish, beautiful - ugly, good - bad, rich - poor, dominate, but also negotiate, in a symbolic way, the constant contradictions of life. In this way, fairy tales talk about the profound anxieties about conflicting emotions that cause inner tension and turmoil.

The social context places specific constraints on narrative and symbolism, or even restores and reproduces them. The folk creator cannot overlook the fact that there is already a tradition that influences reality's social representation. Lacan states it clearly: "There is an efficacy of the signifier that escapes any psychogenetic explanation, since this signifier, symbolic order the subject does not introduce, but encounters"^[14]. Castoriadis will argue the same position by saying: "Symbolism can be neither neutral nor entirely expedient, first and foremost because it cannot take its points from anywhere nor use any signs.

This is obvious to the individual who always encounters before him an already constituted language, and who, if he charges with "private" and special meaning words and expressions, does not do so with unlimited freedom but must use something that "already exists"^[15].

The collective imaginary finds scope for expression and manifestation in the popular narrative, which reflects symbolic social representations that determine the subject's relationship with himself and with others^[16]. The content and structure of social representations are determined by intrapsychic mechanisms (impulses, motivations, etc.) and determine the group's life by expressing the conflicts, contradictions, anxieties, and desires of the group members. "Ultimately, the group creates, manipulates, and invents social codes, not only to understand, control or transform reality, but to accept the laws of individual and collective desire"^[16]. The social imaginary, using the symbolic products of speech, seeks "to readjust reality both to the laws of subjective and collective desire, and to the rules governing social practices and expediences"^[17].

The collective process of storytelling also includes liberation. Innermost desires remain hidden in the unconscious and censored even before they are perceived because of the vulgarity caused by the strict framework of the community. These hidden desires become sources of stress and moral turmoil for the individual. This reality of censored desires affects almost all members of the community, not just a small minority of them. In the popular narrative, extralogical desires are often presented as inescapable hints of someone else or even of fate and destiny. "When man acts in a way contrary to the system of conscious psychic dispositions that he is said to 'know', then his act is not literally his own but has been dictated to him." In other words, unsystematized, extra-logical impulses and actions derived from them tend to be excluded from the ego and attributed to a foreign source"^[18].

As a result, the analysis of the collective products of discourse aims to demonstrate the coupling of subjective intrapsychic processes and the collective imaginary representations that structure them. Kaës^[19] states that collective representation, appearing, for example, in fairy tales, consists of two systems: a psychic system in which the group functions as the object of an action of thought, as an illustration of one or more psychic processes or actions, and a sociocultural system in which collectivity is depicted as a model of relationships and expressions. The fairy tale functions as a link between the social and the individual, joining, through imagination and symbolism, individual intrapsychic processes that may be common to more than one person, invested with everyday experience, and the cultural-ideological mechanisms of social representation.

Narrating is the way of creating a new safe field to make contact about the here-and-now process, projecting on the hero's personal meanings. They are formed with the assistance of a live audience, which largely determines their content. In this way, they recreate collective fantasies, reflect representations of both collective and ideological character, and become the object of retelling by the whole community. The folk tale, distinguished by a seemingly timeless and cross-cultural inertia in the sense that it moves in time and place, maintaining its structure and motifs, accompanied, entertained, and contributed to the formation of its audience. Marie Louise von Franz, who deeply supports the healing power of fairytales, wrote: "Stories are therapeutic because they express the dreams of life and the compensatory work of the collective unconscious that brings balance to the one-dimensional stance, the sickness, and the endless detours of the human conscious. They do not lose their healing power even when we do not try to understand them"^[20].

The opposite of neurotic verbalizing is creative speech; it is neither scientific semantics nor silence; it is poetry^[21] and

fairy tales. Fairy tales can maintain the silent awareness of image, memory, and so on, as well as the pure attitudes of social communication, clarity, and verbal responsibility. Poetry (and fairy tales) can be focused on the silent awareness of image, emotion, sensation, and memory, apart from the clarity of communication and verbal responsibility^[21]. A fairy tale deals with internal conflicts and unresolved and unspoken cravings through collective narrative and aims to defuse them. If awareness is the spontaneous feeling for what happens within us—what we do, feel, or desire—a fairytale helps us to meet our spontaneous self and bridge the distance between sophisticated and spontaneous mode.

