Love for the Colonizer: Literary and Psychoanalytic Investigations of Brazil's Foundational Trauma

Francisco Attié | fla222@nyu.edu

B.A. Global Liberal Studies, 2020 | New York University, New York

M.A. Candidate in Journalism | Craig Newmark School of Journalism at CUNY

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Abstract

The Brazilian cultural and political project began in 1822 with the end of colonization. There was a confluence between the politicians and writers of the 19th century that guaranteed wholly pervasive foundational mythologies. The Brazilian foundational myths enabled the repressed trauma of colonization to fester. Instead of rejecting the trauma of colonization, Brazilian foundational works, like José de Alencar's *Iracema*, engendered myths that repressed it by romanticizing a narrative for the people to fall in love with their colonizer. This love, I argue based on the work of Sigmund Freud and Carl G. Jung, led to a specific cultural complex that induced a repetition compulsion of the original traumatic event up to this day, guaranteeing unconscious entrapment and a constant return and submission to the figure of the colonizer. Identifying the underpinnings of the cultural psyche of the Brazilian becomes possible through psychoanalytic criticism that is focused not on the author's specific neuroses, but instead, on the societal collective unconscious manifest through the author's work. The romanticized mythology of Alencar engendered a cultural complex, best exemplified by the inferiority complex—wherein a Brazilian will see that which is produced internally as inferior to that which is produced in the Global North—and by its consequential superiority complex—wherein a Brazilian establishes his/her European roots in a self-aggrandizing effort to put him/her above Brazilians who cannot establish similar roots. In Chico Buarque's *Spilt Milk* I trace the historical effects of this trauma to the present.

Keywords

Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism; José de Alencar; Iracema; Chico Buarque; Leite Derramado; Brazilian Colonization; Foundational Literature; Trauma of Colonization; Cultural Unconscious; Complexo de Vira-Lata

> We laymen have always been intensely curious to know - like the Cardinal who put a similar question to Ariosto - from what sources that strange being, the creative writer, draws his material, and how he manages to make such an impression on us with it and to arouse in us emotions of which, perhaps, we had not even thought ourselves capable. Our interest is only heightened the more by the fact that, if we ask him, the writer himself gives us no explanation, or none that is satisfactory; and it is not at all weakened by our knowledge that not even the clearest insight into the determinants of his choice of material and into the nature of the art of creating imaginative form will ever help to make creative writers of us. (Freud, "Creative Writers," 436)

The Brazilian cultural and political project began in 1822 with the end of colonization. Even after its political demise colonization wielded enormous fictitious power to shape reality. In Latin America there was a confluence between the politicians and writers of the 19th century that guaranteed wholly pervasive foundational mythologies—the people building the legal-political state were also setting in stone the mythological ideology of the nation. As such, the Brazilian foundational myths served to unify the people under a common national banner. However, in their attempts to overcome the ghost of colonization, which endured for three centuries, they ended up guaranteeing a wholly pervasive structure wherein the repressed trauma of colonization could fester. In Brazil, the creators of the national mythology were affluent, white aristocrats, descendants of the Portuguese elite, and their particular ideology contributed heavily to the way in which Brazilians dealt with the image of the colonizer. One of these aristocrats was José de Alencar, a lawyer, writer, politician, and public intellectual. At one point Minister of Justice of Brazil, Alencar is considered to be one of the founding fathers of Brazilian literature. *Iracema*, published in 1863, is an exponent of the *Indianismo*[1] movement and one of the most important works of the foundational literature of Brazil (Alencar). The novel tells the story of the birth of the first Brazilian, Moacyr, the son of an indigenous woman, Iracema, and a Portuguese colonizer,

[1] *Indianismo* is derived from Indigenous. It was an Indigenous literary movement in the sense that it raised as its hero the figure of the Indigenous people, and in the sense that it was truly the first literary movement from Brazil that told the story of Brazilians and was written by Brazilians.

Martim. During the course of the story, Iracema is forced to abandon her indigenous roots in order to get closer to Martim. This can be interpreted as the author's proclamation of the gendered subservience of the indigenous people towards the masculine European colonizer. Tellingly, at the end of the novel Iracema dies, and Moacyr returns to Portugal with his father—the first Brazilian had left Brazil to live with the colonizer. The plot of this novel epitomizes the ideological framework of Brazilian state building after independence. Instead of rejecting the trauma of colonization, foundational works like *Iracema* engendered myths that repressed it, romanticizing a narrative for the people to fall in love with their colonizer. This love, I argue, led to a specific cultural complex that induces a repetition compulsion of the original traumatic event.

