
PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

Provocations from Amerindian perspectivism to psychoanalysis: Rethinking nature and culture in the analytical experience

Thais Klein¹  and Juliana Vieira^{*2} 

¹ Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil

² Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

ABSTRACT

Starting from a dialogue between Amerindian perspectivism and psychoanalysis—more specifically, concerning the conceptual pair nature and culture—the goal of this article is to outline a notion of cultural experience in psychoanalysis and highlight its consequences for the psychoanalytic clinic. In order to do that, we investigate the notions of nature and culture in Freud's work and then present Viveiros de Castro's (1996) considerations on the subject, in the context of Amerindian perspectivism. Based mainly on Winnicott's considerations about potential space, we then elaborate on the concept of cultural experience in psychoanalysis. Our hypothesis is that it has a bearing on the analytical experience, especially with regard to the intentionality of other beings. Two clinical vignettes are presented in order to help define the analytical experience as a state of 'between-ness', a process in which analyst and analysand are engaged in the possibility of becoming more fully themselves.

KEYWORDS: psychoanalysis; culture; anthropology; nature

The sermons and letters of Father Antônio Vieira, written during his stay in Brazil as a missionary, resume the Second Scholasticism first developed in the 16th century. One of the aspects of this doctrine, the ideological basis of the colonial enterprise, consists of the evangelical obligation to preach to every creature—the opposite of some theses that, by attributing little intelligence and spiritual capacity to the indigenous population, left them out of the Christian religious system. The writings concern a supposedly disordered and wild

*Contact details: julianavieira.contato@gmail.com

territory that needs to be saved from barbarism in order to be constituted as a civilisation. Vieira (1957) writes to the Provincial of Brazil: 'Many are very rude and barbaric, due to a lack of culture rather than to nature' (p. 398). Culture, brought by the Europeans, would then provide the necessary clothing for the population that inhabited the colonised territories to cover their animal nature; of nature, only the traces that could be exploited or enjoyed by civilised humans were praised: beautiful landscapes, gold, and brazilwood. The transformation of nature into natural resources was (and still is) considered synonymous with order, progress, and modernisation, legitimising the uses of 'nature' to generate massive amounts of 'natural resources', the raw material for the Industrial Revolution.

The artificial distinction between human and non-human (and other dichotomies such as nature *versus* culture, civilisation *versus* barbarism, and religion *versus* science) lies at the core of modern thought and supports the ontological division of the world into inseparable, homogeneous categories (Lugones, 2014). Establishing a division between pairs of opposites comes, therefore, in the wake of the construction of a strongly racist hegemonic discourse that enshrined Europe as the epicentre of enunciation from which patterns of civilisation and production of knowledge were outlined; it is a division between modern reason and other reasons, modern man and other existences—existences of bodies and places subordinated by coloniality (Fanon, 1952/2008). The opposition between the pairs of terms that make up the 'nature/culture' dualism constituted, therefore, one of the keystones of modernity/coloniality in its project of ruthless and violent exploitation of bodies and territories.

It is clear that the articulation between psychoanalysis and the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, undertaken mainly by Lacan (1956/1998), brought forth a first displacement from this movement, since it implies the abandonment of a developmentalist perspective that draws a teleological line from the primitive to the civilised, stressing structure as a symbolic dimension that is inseparable from language and that permeates everyone. Culture in psychoanalysis is often considered synonymous with the paternal law, that is, a symbolic order that marks a break from nature and leaves an inescapable remainder. It is, therefore, primarily a force of drive control and a garment that separates the human from animality. Anthropology, since Lévi-Strauss, has continued to debate other ways of conceiving culture and, above all, other approaches to the much-discussed issue of the division between nature and culture.

Our resorting to contemporary anthropology and, more specifically, to Amerindian perspectivism, is thus a fruitful way to better define the concept of cultural experience in contemporary psychoanalysis. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to encourage a dialogue between Amerindian perspectivism and psychoanalysis, more specifically concerning the pair nature and culture. We aim to contribute to the problematisation of the dualism of nature and culture in psychoanalysis by identifying some guidelines for the concept of cultural experience and its connection to the analytical experience. Through two clinical

vignettes, we attempt to present the analytical experience as a process analogous to dreaming, occupying a place of 'between-ness' among different beings, and capable of forging new worlds. To this end, we briefly analyse the notions of nature and culture in Freud's work and then introduce the considerations of Viveiros de Castro (1996), in the context of Amerindian perspectivism.