A fairy tale helps us talk about our past without discussing it at all. A fairytale can benefit people of all ages, «not only because it allows them to “escape” reality but also because it brings forward its archetypes, its fair heroes, and brilliant villains in order to guide the listener [...] through their own forest, on a quest that will bring forward helpers and obstacles in order to obtain the treasure»^[22]. A fairy tale presents our story without making us ashamed or afraid, because the hero is another person. In that way, a fairy tale slowly – slowly, helps the audience to understand what happened then. This happens by creating a new entity of self and environment through a new relationship: the therapeutic relationship. This revival is mobilized through the organic function of feelings, thoughts, and trends. Now the individual and the environment have new contact in the light of an awareness that did not exist before, creating new shapes, new forms, and new awareness. This new contact creates a new reality.

Fairy tales can be introduced in therapy as a way of experimenting and activating awareness on the way to mobilization and ultimately change^[23]. The therapeutic value of a fairytale is that the patient finds his own pondering solution, thinking about what the story suggests about him and his internal

conflicts in life at that time. Yontef^[24] argues that there is a wall that stands between the organism and the field when there are contact obstacles. Fairy tales can easily break this wall and without resistance because of the metaphors, symbols, and interspread suggestions. The use of fairy tales in Gestalt psychotherapy shapes the way gestalt therapists introduce the experiment^[23]. Fairy tales could be seen as products of co-creation (by both folk narrator and his audience) which help clients narrate their stories through a hero's story. Their simple, direct, and symbolic nature can be a basis for building relationships in therapeutic rooms and creating a new field full of emotions where a new or invisible side of oneself can arise. Abuse, whether emotional, physical, or mainly sexual, is often the big secret of the family and society because the feeling behind it is shame. How could I be placed in contact with others? How does emotion freeze? How is the body that used to be the erotic attraction alienated? How does the popular imagination represent this whole process? We will listen to the words of the fairy tale; we will travel in the world of magic by listening to both individual's and group's processes of the soul.

MATERIALS & METHODS

Throughout the qualitative method of content analysis^[25], the fairy tale entitled "Woody Mary" (XyloMaria) (A.T. 510B)^[26] will be analyzed, considered a case study, and will illustrate what happens at the contact boundary when incest and sexual abuse are in the field. Structure and content of this fairy tale is highlighting. Emerged social representations from the fairy tale will be presented, and plenty of light on the analogies presented in the behavior and reactions of the heroine of the fairy tale with those of the woman associated with the case study presented below will be shed on. This means that we will examine, through a case study, how the folk narrator represented the inner process of abuse in the tale of "WoodyMary" (XyloMaria) by highlighting

the inner process of the patient in our case study. In Greece, generally, the dominant title of A.T.510B is XyloMaria (WoodyMary). There is a list of variations of the same type of fairy tale with different titles, like:

a. Mother's wish; b. The petsti-petsi; c. All kinds of fur; d. The pigskin, or The petsenia, in Epirus; e. The walking house, or The princess bear, in Thrace; f. The Xyloukanika or The Skylatsi, in Lesvos; g. The piglet, in Tinos; h. The tale of the caterpillar, in Zakynthos. In Europe, there are a lot of variations, like: a. The dressed in all hairy skins in Germany; b. The Donkey Skin, in France; and c. The Bear, in Italy.

This is the Greek version of type AT 510B and was chosen as it represents the daughter's attempt to avoid her father's incestuous instincts. This selection helps the researcher shed light on the inner process of the daughter who feels threatened by her otherwise caring father. The symbolism is very graphic and intense. The inner process of avoidance due to shame is externalized and symbolized through the dresses and especially the wooden costume that functions as armor against the external environment, which the daughter feels threatening.