Portuguese colonization forced the coming together of three peoples in Brazil: the Indigenous inhabitants of the country, the enslaved Africans brought to work in the *engenhos,*[2] and the aforementioned Portuguese. Each of these carried their own respective cultural archetypes, which, through a cultural mélange, blended into a new, Brazilian archetype. This archetype showcases itself through the many different characteristics of the Brazilian. One, for example, is a general espousing of an inferiority complex that manifests in a lauding of all things not Brazilian. Another one, a direct offshoot, is a superiority complex that manifests once the person has identified their European descent, therefore claiming to be the superior to those whose heritage cannot be traced to the Global North. These archetypical characteristics, I believe, contribute to an easy acceptance of entrapping ideologies that, in some way, recall the colonizer-colonized relationship, establishing a repetition compulsion through transference.[3] In order to identify this

[2] *Engenho* means sugar mill in Portuguese. It is a way to refer to the colonial plantations of Brazil.
[3] Transference, as originally defined by Sigmund Freud within the process of psychoanalytic treatment, is an unconscious redirection of feelings from one person to another.

repetition compulsion I will dive into psychoanalytic literary criticism of the Brazilian novel *Spilt Milk* by Chico Buarque (Buarque).

Spilt Milk helps to set up a socio-historical analysis of Brazil. The story is told through the memories of Eulálio d'Assumpção, whose life spans a century, from 1907 to 2007. Through his recollections, we get insights and descriptions of the cultural and political transformation of Brazil. Coupled with his recounting of his family's history, the reader is left with a comprehensive picture of Brazilian society, going all the way back to the time of publication of *Iracema* and the creation of a national mythology. By analyzing and critiquing the novel as a socio-historical document I derive insights into Brazilian history. Furthermore, Eulálio is an unreliable and senile narrator who often repeats himself and recounts events in different manners. His narrative style creates an interesting parallel to the process of psychoanalysis: the reader is left to interpret the truth and draw their own conclusions from the story. Much in the way a psychoanalysis session would happen, except, in this case, the patient does not receive a cure, nor is he made aware of his neuroses.[4]

Traditionally, psychoanalytic criticism has been used to identify the neuroses of an author; through careful analysis of the work, one would find a manifestation of the author's unconscious and their neuroses. My goal, however, is to perform a psychoanalytic critique of *Spilt Milk* not to decipher Buarque's neuroses, or of *Iracema* to decipher Alencar's, but to interpret a Brazilian unconscious and the manifestation of Brazilian national trauma within these works. Then, not only would the narrator act as a manifestation of trauma, but in the recounting of history, I would find

[4] For a full analysis of *Spilt Milk*, *Iracema*, and *Epitaph of a Small Winner*, see my Global Liberal Studies Senior Thesis *Love for the Colonizer: Literary and Psychoanalytic Investigations of Brazil's Foundational Trauma*. 2020. New York University.

evidence of repetition and transference of a national traumatic experience. If literature plays a role in repressing trauma, it may also play a role in curing trauma.

Before I delve into the analytical side of this work however, a general preface to my discussion is necessary—I must enunciate my own position before the subject. I am not a professional, or a studying psychologist, therefore the arguments I extend here are based on my reading and analysis of theory, not of practical and clinical experience. I lay this out to clarify that perhaps the furthest I can go with my thesis is to help Brazilians understand their trauma and make it conscious. Through literature I will show a way one may take to initiate the curing process—individually for readers, and collectively for writers. Still, to cure the trauma completely must be a project derived from unity and arduous work, extended across many disciplines of study and artistic fields.

Furthermore, being Brazilian myself, I do not wish to pathologize other Brazilians. As I said before, I do not have the medical acumen to do so, and most importantly, I do not believe that the Brazilian population is "sick" in any way; to have suffered, and be stuck in a cycle of repetition, does not mean one is diseased, but merely traumatized. I stray away from the term because sickness implies something much more insidious and debilitating, something that has origins inside the body of the diseased. Trauma, on the other hand, occurs when our conscious mind is not able to fully deal with a situation, thus it bypasses our conscious and goes straight into our unconscious where it ends up creating outward manifestations in our life, invariably but unintentionally. Brazilians do not lay at fault for this manifestation, after all, it descends from a traumatic event they had no choice but to be the victims of. Nonetheless, some Brazilians bear more responsibility than others for repressing, instead of dealing with, the trauma during the foundational years of the

nation, even if they did so with the best intentions in mind—and I do firmly believe that some, if not most, of them had good intentions.

Moreover, it is not my desire to pass anachronistic judgments upon the figures of my country's past. Under contemporary socio-cultural standards the actions of aristocrats like José de Alencar are hard to defend, however these actions were not just his, as they represent the understanding of a different time and class. And as easy as it may be to label Alencar a retrograde thinker for the way in which he helped construct the Brazilian myth, he was also a pioneering thinker about the representation of minorities, a protagonist in the first major literary movement of the country, and one of the first writers who sought to foment an original national culture and develop a wholly national variant of the Portuguese language for Brazil.