CULTURE (AND NATURE) IN FREUD'S WORK

Looking for a definition of culture in psychoanalysis is an arduous and controversial task. Costa (1989), for example, maintains that in the most authoritative Freudian texts on culture, civilisation, masses, religion, etc., it is not possible to identify consistent foundations to speak of a psychoanalytic theory of culture. The cultural dimension for Freud is, from this perspective, strongly marked by his metapsychological concern around the psychic constitution—which, in turn, doesn't correspond to a disregard for it. For Costa (1989), Freud manages to make us see, perhaps like no other thinker, what the world of men without institutions or rules would look like: a catastrophic scenario of unbridled impulses. Therefore, even though a theory of culture cannot be precisely outlined based on his work, the cultural dimension is undeniably central.

In general, it can be said that the Freudian hypothesis about culture is mainly supported by the model of the psychic apparatus based on neurosis: culture and the defensive mechanism of repression go hand in hand. The role of culture, mainly throughout the first Freudian topography, concerns the viability of drive renunciation. In his words:

the human culture—I mean everything in which human life has risen above its animalistic conditions and in which it is distinguished from the life of animals—and I refuse to separate culture [Kultur] from civilisation [Zivilisation]—shows the observer as is known, two sides. In one of them, it encompasses all the knowledge and capacity that human beings would acquire to dominate the forces of nature and extract their goods from it to satisfy human needs; and, on the other, all the devices necessary to regulate the relations of human beings with one another, and especially the distribution of accessible goods... Culture needs, therefore, to be defended against the individual, and its devices, institutions and commandments are placed at the service of this task: these aim not only to establish a certain distribution of goods, but also to maintain it; in fact, they need to protect from the hostile motions of human beings everything that serves to conquer nature and produce goods. (Freud, 1930/2020, pp. 234–235)

It is important to stress that the use of the terms '*Kultur*' and '*Zivilisation*' interchangeably is not the product of mere chance: Freud refuses to adopt the difference between the two as a support of his definition, making it clear to the reader, on the other hand, that he was aware of the different ideas they expressed (Ianini & Santiago, 2020). This is a political position, since, at the time, '*Zivilisation*' consisted of an expression used to designate the utilitarian English world, associated with the domain of technology, economics, and politics. The term

'*Kultur*', in turn, was used to define the Germanic values underpinning the 1914 conflict and the growing violence that led to the Third Reich. Ianini and Santiago (2020) claim that Freud does not endorse, by refusing the opposition between these terms, the nationalist illusion, especially the German one, according to which the Indo-Germanic peoples were the only ones capable of culture. Freud, by not distinguishing the two terms, extends culture (or civilisation) to everyone, and thus identifies as it one of the sources of human suffering. This point of view is quite explicit in his letter to Einstein:

What I think is the following: since time immemorial, the process of cultural development has occurred in humanity. (I know others prefer to call it civilisation). It is to this process that we owe the best of what we have become and a good part of what we suffer. (Freud, 1930/2020, p. 440)

In view of this preamble, it is important to point out some guidelines for the Freudian discussion on culture, mainly within the scope of the first topography. It is, therefore, a process which permeates everyone and has a double aim: regulation and restriction of instinctual motions. Culture is considered, therefore, as an ally of the suffering arising from the conflict between impulses and the restrictions imposed on them. Now, if we consider Costa's (1989) statement that the Freudian discussion about culture is mainly anchored in his interest in the genesis of the psyche and, more specifically, is located primarily in the neurotic paradigm, the articulation of the cultural dimension with the constitution of the neurotic subject becomes inevitable. This correlation can be explicitly found in Freud's work—for example, in one of the first texts deemed 'cultural' by Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (Freud, 1913/2012). Freud's most anthropological text also contains a paradigmatic example of how culture is conceived in tandem with the conflict between the demands of impulses and repression. It draws a parallel between the establishment of the cultural dimension and neurosis: as is known, from this perspective, ontogenesis repeats phylogenesis.

