Challenges, José Vicente Pestana Paradoxes and Tensions in Artistic Cooperation In (and Between) Europe and Latin America: Some Reflections and Guidelines Introduction

Cooperation projects are cardinal in the development of artistic peripheries in general—and, in particular, the artistic peripheries in which live performance primarily operates. The sense of encounter that accompanies cooperation is a little explored field that resituates the limits and ultimate meaning of who we are as artists and social beings.

This contribution uses these ideas as a baseline to review challenges, paradoxes and tensions as principles that characterize—or can underpin—artistic cooperation between close and, at the same time, distant contexts, as is the case of Europe and Latin America. This paper proposes a series of guidelines, based on Jung's Analytical Psychology, to take into account when undertaking artistic cooperation, which may be seen as a stage for human beings confronted with their own complexity as individuals. Artistic cooperation constitutes an invitation to discover the common mythical base between their protagonists. Specifically, this common base includes the archetypal personifications that can mobilize the performers' creativity, as well as drive forward the configuration of the creative process. From this arises the need to attend symbolically to the surrenders and sacrifices made during the exchange process, which entail challenges, paradoxes and tensions.

This approach makes sense given the psychological meaning of the beginnings of theatre as an area of expression for human beings. This sense is that of extraversion, that is, externalizing—i.e. presenting to others—whatever inner contents that have lived inside us (Pandolfi, 1964/2001). This process from introversion to extraversion is accompanied by the emergence of the re-presentational, which means re-presenting to the other something that has happened (or would happen), which also crucially requires the psyche to transcend time and space. The cave painting that can capture an already experienced hunting scene (past), or a human being showing to another one how to capture prey to provide food for the next day (i.e. in the immediate future) are both examples of this. Past and future are observed coming together in the present, which is the perspective of time that characterizes living spectacles—and the direct experience of any work of art. We see, then, that every scenic product involves the embodiment of psychological content that challenges a community.

Starting from these ideas, the following paragraphs establish the importance of the collective unconscious, a concept from Jungian Analytical Psychology, to understand—and, at the same time, favour—artistic cooperation in (and between) Europe and Latin America. Encouraging this cooperation has taken centre stage since the EU adopted the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Although the beneficial and fruitful nature of this initiative is recognized, two issues have been noted: on the one hand, the need for greater diversity and resources to increase the impact of the convention on all European policies (Becerril, 2017); and, on the other hand, the lack of sufficient indicators to evaluate its results in cultural promotion, which must be established "from the perspective of strengthening regional integration processes and social and democratic cohesion" (Crusafon, 2015, p. 235).

Although research on cooperation between groups has highlighted a biological foundation that shapes culture (Gächter & Herrmann, 2009), it is not clear how culture affects cooperation (Boyd et al., 2011; Smith, 2020). In this regard, incorporating Jungian Analytical Psychology offers a differential point of view, as psychological, sociological, anthropological and historical issues converge in this perspective. It offers a vision that is related to the values of pluralism, diversity, multiculturalism and innovation—to which the entities responsible for culture in the EU aspire. The incorporation of these values constitutes a novel contribution that recognizes the difficulties involved in assuming comprehensive models applicable to various realities in the field of cultural policies (Visser, 2002). As will be displayed throughout the text, attending to the main characteristics of the collective unconscious offers ways to promote deep connections between artists of different origins, as well as between them and the communities in which their creative processes are created and inserted.

The Collective Unconscious in Artistic Cooperation: Archetypal Images and Creation

The collective unconscious is a psychological concept proposed by the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), providing an explanation for the historical-cultural foundation common to civilizations of all times. Specifically, it includes: contents which do not originate in personal acquisitions but in the inherited possibility of psychic functioning in general, i.e., in the inherited structure of the brain. These are the mythological associations, the motifs and images that can spring up anew anytime anywhere, independently of historical tradition or migration. (Jung, 1921–1960/1971, §842).

Bassil-Morozow (2018) has recently highlighted three motifs that encompass the main archetypes of the collective unconscious proposed by Jung, each of which integrates specific figures: social adaptation (the shadow and the trickster), reality-testing (anima and animus—along with the old man/father and the old woman/mother) and self-actualization (the child, the hero and the self). Appealing to characters from literary, theatrical and cinematographic fictions, Bassil-Morozow refers to specific characteristics for each of these three themes, which can guide the work of those who wish to start an artistic cooperation project.

Social adaptation. Initial contact with the world sparks a process of adjustment whereby each individual moves from primary narcissism to successful adjustment with those around them. During this process, the shadow reveals flaws in the adaptation, while the trickster tries to maintain the agency of the individual in the face of social norms (even breaking them—as happens in the most recent films about the character of the Joker).

Reality-testing. At the beginning of the life's journey, this theme is played by the mother and the father, who will result, respectively, in the anima (man's inner female) and the animus (woman's inner male). This change is characterized by a transition from dependence on parents to the beginning of an independent life. Put differently, these archetypes "indicate a degree of maturity, acceptance of reality and ability to separate real people from fantasies" (Bassil-Morozow, p. 66).