So if we are stuck in a repetition compulsion of our foundational trauma because of the work of people like Alencar, we are also Brazilians for that same reason. While I am not suggesting that Brazilians do or should identify positively with the repressing of their trauma, though that may have been the case in some instances, it is undeniable that trauma breeds some sort of identity in its receiver. And that, perhaps, is the great paradox that this thesis deals with: Brazil has achieved and lost enormously, both domestically and in the world stage; it escaped an abominable colonial project in a way very few other countries have been able to, only to recede into a malignant military dictatorship in the 20th century; it has attempted to deal with some of the darkest chapters in its history in a commendable fashion ("Comissão Nacional da Verdade"),[5] yet it seemed content to elect a far-right demagogue in 2018 who preaches the very same violence we have attempted to defeat; it is the birthplace of Samba and Bossa Nova, and now houses an administration seeking

[5] Up until the election of President Bolsonaro, Brazil had shown a strong commitment to dealing with the atrocities of the military dictatorship (1964-1985) in an open and truthful way with Truth Commissions.

to curtail the cultural expression of Funk.[6] If contradictions are what make the Brazilian project so arduous, they are also what make the culture so unique. People express themselves in accordance to their time in shades of grey, and so, too, do cultures.

I will not run over my country's history and erase it in any way. My intention is to offer a perspective on it, hopefully with fresh eyes, and a possible way to deal with the contradictions that have plagued us for so long. This work is not written with the purpose of electing villains, but to unmask the cultural-psychological framework that has allowed for the appearance of villains in the first place.

Conceptual Framework

In many ways, Sigmund Freud presides as a sort of philosophical guide for the way I see the world. Like him, I see myself as an empiricist, therefore the concepts of psychoanalytic theory and criticism that I will employ, will be very much rooted in empirical logic; and when not, particularly as I delve into more Jungian ideas, I will make a case as to how I am reinterpreting the concepts, and will present secondary literature as evidence that allows for a different interpretation.

First of all, I believe it is important that I explain my view of the psychoanalytic process, as it is the bedrock for my subsequent points. Very similarly to the way Freud saw it, I think that the role of the analyst is to guide their patients through the process of catharsis. However, analysts cannot interfere directly into the individual process of the patient. They will merely supply footholds for the climbing of the mountain; the patients must find the strength to climb themselves. The analyst tries to assume a certain neutrality from strong guiding suggestions because the

[6] In 2017 a bill reached the Brazilian Senate in an attempt to criminalize Funk in the country ("Projeto De Lei De Criminalização Do Funk Repete História Do Samba, Da Capoeira E Do Rap"), and since Bolsonaro's election, *bailes funk* (Funk balls) have been in the news more frequently for the wrong reasons. Raids by Brazil's military police often end with the murder of civilians (Rodrigues).

patients have been encapsulated by an overbearing trauma that invariably guides their life. As the analyst helps them become free of this overarching mental structure, it would be counterproductive for the analyst to supply patients with another overbearing structure. As Freud sees it, and as I do as well, the point of undergoing the psychoanalytic process is to achieve a state of mental freedom from which the person can then choose their direction in life without traumatic hindrances. Such is my desire with this thesis, to provide a sort of bedrock from which readers may explore their trauma and attempt, perhaps even achieve, some sort of catharsis.

As I try to evaluate the trauma colonization has instilled in Brazil, I will make use of psychoanalytic concepts that can guide us toward a better understanding of trauma and its subsequent neuroses. Important terms—most of which originated with, or were largely disseminated by Carl Jung—I would like to highlight right now are collective unconscious, archetype, and shadow.

Since the collective unconscious stands at the heart of the matter, I will be tackling it first. The concept of a collective unconscious originates with Jung in 1916. In response to Freud, who focused on one's personal unconscious, Jung claims that this personal unconscious rests on a "deeper layer" that is universal: a collective unconscious. For him, the collective unconscious

> has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us (Jung, *Archetypes* 23).

Certain images of the unconscious are, therefore, shared universally and appear historically in myths and fables through recurring character archetypes, like the wise old man who aids a hero in their quest, or the strong mother figure who very often takes the shape of a mythological goddess, either a great helper or a powerful adversary in the heroic journey (Jung, *Archetypes* 82). Now, Jung still believes that there are culturally specific aspects to the collective unconscious of people

from different backgrounds, but generally, he attempts to bridge the divide between different cultures when talking about archetypes as contents of the collective unconscious.