The totem, more specifically, the totemic animal, is defined as a substitute for the tyrannical father murdered by the brothers in the primal horde. This founding murder is celebrated with a feast in which the totem is devoured—the homicidal impulse is thus buried under guilt, which is in turn reinforced by acts, beliefs, and reparatory rituals (religious ones, analogous to obsessive thinking). After the murder and the totemic ritual, a kind of fraternity is established around the feeling of guilt linked to the murder, which prevents the repetition of tyranny by one of the individuals. The totemic organisation replaces the primal horde and gives rise to a new way of life, as the brothers begin to restrain their impulses through identification with the totemic animal, a representative of the murdered father.

This plot is often evoked as a founding myth of culture as separated from nature. The latter, related to the free impulses of the primal horde, is partially dominated with the fraternity established by the death of the primal father and the identification with the totem. The decision by the brothers to renounce the father's place turns his death into parricide and the survivors into accomplices to the primordial crime, subjects divided, barred, subjected to

castration, and symbolically owning it. Defeated, dead, and mourned, the leader of the horde becomes a symbolic Father, Name-of-the-Father. Alterity is hereby signalled by the symbolic dimension of the totem and the mechanism of identification to it. From this perspective, the primordial crime is the symbol of the origin of culture (or civilisation): all those who are traversed by language are complicit in this crime. Drive renunciation is considered, therefore, a condition of the social bond. Culture is thus connected to the constitution of the social bond and to the renunciation of impulses, restriction, and viability (of the social order). Inspired mainly by evolutionary anthropologists, Freud takes animism as a form of primitive thought analogous to omnipotent thought, that is, a projection of one's own desires into the world, relegating alterity to the articulated symbolic dimension—to totemism or the paternal law.

Freudian considerations about animism and totemism paradoxically reveal lines of continuity and rupture with modern tradition. By indicating that the 'comparison between the psychology of primitive peoples and the psychology of neurotics is destined to find numerous points of agreement' (Freud, 1913/2012, p. 20), Freud maintains that the animism present in 'primitive peoples'—this Other, foreign to the modern European subject—is not overcome, but continues alive and well, as observed in neurotic symptoms. Endowing things with a soul would not just be for 'primitives', but for all of us.

Freud hesitated throughout his journey between a rationalist and intellectualist conception of culture and a conception that sees the social as produced by lacerating and irreconcilable conflicts (Costa, 1989). Even when he affirms the existence, within the scope of the second topography and the second drive theory, of the inescapable remainder, the malaise inherent to culture, one of its main limitations will be the 'superior power of nature' (Freud, 1930/2020, p. 332). The considerations brought by the new instinctual dualism do not refashion his conception of culture, but point out its restrictions. In his words: 'We will never completely dominate nature; our organism, itself a part of that nature, will always be a passing formation, limited in terms of adaptation and realization.' (Freud, 1930/2020, p. 333).

Although throughout his work Freud avoids providing a precise definition of what he conceives as culture (and as nature), it is nevertheless possible to delineate some aspects of this conceptual pair, above all regarding the role of culture that runs through his entire work. Let's follow an excerpt from *Civilization and Its Discontents*:

It suffices for us, therefore, to repeat that the word 'culture' [Kultur] characterizes the sum of the achievements and devices through which our life distances itself from that of our animal ancestors and which serve two purposes: the protection of the human being against nature and the regulation of the relationships between human beings. (Freud, 1930/2020, p. 337)

Therefore, the notion of culture outlined in the main Freudian discussions on the subject is based on the repetition of the ontogenesis of the neurotic subject and, even though its limitations are precisely laid out, it has drive restriction as its cornerstone. On the other hand, the persistence of nature and even primitive impulses allows us to glimpse Freud's break from

teleology and points to the permanence of nature within culture itself. Therefore, even though the Freudian conception of culture is mainly grounded in contributions from evolutionary anthropologists and marked by the separation between primitive and civilised, the path opened by psychoanalysis allows us continue to build bridges with anthropology in order to rethink our ideas about culture (and nature).