Woody Mary (XyloMaria) (A.T. 510B): the story, in brief:

Once upon a time, there was a couple who had a daughter. The father was a priest. They all lived happily until the priest's wife died. Before her death, she said to her husband: «Do not get any woman as a wife if she doesn't fit in my shoe or my ring». The priest turned the world upside down, but he didn't find that woman, except for his daughter. The priest said to his daughter: "You will be my wife". His daughter was very sad, and she said: "Father, if you want to take me as your wife you have to bring me four dresses, one with the earth and its flowers, one with the sea and its fishes, one with the sky and its stars, and finally one woody dress". The priest brought her dresses, and then he wanted to get married

with her. She went to the garden all night long to make her prayer, but her father tied her and his hand with a rope. She tied the rope to a tree, and then she wore all her dresses and left. People saw a wood walking and felt surprised. A prince took her to his palace to take care of the chickens. She put on her beautiful dresses and went to church occasionally, and the prince fell in love with her. He took her for his wife. The priest heard about the wedding, he dressed like a woman, and went to the palace to be the nanny for their children, but he slaughtered his grandchildren and put the knife under his daughter's pillow. Her husband threw her away, but an old man gave her water with magic power and enlivened them again. She lived in the woods with her children since her husband found them, and they lived happily ever after^[26].

RESULTS

Results indicate symbols in the fairy tale according to Gestalt's theory approach: cycle of contact, stages of neurosis, co-creation of the field, phenomenology. If someone listens, whether he is a child or an adult, a fairytale may help him to project over the hero his own needs and his hidden desires. In this tale, adults, narrators, and listeners project their own untold incestuous impulses, which they attribute to the daughter's father, the priest. Of course, it is possible that an abused woman could project her own experience on the daughter's adventure.

The folk tale makes intelligent and accurate use of different kinds of resistance

i. The resistance of projection

A child or an adult, when listening to a folk tale, can project onto the protagonist his own needs, conscious or hidden desires. In this tale, adult narrators and listeners project their own unspoken incestuous impulses, which they attribute to the daughter's father. There is not always a clear awareness of this desire of adults towards their daughters, or at least in the context of rural society, it is

very difficult to confess such a desire, even to themselves, so the fairy tale can easily play the role of a tool of release and catharsis^[7]. Let's not forget that in rural societies, although incestuous love affairs are forbidden, they occur quite often and the father's argument that «whoever watered the apple tree will eat its apples» is quite widespread. This resistance allows the person to disconnect from his desire or arousal, which he himself rejects. Although, in real life, it is not an easy issue for the community to admit and manage, a fairy tale may give space to what is forbidden. Things are simplified in popular narrative and fantasy contexts. As these are such intense feelings and desires, the popular imagination has taken care to facilitate those who recognize themselves and their feelings, involving the factor of coercion, as if the father had no choice, as he had to keep the promise to his dead wife; otherwise, her curse will follow him forever. The concept of forced labor makes the whole process for the father more digestible, but this does not negate the abusive dimension of his desire. It is possible for women who have suffered sexual harassment, in any form, to project their own experience and process into the story of the priest's daughter. Listening to the daughter's adventure can cause memories to arise and revive feelings from their own experiences, even from some very repressed experiences that memory is unable to recall. There is a chance that they recognize their own feelings and emotions, or even their own behaviors and reactions.

On the other hand, we can assume that collective narrator may describe with this narration the internal father's process of letting her daughter to grow up, construct her own social identity and differentiate herself. In that process it is very often that many adults have several obstacles. One can project on this narration his difficulty to let his child grow up.