So while I use the Jungian term, I will differentiate it on a cultural basis, that is, I will not be primarily seeking to investigate aspects that are universal, but mostly the cultural particulars that embody the Indigenous, African, and Portuguese variants of the collective unconscious. When it comes to the culturally specific Brazilian collective unconscious, I agree with Jung that it represents an overarching psychological structure that in many ways guides our existence. Still, I disagree with him on one key feature: Jung sees the collective unconscious as possessing both primitive and cultural origins in the mind—part of it is inherently and universally passed on through generations, while the rest comes as a result of cultural evolution. The inherent aspects are more dominant from his perspective, as it is only when the cultural aspects manifest in inherent ideas that they form a more powerful archetype. In keeping with that idea, American psychologist Joseph Henderson developed from his studies with Jung the concept of a "cultural unconscious," which questioned some of the naturally received aspects of his mentor's theory. For Henderson, many features of the collective unconscious are "transmitted through our environment before we were able to affirm its validity for ego-consciousness" (Henderson qtd. in Kimbles 55). I, on the other hand, expanding upon Henderson's concept and tilting towards Freudian empiricism, argue that the collective unconscious exists not from birth but appears in one's psyche solely from the moment one is invariably immersed, from a young age, to all the overbearing stimuli of a culture. That is, one is immersed in a culture at a time when one is not yet able to consciously discern the ideological underpinnings that one is fed on a daily basis (when one is not able to affirm their "validity for ego-consciousness"), which, literally or symbolically, will feed into one's unconscious mind, slowly developing the culturally-specific collective structure. Therefore, the

collective unconscious can be universal only because cultures have historically evolved out of other cultures, and in the little influence that remains through generations, and across different traditions, we perceive similarities that occur beyond our conscious decisions that are pieces of a universal collective unconscious.

Archetypes are the contents of the collective unconscious. According to Jung, they have a primal bond with our instincts. Through the manifestation of character archetypes in myth and fables, we are able to map out the collective unconscious in its universal expansion. As with Jung's understanding of the collective unconscious, there is an inherent quasi-biological aspect to the archetype that I do not fully agree with. He argues that archetypes cannot be invented culturally and thus cannot be acquired individually over the course of one's life; they are unconscious understandings that exist historically and cannot be informed consciously (Jung, *Archetypes*). I will extend my empirical interpretation of the collective unconscious to the archetypes and make two arguments against Jung: (1) archetypes can vary culturally as do the specifics of the collective unconscious; and (2) in cultural mélanges, like the Brazilian, different archetypes will inform, consciously and unconsciously, the creation of new archetypes that are then disseminated through literature.

Finally, the shadow is the name Jung gives to the contents of our individual unconscious. He holds that the shadow could include good and bad traits of one's character, traits that were repressed during the course of our lives. Following that logic then, as the shadow stands to the individual unconscious, the cultural shadow stands to the collective one, and therefore, in the cultural shadow of a society lies all of its repressed traits (Jensen 15-16). How this applies to my argument specifically I will elaborate further down.

An important caveat is raised here, however. To use psychoanalytic theories, as expounded upon from a European context, in order to analyze a Latin American one, can be a problematic endeavor. Therefore, it becomes imperative that I look at postcolonial psychoanalytic theory to supplement my approach. In order to counter the argument that psychoanalysis cannot be adequately used as a framework for postcolonial exploration, I raise the objection espoused by Indian political psychologist Ashis Nandy, who argues that psychoanalysis has been seen, historically, as a "marginal" science in the Western tradition. Therefore, it sits in a privileged spot to aid post-colonial writers: through psychoanalysis one can easily investigate the fractures of Western thought (Greedharry 139). He proposes, for example, that psychoanalysis has a similar understanding of time as the Hindus, wherein time "does not proceed in a linear, non-reversible direction. Instead, as in psychoanalysis, the past is always part of the present and the present can be remade through the past" (Greedharry 139). This unconventional approach (from a Western perspective) to time is one of the signature moves of Buarque in *Spilt Milk*.

Another important voice who dealt with the psychoanalytic under a postcolonial light was Frantz Fanon. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, the West Indian psychologist writes about institutionalized colonialism and the liberation wars in Algeria, and how the process of colonization creates severe traumas in the minds of the colonized people. Although the context described in his book is not a direct equivalent to that of the Brazilian—when it comes to Independence, as I have said before, Brazil achieved it without real conflict—the underlying condition of the two countries, their subjugation as colonized nations, invariably led to similar traumatic manifestations, one of which is the repression of the Self: "Because it is a systematized negation of the other, a frenzied determination to deny the other any attribute of humanity, colonialism forces the colonized to constantly ask the question: 'Who am I in reality?'" (Fanon

408). Fanon sought to deal with colonial traumas through a practical psychological approach, and he did not reject the psychoanalytic framework; in fact, he sought to use it as a tool of empowerment to heal those forced to exist under the oppressive and domineering structures of colonialism, both current and inherited. For Brazilians, this colonization-induced self-negation and questioning led to the appearance of an inferiority complex.