Self-actualization. Child, hero, and the self "explore the issue of free Will: do we make life decisions ourselves or are we led by a larger force on our individuation path; an omniscient force that controls us?". On this common problem, the child "itself stands for motivation and creativity", because it is "pure and naïve, untouched by the corrupting influence of society, and it is a source of spiritual renewal". For its part, "the hero who searches for the true self... is characterized by her or his ability to be motivated, brave, decisive and to overcome obstacles" (Bassil-Morozow, pp.77–78).

As a matter of fact, self-actualization is an individual process that is related, in a broader sense, to the social issue of freedom. Consequently, being touched by any of these three archetypal figures may make us aware of how crucial the source that nourishes our strive for authenticity is. Ancient Greek tradition has a paradigmatic example in Ulysses' life journey as described in the Odyssey chronicles.

In addition to these three motifs, another element in the collective unconscious is that of creation myths (von Franz, 1972/1983). The characteristics of the creation myths illustrate experiences similar to those that can occur in the context of cultural cooperation in (and between) artists from Europe and Latin America. From the myths described by von Franz (ibid.), four useful principles for artistic work can be derived: the two-way unpredictability, the creative parallelism, the sacrificial question, and the latent feeling.

Two-way unpredictability. In essence, a truly creative act is unexpected and surprising, although artists can start from a previously agreed upon theme. This unpredictability can emerge in two opposite and complementary directions at the same time: from below and from above.

When the unpredictable comes from below, the starting point can be a dream or any other image that bursts into our consciousness in any circumstances. This would be the case of an artist who, for example, is shocked to see the news of police charges against protesters, and more specifically, how in a small part of the image an agent smokes and smiles placidly.

On the other hand, the unforeseeable comes from above when we do something physically with our body, after which there is the occasion of thinking on the symbolic aspects of the physical actions contained. In this case, there may not be a specific starting point on which to work, just an improvisation with movements of various artists, who, upon seeing the result, will try to synthesize in one word what their bodies have discussed.

Creative parallelism. When more than one artist coincides, different artistic universes constellate, trying to harmonize between them, but this can also generate friction. Harmony and friction are twin expressions of a process underlying creation: the tension between opposites that, in reality, originate from the same place to be unravelled and made conscious.

When opposing forces appear in the development of artistic cooperation, it is usually common to choose one of the options, one "good" and the other "bad". For von Franz (1972/83, p. 83), "every creative impulse is double. There is always a Yes and a No, an active and a passive aspect". Now, the choice must be made based on a principle of synthesis, that is, understanding that good has a bad part and bad has a good part. If, on the contrary, the "good" is chosen because it

is convenient and the "bad" is discarded because it is despicable, this unilaterality distances us from a vision of the complexity and wholeness of the human essence.

Continuing with the previous example, no matter how shocking the image of the police officer smoking and smiling while his colleagues attack protesters, it could also be a starting point to reflect on the forms of evasion that all individuals can show in stressful situations.

Sacrificial question. In line with the previous principle, every choice involves losses, which is equivalent to sacrificing something. Sacrifice involves giving to transcend:

Every step forward towards building up more consciousness destroys a previous living balance... Every bit of progress in consciousness, every creative process, every widening and changing of the conscious attitude, first destroys a primitive original totality and a certain balance within the whole system. (von Franz, p. 100)

Thus, cooperating between Europe and Latin America means going beyond—without ignoring—geographical and historical limits, borders behind which common archetypal images can emerge. In this sense, the trickster is of special interest, an archetype that, by questioning social adaptation, moves from unpredictability and a certain destructive lack of control to a deeply salvific position (Jung, 1953–1973/1980). This figure is embodied in a character from Spanish literature such as Lazarillo de Tormes and also in the indigenous people who deceive the gods in foundational stories of countries such as Guatemala (Asturias, 1930/1970) or Venezuela (Tedesco, 1981). This example illustrates the presence of the same material in the cultural base of two different places. Therefore, appealing to archetypal foundations such as the trickster would make it possible to destroy and sacrifice (in a metaphorical sense) geographical borders for the sake of symbolic proximity.

Latent feeling. As a last—but no less important—characteristic we must consider the sensitive experiences of the artistic process, which differ in origin from rational experiences. In their confusion and intensity, the feelings that accompany a creative act are also revealing of that common background between artists of different origins. Von Franz (1972/1983) emphasizes the feeling of loneliness, given that it can be a good starting point to fill one's existence with meaning through creation.

Thus, when faced with artists from Europe and Latin America, the following question might be asked: what makes them feel alone, not seen or not heard as creators? Or put another way: what do we agree on in terms of the emptiness we believe undermines our world today? Questions like these can also form the basis of an artistic cooperation process.