Moreover, the tale begins, like many others, with a couple who have a child. Everything seems ideal, but the child's anxiety begins when the loss of one of his/her parents

occurs. He/she begins to wonder what happens when separation and loss occur. This is one of the main internal pressures of a child, but it is also true of every adult. It is never easy to manage a loss. One may project in the heroine of the story anxiety about loss, separation from one of their parents, and what will happen after, possibly including her desire to replace her mother and take her place next to her father. Of course, we are talking about a very internal and unconscious process that can be visualized through the story. It begins with brevity and extreme precision, one of the most profound existential themes, and bases it on the whole plot, the relationship with death, and the perspective of the next day.

ii. The resistance of confluence

The daughter is in confluence with her family. At the beginning of the story, the popular narrator perfectly describes this union and the loss of boundaries. They will stay together, no matter how many years pass; they will continue to be together, no longer only as father and daughter but also as husband and wife. The important thing is that, in this family, where there is such a great confluence, no more separation or another loss will be allowed, and that is why the father, after the death of his wife, decides not to let his daughter differentiate and to go away. But the daughter is looking for differentiation; she wants to go out, search for herself, and create something new.

The fairy tale visualizes this confluence and the daughter's effort to find the boundary: where does the other "ends" and where does she "begins". According to the fairy tale, the rope is the perfect tool, in the words of the fairy tale, to convey this limitless bonding. As long as, they are in confluence, when one moves, the other will feel it; no matter what one does, the other is equally affected because it is attached to him. The daughter tries to find her limit and, with very slow and calm movements, tries to separate herself from her father, who does not seem to understand his daughter's needs. So, she

leaves him with his contribution. She simply ties him to the mule, so when it moves, he is affected and stays quiet for several hours.

Interpreting father's process who wants to marry her daughter we can hypothesize that this confluence is more a symbolic procedure of father's unwillingness to let her daughter grow up and go on with her life outside her paternal family than it reflects a real incestuous feeling. On the other hand, a daughter's decision to leave away from her violative father may reflect her willingness to grow up, to differentiate, and to make things her own way. Undoubtedly, this is a well-known real-life conflict between fathers and daughters.

iii. Polarities

Individuals have always had to adjust to the numerous contradictions of everyday life and their inner and invisible polarities. Gestalt provides a framework for conceptualizing these habitually dulled and diluted interactions (in their intrapsychic and/or interpersonal manifestations) and describes them as 'low-grade emergencies'. This terminology implies that a sense or memory of an intense 'high-grade emergency' underlies and threatens the more manageable 'low-grade' arrangement^[27]. The fairy tale helps individuals handle those interactions and manifestations in a symbolic, external, and safe way.

Persons in fairy tales are not ambivalent, good, and bad simultaneously; they are either very bad or very good. The father is horrible from the beginning to the end of the story. Mother and her memory are good until the end. The emotional props—the old man or old woman, respectively—are only good people. Our heroine is only good from the start to the end; she has not revealed negative emotion or behavior. According to Bettelheim^[28], the juxtaposition of opposing characters intends to present the characters in a way that can be understood by the child and not be confused by the complexities of reality.

The polarization^[29] is managed towards the end of the tale, where the daughter in the

Smyrna version^[30] decides to tell her story in front of everyone as she feels determined to openly face what is happening to her and not hide from her shame again, says: "And he is not a woman; he is my father, and he slaughtered the child, and you slaughtered me. I didn't slaughter my child, but you decided, and you slaughtered me"^[31]. At the end of the story, we have already reached the end of the healing process; the neurosis has resolved, and the daughter can calmly and wisely meet the two poles. She accepts reality with her father, whom she loves, because he has brought her into life but has become an abusive person and put her and her child in danger. The same is true with her husband, who is very good but can also become very bad; she accepts him in its entirety with both his good and bad elements and chooses to live the rest of her life with him.

iv. Neurosis stages

For the daughter, the problem started from the very beginning when she lost her mother. The loss is managed in a stereotypical way. In all fairy tales, there is a couple who have a family, and while everything is fine, suddenly something happens, and one of them dies. It has a recurring pattern that is almost stereotypical. The daughter needs to deal with her loss and does it very quietly. She plays the role of the good daughter, who supports the father after the mother's death. From this point in the story fairytale's action begins. The impasse arises when she needs to change roles, not only verbally but also practically. The role of the daughter must be changed to that of her father's wife. Roles and masks have fallen. There is no real self; instead, there is a lot of shame. She wants to isolate, hide, get lost, and become formless and timeless, without a country or a father. She is woody, as wooden, and rigid as her father treated her. The wooden dress helps her manage the shame she feels for her father's incestuous instincts.