On the Brazilian Archetype

First of all, we must understand the context of Brazilian society when foundational literature was being written. While the specific historical points are very important for this argument, I will not argue them in full in this article; here I am primarily concerned with the psychological effects engendered by the archetype and not the history that engenders the archetype in the first place.

The Brazilian cultural archetype comes from a mixture of the culturally dominant parts out of three manifestations of the collective unconscious: the one from the Indigenous population, the one from the Portuguese colonizers, and the one from the African slaves. Given that colonization forcibly created an environment where cultures and ethnicities had to mix, each of these peoples has, in its own way, contributed to the formulation of the Brazilian archetype. Its most enduring characteristic, however, is a love for the colonizer that allows for a repetition compulsion of the traumatic event and a constant search for the return of a colonizing figure who would be superior to the Brazilian.

Portuguese colonization, specifically, carried an underlying sentiment that allowed heterogeneity instead of enforced hegemony in its cultural and ethnic pool; that is, the colonizers did not seek solely to fortify their imprint upon the native population of Brazil. They sought to

realize their aspirations of Empire by whatever means necessary, and if that meant allowing miscegenation with the local population, both biological and cultural, then so be it.

In his article "Cultural Complexes and Cultural Identity in Brazil," Brazilian psychologist Walter Boechat discusses the syncretism that was allowed in the Portuguese colonial project as a linchpin for his interrogations vis-à-vis the Brazilian inferiority complex and the "trickster" cultural complex it engendered:

> Although most of the indigenous population was devastated soon after the country's discovery, Brazilian culture has always maintained some proximity with tribal societies and their oral traditions, customs, and myths. The African influence, which has been part of Brazil's heritage for centuries and has also been a fundamental part of our history, has contributed to the soul of Brazil and its diet, religion, customs, and language. This inheritance is fixed in Brazil's cultural unconscious and affects our behavior, dreams, and ambitions in various ways, despite the fact that Brazilians may not be aware of it (Boechat 239-240).

This "trickster" complex, Boechat argues, may have come from the Portuguese archetype, which is molded after the figure of Ulysses, the mythological founder of Lisbon. The Portuguese people would generally praise one's cunning and pragmatism above their might:

> All descendants of the Iberian people in this mythic imagining have inherited this element of trickery and deceit. This Trickster is one of the symbolic figures of the Brazilian collective psyche, and there is a range of representations of this in our folklore, including Pedro Malasartes, Macunaíma, Exú, and the Carioca malandro, a typical rogue from Rio (Boechat 240).

The idea that the Portuguese were more open to the idea of cultural mélanges may also originate from their archetype. Though Boechat does not explicitly draw this connection, it could be argued that the colonizers saw it as imperative, and as the most favorable manifestation of their cunning, not to segregate themselves from the Indigenous and (later on) the African populations, but actually to allow the miscegenation of races, even if under a racial hierarchy, in order to ensure the success of the colonial project. To an extent, Portuguese religious syncretism allowed for African

religions to exist alongside Catholicism—these beliefs are still in place to this day, many of which have actually transcended religion and become ingrained in popular Brazilian culture.

Nonetheless, racism and ideas of ethnic superiority did not disappear. In fact, there actually was not much miscegenation amongst the upper classes of pre-independence Brazil; the figures of power were still, and continued to be for a long time, members of the white, European aristocracy. From this paradigm, after 1822, the writers in the newly independent Brazil began the national literary movements of the country. The foundational literature of the country shaped the official language and culture of the new nation. The vast cultural mélange that had already taken place allowed for the archetype of the Brazilian, as espoused in foundational myths, to be a mixture of Indigenous, African, and Portuguese archetypes.

Even through this mélange however, the narrative chosen to symbolize the foundation of the country emphasized love and admiration for the Portuguese colonizers—heralded as saviors, and not the bringers of trauma—while placing the Indigenous and African cultures in a lower degree of importance. This engendered in Brazilian culture, and consequently in the minds of the people, a cultural complex. Though Brazilians may not be aware of its origins and historical mechanisms, there is a recognition of this complex by the people, we call it a "*complexo de vira-lata*"[7]—in direct translation it means "complex of a mutt dog," a dog that is not purebred. Jungian analyst Denise G. Ramos calls it an inferiority complex, culturally manifested with Brazilians seeing all that came from Europe, or the Global North, as better than what is made in Brazil (Ramos 108). Ramos performed interviews with Brazilians in order to establish a connection between the complex and an inherent sense of corruption in the country. Though a discussion of corruption will not be in the purview of this article, and in general terms I cannot say I agree wholeheartedly with

[7] Term originally coined by the Brazilian playwright Nelson Rodrigues.