This synthesis of the mechanisms underlying creation myths makes it possible to name what can be experienced in creative processes, especially when it involves artists from diverse cultural backgrounds. Let us remember that beyond the external differences, we all house images of the collective unconscious as a symbolic heritage shared by all humankind. Now, creation also has an individual dimension, which Guggenbühl-Craig (1992/2014) accounts for by distinguishing three types of creativity: personal creativity, collective creativity, and transcendent creativity. A description of them helps to discern when we are dealing with an authentic creative event.

Personal creativity relates to everyday self-expression coming up with ingenious or striking solutions to solve minor problems. Collective creativity relates to anticipating what will please a large mass of individuals, as is the case of influencers who sense what may be successful in the immediate future. With transcendent creativity, the artist is a vehicle for a higher message, which appears inevitable and which entails an element of sacrifice beyond the body that expresses it (to the point even of destruction). As examples, we have Jacqueline du Pré playing the Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto in E minor (Op. 85) and Ryszard Cieslak's performance of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *El Príncipe Constante* (The Constant Prince). In both cases, Jung's assertion (1931–1957/1971, §107) would be exemplified: "[a] work of art is not a human being, but is something supra-personal... the special significance of a true work of art resides in 'the fact that it has... soared beyond the personal concerns of its creator'".

Approaching the Collective Unconscious in Artistic Cooperation

The introduction of the collective unconscious in artistic cooperation can raise doubts regarding whether it is possible to operationalize these contents on stage. A series of considerations are made below to respond to this concern. They are designed to favour entry into contact throughout the creative process with the contents of the collective unconscious, whether archetypal images or characteristics of the creation myths. These considerations are oriented towards group experimentation; in the case of individual works, the work of Page (2019) should be consulted.

Firstly, all judgment—and prejudice—must be suspended when receiving the stage materials: there is no bad content but only poorly (or unilaterally) worked content. Now, if any image appears that far exceeds the actors' ability to work with it before an audience, it must be left aside. Remembering Hagen & Frankel (1973/1990), on stage we must make visible things which we can go in and out of, and (dis)connect to or from.

Distancing ourselves from judgments and prejudices as much as possible, the question arises as to what type of individual material or images (of dream origin or others) can contribute to group work. In any case, a good starting point for selecting content is purely psychological, that is, using the images that challenge us. To question is to not leave us indifferent, whether in a positive or negative sense. We do not only have to share images or stories that impress with their grandeur or adventures. Sometimes, a detail or moment that appears trivial—but that we cannot get out of our minds—can be an excellent starting point for stage research.

Once images have been selected, will they be suitable for the group's stage work? Sharing the material after a group relaxation is advisable here. With eyes closed, whoever provides images does so in a neutral and slow manner, without evaluations or interpretations. For their part, those who listen to a partner's contribution try to capture the essence of what they heard without judgment. Rather than trying to learn to reproduce, it is about getting involved to grasp. The painting "Las Meninas" by Velázquez serves as an example: without detracting from its artistic values, it would be about seeing ourselves in the same room (whether or not we are one of the characters, animals or objects portrayed) and, from that implication, freeing our imagination to this experience.

Once you have received the materials from everyone involved, a good practice is to ask yourself: in a word, what topic or conflict have we been talking about? What term would be used to string together most (ideally all) of the material? Sticking to one word is not a trivial matter, since as von Franz (1970/1993) argued, this synthesis corresponds to intuition, a manifestation of the unconscious that, like a diamond, shows the countless facets of a single gem.

The considerations made do not rule out intellectual work in organizing the image materials (and other exercises that the creation process demands), but it is precisely the visibility given to the contents of the unconscious, shared in a group, which can help you to capture the base archetype underlying the artistic cooperation.

These recommendations should be complemented with those specific to an individual process of self-knowledge; fundamentally, the embodiment of images that suddenly burst into our psyche (whether we are asleep or awake) and that may be linked to the creation process. It is beyond the scope of these pages to delve into artists' individual processes, which in some cases may require the support of professionals. But in no case are the interpolations between the individual and the collective in a creation process ignored.

In Conclusion

Like two travellers from distant origins at a common crossroads, the experiences of artistic cooperation in (and between) Europe and Latin America are as desirable as they are insufficient. Beyond the contents of consciousness, letting the contents of the collective unconscious flow, which can constellate in a creation process, can bring authentically revealing material to the stage. Nevertheless, this process is not free of challenges, paradoxes and tensions that must be addressed.

Challenges, given the need to promote more artistic cooperation in which, in addition, social scientists can be incorporated to account for the processes experienced by artists. *Paradoxes*, to the extent that every creation process brings with it contradictions—in materials and motives—that bring the whirlwind of the unconscious and the logic of consciousness face to face. And, accompanying these paradoxes, *tensions* appear due to the unpredictability, parallelisms, sacrifices, and latent feelings involved in authentic creation processes.

In sum, to undertake the mission of artistic cooperation projects, each individual involved must know—in a metaphorical sense—their own house, conditioning it in such a way as to be open to welcoming all realities. After this, the symbolic foundations will be laid to invoke that transcendence a shared multicultural stage gives us.

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STRONGER PERIPHERIES:

Building a Southern Coalition in Performing Arts

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