Shame prevents individuals from coping with the situation in all its dimensions. The

abused person sometimes refuses to think or remember and sometimes blames himself or herself, and this self-accusation feeds feelings of guilt and shame, which are, however, an obstacle to managing feelings and emotions, and similarly, an obstacle to asking for support to overcome the abusive event. Negative thoughts arise and afflict the person about things he did or didn't do: "if I wasn't there," "if I didn't wear this dress", "if I hadn't been alone with him", "if I wasn't so beautiful", "if I didn't have these gifts.". She assumes the responsibility for the event and feels she suffers less in the short term as she manages it herself. She is ashamed to announce to her family what has happened because she is afraid that she will be blamed again, and she is left with her guilt, shame, and silence. The silent management of abuse has less exposure and more inner pain as self-accusations block interaction and contact with other people, resulting in either loneliness or excessive sexual activity in search of love and affirmation, but in a way that is discredited, alienated, and quite manipulative.

Guilt^[32] refers to something that went wrong, to an omission or failure, or to an act that someone did or did not do. In any case, it offends a part of the self; it does not invalidate the whole self, and for this reason, it is more easily manageable than shame. Shame is the feeling of having done or suffered something very painful. As an emotion, it lasts longer than guilt, making it more dangerous. It does not refer to an act of the self, but degrading feelings are experienced that refer to the whole self. The self is perceived as dirty, small, helpless, discredited, wanting to leave, hide, forget, not to tell, not to be seen, just wanting to disappear the memory itself. The shame is reflected in the eyes; the gaze is lowered. The individual becomes guilty and cries out that he/she is afraid of being seen. The shoulders are lowered, the stature becomes hunched, and the voice is not heard. One wants to hide, and the more he/she wants it, the more it becomes an obstacle to contact, so that loneliness comes. An immense guilty

loneliness emerges that, if it had a voice, would say, "I'm in pain". The feeling of shame creates feelings of worthlessness and a belief that the person in pain is the one to blame for everything that happens around them. He/she takes responsibility for the whole world and sees everything through a filter of shame. So, he/she cannot clearly hear the words of others, despite hearing them very often. He/she hears criticism, which causes the person to become very aggressive, unable to hear the other's differences.

The victim experiences his/her own feelings and the feelings of the abuser, swallows the shame of the abuser, and is afraid of being seen or heard. He/she has a strong fear of rejection. It leads to loneliness and isolation. It builds a strong fear of meaningful contact. He/she cannot listen to his/her real needs. He or she develops self-destructive behaviors and negative-derogatory thoughts about himself. Deep sadness and a special freeze in trying to keep inside all emotions so that he/she doesn't feel the pain, especially the feeling of anger so that he/she does not react. People seem to have a lot of wisdom and deep inner knowledge to convey all the emotions of desensitization. The body becomes numb and anesthetizes as it perceives external threats and dangers, so it adopts a rigid focus of awareness away from the senses. The daughter feels that allowing herself to experience her emotions will be dangerous.

The popular imaginary represents the inner process in a symbolic way and is therefore very austere and direct. The daughter wanders to other places, walks, and vacillates. We hypothesize that she is at the stage of implosion, at the stage of death. This is the symbolic representation of women's inner processes, so we hypothesize that the old is dying to give space to the new. The new self will be born, the authentic self^[29]. This will not be easy; it will not happen overnight. In some cases, in some variations of the fairy tale, there is a magical helper that symbolizes emotional support for the inner journey of the

daughter. In the fairy tale of Woody Mary (XyloMaria) (A.T. 510B) an old woman who has a house in the woods hosts her. The journey is inner, solitary, through the wooden costume, through the skin. The contact with the outside world is gradual and careful. She gradually removes her silk dresses as her process progresses. The dresses depict nature's elements. Symbolically, essential contact with nature refers to contact with our own nature, with our essence, this inner process. The daughter is depicted in the silk ornate dresses adorned with the sky and its stars, the earth with its flowers, and the sea with its fish. Until the explosion comes, she leaves behind the old; she lets everything old go; she leaves behind her paternal family and the abuse that came from it; and she moves on with a new beginning. She starts a new family.