Ramos' findings on the subject, her research on the cultural complex is still very enlightening for my argument. She argues that the Brazilian inferiority complex comes as a perpetuation of the stigma of an underdeveloped nation, a so-called Third World country. We may then surmise that the complex serves to keep Brazilians continuously invested in the colonial mentality; the love for the Portuguese colonizer is simply transferred onto other nations—i.e. the United States during Brazil's Military Dictatorship—as the people are stuck in a repetition compulsion of the original traumatic event.

In order to provide some background for this repetition compulsion, I will bring forward Luigi Zoja's writings of colonial trauma in Mexico. In his article, "Trauma and Abuse: The Development of a Cultural Complex in the History of Latin America," Zoja discusses how the figure of the colonizer was understood by the Indigenous people of Mexico to be a manifestation of the wraths of their gods (Zoja). The scars of war and colonialism engendered trauma that have continued to repress the Mexican population to this day. Zoja also makes use of Jung's theories of the collective unconscious. Furthermore, Zoja introduces Jungian psychoanalyst, Donald Kalsched's ideas on archetypal defenses. Kalsched argues that they come into play as a primitive defense of the Self to safeguard against possible recurrences of trauma in a person who is severely traumatized at a very young age. Archetypal defenses act as a sort of "caretaker" that can be

> often far more sadistic and brutal than any outer perpetrator, indicating that we are dealing here with a *psychological* factor set loose in the inner world by trauma—an archetypal traumatogenic agency within the psyche itself (Kalsched 4).

While this mechanism is inherently "well-intentioned," it also sets off a mischievous mechanism that ends up entrapping and propagating the traumatic experience:

> The primitive defense does not learn anything about realistic danger as the child grows up. It functions on the magical level of consciousness with the same level of awareness it had when the original trauma or traumas occurred. Each new life opportunity is mistakenly seen as a dangerous threat of re-traumatization and is therefore attacked. In this way, the

> archaic defenses become anti-life forces which Freud understandably thought of as part of the death instinct (Kalsched 5).

For Zoja, however, these defenses don't appear solely in light of "individual trauma suffered during childhood," but can manifest themselves in the event of "collective trauma that […] is remembered for generations [and] can become the nidus around which a cultural complex forms" (Zoja 85). Therefore, in Mexico's case, the nation suffered a great collective trauma during colonization which triggered archetypal defenses. As such, the traumatized people now find themselves in a loop where the defenses of the Self, supposedly protecting from trauma, continuously re-traumatize the individuals while impeding any learning to be had from the situation. My intention is to extend Zoja's use of archetypal defense concepts in Mexico to a Brazilian context so as to show that, throughout our history, trauma is being re-experienced in attempts to escape the recurrence of said trauma, and consequently engendering and propagating cultural complexes.

Finally, when it comes to the manifestation of the cultural shadow of the Brazilian, it is apt to return to Jung. In the introduction to the book *Post-Jungian Criticism*, George H. Jensen discusses, among many other things, Jung's belief that

> to promote group cohesion, any aspect of our personality that does not relate to our cultural notion of "goodness" is generally negated or repressed. Through such negations, we begin to refine our conscious notion of who we are, how we should act, and what we are capable of doing, but we are, at the same time, relinquishing power over a complex within our broader self (Jensen 15).

This repression sets off a shadow in the mind wherein "negative" traits fester, resentful until the moment they can come forward and manifest themselves in destructive ways (Jensen 15). Jensen continues and brings in the work of French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard's *Heidegger and the Jews*, wherein his conception of cultural othering—a manifestation of the shadow—is discussed: "The cultural shadow, in this sense, is similar to what Lyotard calls 'the jews,' the Other

within that represents what we have been culturally conditioned to despise. Lyotard refers to 'the jews' in lower case and quotation marks to indicate that this is a symbolic Other, not the historical Jews" (Jensen 16). Thus, the bad traits a society has repressed in its shadow will come out as it seeks to stereotype and define itself in opposition to an "Other."

So, too, would the Portuguese during the colonization process have, consciously and unconsciously, treated their cultural "Others," the Indigenous people and the enslaved Africans. This treatment, I argue, festered in the Brazilian cultural unconscious, up to the point where it engendered an inversion of the cultural shadow in Brazil. As the Brazilian is traumatized, the love for the colonizer manifests itself through the cultural shadow: for the Brazilian, the "Other" is the Portuguese, to whom we assign not the bad traits we repressed, but the good ones—which are repressed because of trauma. As such, when we define ourselves in relation to the colonizer, we negate ourselves—similarly to how Fanon describes it—and see not the bad things in our shadow, which would lead to a rejection of the "Other", but all the good things we fail to see in ourselves.

One might even go as far as to argue that with the passing of Brazilian history, populist leaders have taken advantage of the traumatized population, and in particular the cultural shadow as a way to come into power. This argument is inspired by Brazilian psychoanalyst Christian Dunker who explains how populism takes advantage of the trauma of the socially oppressed and weaponizes it in a way that empowers the leaders of the populist movements, further entrapping its followers (Dunker 203-223).

On the Role of Brazilian Literature

While a detailed analysis of Brazilian literature goes beyond the scope of this article, it is vital for my broader argument. In my senior thesis I have shown how Brazil's foundational mythology helped repress the colonial trauma, making Brazilians fall in love with their colonizer.

I have also looked at Machado de Assis' *Epitaph of a Small Winner* (1881)—largely seen as one of the great works of Brazilian literature written by, arguably, the greatest writer the country has seen—which was a strong source of inspiration for Buarque's *Spilt Milk* and offers an irony-rich perspective on *fin-de-siècle* Brazil. Finally, I have proposed a way to deal with the trauma and the neuroses it created, heralding the power of literature as the answer. Consequently, I have argued that *Spilt Milk* could actually be seen as a form of therapy, perhaps even as a psychoanalytic session itself, and I have proposed that the cure for the Brazilian trauma might be found in literature as it mediates class and reinvents language in a way that is meant to reflect society.

As it might have become clear at this point, literature is for my argument both patient and method; it is the place where the unconscious neuroses are made manifest, and the place where catharsis can be stimulated. Discussing Freud's understanding of the analyst-analysand relationship, Peter Brooks writes that "repetition is both an obstacle to analysis, […] and the principal dynamic of the cure" (342). In that vein, literature has historically carried the repetition of the trauma through the collective unconscious elements of culture that are present in it. At the same time, it carried the key for the cure, because, as per psychoanalytic theory, it is only by externalizing the trauma that one can overcome it, and in its literature, the Brazilian has already initiated this process, albeit unconsciously. Therefore, a psychoanalytic reading of literary works can both expose the underlying problems of a nation and give individuals the tools to overcome said problems.

This idea I have based off Freud's own understanding of literature and the psychoanalytic method. Freud thought of literature as a magnification of our lives that can force us into contemplating our existence (Freud, "Some Character-Types," 155). In playing its healing role, literature must give wholehearted attention to its readers, providing hints for the catharsis but not

the catharsis itself. Literature acts as a guide and template for the reader who wishes to uncover the archetypes haunting their individual and cultural unconscious.

On Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism

Psychoanalytic literary criticism is a form of cultural analysis derived originally from the writings of Freud. Beyond a psychoanalyst, Freud was also an interpreter and critic of men—a humanist, if we may so call him. He questioned the most basic instincts of humanity and arrived at the unconscious not only through the more practical work of a doctor, studying the biological structures of the brain, but also through the studying and writing of philosophy, where he interrogated strands of meaning and scrutinized human thought to its roots. Art historian and psychoanalyst Ernst Kris wrote, "Freud's predecessors in the study of man were not the neurologists, psychiatrists, and psychologists, from whom he borrowed some of his terms, but rather the great intuitive teachers of mankind" (Kris 266). While a simplistic statement taken out of context, it still offers great insight into the psychoanalyst's spirit. Freud sought a holistic approach to understand people. As he inaugurated and evolved the field of psychoanalysis, he found it necessary to delve in cultural analysis just as much as clinical work. For him, relying on literature to explore the human condition was essential—as he wrote in his 1908 essay "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," creative work offers us refuge from the repressive "civilizing path" of society. In day-dreaming (and creative writing) then we are able to escape this path for brief moments, meaning that we supersede the structure. Through literature we are able to criticize society at its deepest because fiction goes beyond society (Freud, "Creative Writers"). Thus, the psychoanalytic strand of criticism became a reality, first in support of psychoanalytical theories, and then as its own genre of writing.

Freud's writings on literature usually focused on the question of character-types through which he would diagnose fictional characters in order to explore psychoanalytic concepts in depth. Freud's ruminations served to support the growing field of psychoanalysis, lending themselves as "illustration and demonstration" of illnesses (Kris 266). Character studies on Macbeth and Richard III for example, offered Freud much insight into the human psyche under distress (Freud, "Some Character-Types"). His explorations of literary character-types also allowed Freud to diagnose the author behind the work. Freud famously drew in-depth insights of Leonardo da Vinci and Fyodor Dostoyevski through analysis of their art (Freud, "Leonardo DaVinci"). In addition, Freud's cultural character studies showed the potential of literature, which at its highest can mirror the psychoanalytic process itself, offering industrious readers a chance to achieve a certain level of catharsis from their own traumas and neuroses.

Ernst Kris recognizes the importance of Freud's literary character studies for the early days of psychoanalysis, but alerts us to the fact that while once a vital tool, engaging with character study in place of clinical work today fails to engage with the "full detail of interacting dynamic and genetic factors toward which the most essential part of current psychoanalytic research is directed" (Kris 266-267). Nonetheless, the analysis of character through a psychoanalytic lens offers much to the field of cultural criticism. Freudian investigations in that sense have gone beyond the scientific, and wandered into the realm of art itself: as one seeks to investigate a work of art, engaging with psychoanalytic criticism can offer original appreciations of the piece in question, and consequently of the cultural scene surrounding it.