The daughter's father lives somewhere and will look for her to manage his unfinished business and solve his issue. The popular imaginary, imbued with the socially correct and morally acceptable, treats the incestuous tendencies of the father as manifestations of profane eroticism, and for this reason cannot allow such desires, especially those of adults, to be purified; the only solution is punishment. Father aggressively enters the process of providing a solution to his unfinished business; he seeks revenge. The aggression is two-sided, with both the father and people towards the father. His vengeance is directed towards the daughter's children, the fruits of her sexuality, and in a slanderous way, he throws the accusation against her and projects it on her. This is the ruthless mother, not this abusive father.

So, the father is not aware of the real unfinished business^[33] that afflicts him, because it is certainly not his daughter's refusal to become his wife but his own incestuous desire that creates an entrenched Gestalt and determines his whole being. The physical (the priest shaves his beard and becomes a nanny), his emotional (he feels hatred for the daughter who made her life) and his cognitive processes (devises a plan

for revenge), try to shut down this unfinished Gestalt^[34] in an unsatisfactory way through revenge. This distorted desire leads to his death. The projection^[35] onto his daughter of the accusations that cover his own guilt for his socially unacceptable sexual desires returns to him in an irreversible and destructive way. Revenge becomes reality, but the revenge of the popular imaginary, which, without silencing forbidden needs, gives them space to defuse but condemns them to bring calm and balance to the community. Let us not forget that the popular narrative very often becomes a vehicle for the representation of the socially desirable and a tool for imposing the dominant ideology that supports monogamy, the patriarchal construction of society, and the exchange of women with other families to achieve alliances.

v. CASE STUDY

Woody Mary of real life is 40 years old now. Let's say that her name is Helen. She is married to a man who has been with her for 12 years. They have two children. The patient contracted lupus erythematosus in her twenties, which is where the intense marks on her face come from. The disease only struck her face, which she altered. Her adventure led her to the hospital for some time. Her grandmother was her supporter. After the lesion on her face occurred, the disease did not progress further. The shape of her face cannot be restored with plastic surgery, as doctors fear the disease will strike again. It is an autoimmune disease whose pathological cause cannot be identified, and which is never completely eliminated from the body.

The client herself had been sexually abused by her father during her teenage years, which lasted about four years. He harassed her by saying that he was in love with her, and when he became more demanding, our client revealed the truth to her mother, who did not support her. The incident culminated when her father wanted to finish, even being self-satisfied with her, and because she

revealed the fact, he pilloried her by returning her to the streets of the neighborhood where they lived with the sign: I AM A WHORE. It was then that she finally left her family home and ended up, after a small adventure, finding her own place for a few years until she got married. She lived a few years alone and built a relationship that she maintained for several years, which she considers abusive, with many insults and demotions.

The patient's primary resistance is retroflection. She seems to turn to herself the anger that she experiences from the behavior of her paternal family and her father, but even more from her mother, who did not listen to her, did not protect her, and, in short, held her responsible for her father's behavior, for the fact that he fell in love with her, as he said. She mentions that it's not her father's fault; he just happened to fall in love with her, and that's where her guilt trials begin. She has something that caused it—her beauty, her aura. Her anger turned towards herself, towards her body, which was the cause of all of her own suffering and that of her family. So, she destroyed her face unconsciously, the main attraction for a woman, and made it repulsive so that she would no longer be desired, and on it he reflected all the bitterness of her soul and all the pain. She marked herself so that everyone knew it hurt without telling them. She unconsciously has put on a symbolic deforming costume, in order nobody could see her real face, her real emotions, her real self. Her feeling of deep shame led her to hide behind a mask she aggressively made for her face through her autoimmune disease. When listening this fairy tale in therapy she felt emerged and touched emotionally. She realized that her disease was connected to her story and that was something she kept doing to herself, as a self-destructive process, and that her feelings of shame and devaluation are offensive against herself. Her awareness was mobilized, and she realized that she needed to differentiate herself from her paternal family and not feel guilty about the behavior of others. This