So, under the banner of cultural criticism, we might wonder whether engaging with Freud's interest in utilizing the work as a lens to diagnose its author might also offer valuable points for the analysis of art. While foregoing a judgment of character, perhaps tackling the motivations of

an author can lend itself to a deeper comprehension of the piece in question. Jung, however, sees very little merit in that mode of interpretation. In the fourth chapter of *Spirit in Man, Art and Literature*, he argues that understanding an author's neuroses does not allow us to understand the work itself. Against Freud's reductionism, and those it influenced, Jung says that a psychoanalytic reading of art is not primarily concerned with the work, and therefore has nothing meaningful to say about art and its essence (87). To Jung's argument, Roland Barthes has given a passionate defense in his 1967 essay "The Death of the Author." In fact, most introspective cultural criticism today follows, or attempts to follow, that idea: creator and creation should be analyzed separately.

Nevertheless, Jung perhaps has missed the larger point Freud was trying to make. In restricting Freud's observations solely to the realm of psychoanalysis, he bars inquisitive thought from promoting new ideas. Jung fails to see that cultural criticism has always sought to illuminate beyond the work in question,[8] and that restricting the knowledge base that allows one to ruminate beyond the inspirational material goes against the principles of criticism. Therefore, while I do not wish to generalize from a simple psychoanalytic reading, I still make use of Freudian approaches to art, albeit not exactly as Freud described them. After all, if we did not venture beyond our respective learned bases of knowledge, following the appropriate boundaries set forth by other bases of knowledge, we would not be able to ever uncover new theories.

Conclusion

Taking a look at the author, or *through* the author, can lend important information for the appraisal of art. Writers are, up to a certain extent, products of their time, thus their work can shed some light on the cultural context that surrounds it. If not a value judgment of art, looking at the

[8] As evidenced by Oscar Wilde's 1891 essay "The Critic as Artist," George Orwell's 1941 article "The Art of Donald McGill," Margaret Fuller's "A Short Essay on Critics" from 1840, and Jorge Luis Borges' 1931 essay "The Superstitious Ethics of the Reader."

author can at the very least help us uncover the important cultural strands that have influenced the creation of the piece. *Looking through* Alencar we find a Brazilian society still very much influenced and molded after its colonial master. *Looking through* Machado we find a post-abolition society engaged in the first steps of integration, dealing with miscegenation and its consequential cultural mélange. And *Looking through* Buarque we find an optimistic society in the midst of an economic boom that, led by a left-leaning President,[9] helped raise millions out of poverty.

Freud's conclusion, that literature can mirror the psychoanalytic process and help readers achieve catharsis, is a guiding impulse for my proposal of a cure. If literature does indeed carry such a potential for catharsis, then it is imperative for writers to become aware of the unconscious trauma they may be inflicting upon their work, and consequently, broadcasting culturally. Then, the novel can be fashioned not as a dogmatic text, but one that deals with its contradictions, both individual to the work and universal to the specific society, in an open way, allowing the readers to draw their own interpretations at the end.

Identifying the underpinnings of the cultural psyche of the Brazilian then becomes possible through psychoanalytic criticism that is focused not on the author's specific neuroses, but instead, on the societal collective unconscious manifest through the author's work. One of the most impactful underlying cultural-political structures unconsciously at play in Brazil to this day, has originated in the 19th century, right after Independence. The romanticized mythology of Alencar served to repress the nation's colonial trauma, it made the Brazilian fall in love with the colonizer, and unconsciously seek its recurrences throughout history. This, in turn, engendered a cultural complex, best exemplified by the inferiority complex—wherein a Brazilian will see that which is produced internally as inferior to that which is produced in the Global North—and by its

[9] Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva served as the 35th President of Brazil from 2003 to 2010.

consequential superiority complex—wherein a Brazilian establishes his/her European roots in a self-aggrandizing effort to put him/her above Brazilians who cannot establish similar roots. The trauma, the complex, and the search for the recurrence of the colonizer are all passed on through generations in the Brazilian collective unconscious, which can be evidenced in the national literature. In *Epitaph of a Small Winner*, I find evidence of an aristocracy espousing the ideas propagated by Alencar, while also suffering from the trauma. And in *Spilt Milk* I trace the historical effects of this trauma to the present, highlighting the many aristocratic transitions the country has undergone, and showing how these brought along general changes encapsulated by new regimes. At the same time, however, these changes only truly worked in façades, as the underlying structures of the country have remained intact to this day, conscious- and unconsciously, ultimately evidenced by the election of President Bolsonaro in 2018.

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