fairy tale gave us the opportunity to go deeper to her inner process of adjusting to her cruel reality, but details of our therapeutic process overcome the needs of this article. She started talking about the heroine, her feelings, her process without any bluntness and holding back the thoughts or feelings that emerged, because she was simply not talking about herself but about the heroine. The narration of the tale was the safe path to awareness that we would reach with great difficulty due to personal resistance through the simple oral process. The fairy tale introduces the path of emotion through the experiential process, bending the obstacles put in place by consciousness and reason that tries to protect the self from some threatened pain.

DISCUSSION

Using the eyes of imagination, we can see in this fairy tale the whole process of self in the process of contact and awareness during therapy. At the beginning of the narrative, just as in real life, when a figure emerges from the background, the senses and needs dominate. The father's need to marry the daughter emerges; the daughter's need is to find her place. Here, the self sees only its own needs, so the id dominates. The heroes are in internal conflict, unable to cope with the loss of the king's wife and are looking for ways that will no longer disturb this situation of confluence. Daughter tries to adapt to things and situations, but not necessarily creatively. She focuses on others. In the circle of contact^[36], we are the pre-contact; the stimuli of the environment and desires dominate.

As therapy progresses, all the issues of projections and introjections open: "who should I be", "can I become the wife", "should I not become the wife", "is this about the desire of the father or even my own desire?" We are moving into awareness: "I am at a dead end, and I need to come out", so the energy is mobilized, the ego is presented intentionally, with conscious choices and staggered mobilization, and we are already at the stage

of contact. She occasionally recognizes her needs, as she is neurotic. There are symptoms of personality disorders, and for this reason, she finds a stable and rigid way (cognitive, emotional, behavioral) to organize her experience. She can't handle: "What am I and what is the environment", I-not-I. It cannot be differentiated from the others. It lacks free choice, spontaneity, energy, stimulation, and vitality.

If she tries not to admit her identity, pretend to be someone else, or play the role, she remains the same. She doesn't get in touch with herself or her identity, and she tries to make some superficial changes. By choosing to create a costume and leaving home, she tries to get out of the pattern of confluence and mobilizes in the direction of differentiation, and the fairy tale visualizes this inner process by preparing the daughter to leave. Prepares the costumes and plans the use of the rope to begin the action depicted by the daughter's wandering and the process of gradual acquaintance with the royal child.

The stage of final contact involves contact with the self; the old self dies, and the new one appears. She is changed now, and she finds another who has differentiated characteristics and can support the new self. Personality dominates; she knows who she is, what she can do, and what her values are. But open accounts also need to be closed; this is where the father appears again, seeks revenge, polarizations open to balance the self, and contact with the environment sometimes hurts, but justice is restored.

The contact process is complete. Satisfaction and fulfillment come. She and her children come back to life, her new family comes out unscathed from this whole process, and she finishes her unfinished business. The old dies and comes after-contact, withdrawal, and tranquility. They lived well, and we always lived better.

CONCLUSION

Summarizing the present study, several important issues arise, such as: a. folk tales visualize through symbols and metaphor the

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inner human process and help it through the path of projection to come to awareness by bending the resistances of consciousness, b. the use of narration and fairy tales in the process of psychotherapy functions as an experiment, according to the Gestalt approach, and acts experientially and for this reason liberates emotion and facilitates awareness, paving the way for healing and change.

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