FROM MULTICULTURALISM TO MULTINATURALISM: NATURE AND CULTURE IN AMERINDIAN PERSPECTIVISM

Anthropology since Freud has provided, as we have shown here, not only an important field of dialogue for psychoanalysis, but its contributions have worked as a kind of foundation that helps sustain metapsychological elaborations. The paths followed by *Totem and Taboo* (Freud, 1913/2012) are grounded in the anthropology of the time, mostly in the so-called evolutionist anthropology, although they were criticised by some of Freud's contemporary anthropologists, such as Malinowski. Lacan, in turn, used Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology as one of his main allies—it was by transforming it into one of the foundations of his notion of the unconscious, along with Saussure's linguistics, that the return to Freud as a critique of the psychoanalytical movement of the 1950s was made possible. Therefore, exploring the contributions of contemporary anthropology is not a mere intellectual whim for the psychoanalyst.

Starting from ethnographies of the Amazonian peoples, Viveiros de Castro (2018) claims that perspectivist theories bring about a kind of inversion of modern anthropology, an anthropology in reverse, which refuses to be yet another case of artificial systematisation by an anthropologist or a caricatured portrait of one of multiple possible cultures. It does not represent, however, an absolute break with the anthropology that precedes it; the considerations brought by Amerindian perspectivism, despite asserting a form of difference, follow in the footsteps of the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss. For Viveiros de Castro (2018), it is possible to find alternatives to structuralism in Strauss's own work, precisely in the discussion around totemism. The paradigmatic contrast between 'totemism' and 'sacrifice', appearing both in 'Totemism today' (Lévi-Strauss, 2018) and in 'Savage thought' (Lévi-Strauss, 1990), refers to a generalised opposition between myth and ritual. While totemism postulates a homology between two parallel series (nature and social groups)—that is, a metaphorical division—sacrifice refers to metonymy (one can easily envisage here the discussion later carried out by Lacan). The real and non-reversible mediation between two terms, humans and divinities, carried out through sacrifice, makes up a kind of system of operations. The line chosen by Viveiros de Castro, supported by the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari (1972/2010), seeks to rethink anthropology along similar lines, based on the concept of sacrifice. In other words, just as the abovementioned philosophers developed a critique of the neurotic and Oedipal paradigm, Viveiros de Castro's aim is to shift the

perspective from myth to sacrifice in anthropology, emphasising the field of dynamic virtualities that sacrifice mobilises as a process.

This path, called by Viveiros de Castro (2015) 'anti-narcissistic', derives from a reassessment of animism as perspectivism, as a 'true anti-totemic operator' (p. 101). Perspectivism, as an ethno-epistemological corollary of animism, ends up producing an 'asymmetric twist' (p. 15): while animism presupposes an attribution of supposedly exclusive human characteristics to things, perspectivism starts from the assumption that intentionality is the one thing all beings have in common. When we investigate Amerindian mythology, a completely different conception of relationship comes out. In this worldview, all animals were once human—all things were human. What the myths narrate is the process by which beings who were human ceased to be so, lost their original condition—the antithesis of our modern mythology. For us, the common ground between humans and other animals is animality or nature, but not humanity. From the point of view espoused mainly by modern European thought, humans are an animal species, but not exactly 'one among others', because we are endowed with something else: culture or language. The instincts, behind the layers of varnish that is culture, constitute our animal background and culture would then give an Apollonian contour to animality.

Contrary to the naturalistic ontology of Westerners, the basic idea contained in perspectivism is considering culture as something universal—humans and non-humans are endowed with social relations—and nature as multiple. Intentionality, defined by the idea of spirit, would be the common link between human and non-human beings, who resemble each other not because of the radical division or the homogeneity of what they express or perceive. All beings, endowed with intentionality, are not equal and are differentiated by the body: the perceptions of a being about another one are directly connected to their clothing, that is, to their body. Intentionality, from this perspective, is not exclusive to humans: all beings are endowed with intentionality. Culture is the common ground; nature is multiple.

Therefore, the shifts brought about by Amerindian perspectivism in the concept of animism are based above all on the fundamental question of the difference between what is 'proper to man' and what is, on the contrary, an existing property in general—a problem concerning the modern division between nature and culture. The discourses of the so-called natives are not just about their needs or their minds, they do not reflect a specific way of conceiving an idea of nature or concepts represented by a certain cultural panorama but are ways of creating a world that must be considered as essentially different from ours.

This diversity of perspectives results in a so-called multinaturalism—that is, not the affirmation of the variety of natures, but the 'naturalness' of variation. If in the mononaturalism that characterises modernity, subject and object are distinct poles with regard to intentionality, multinaturalism conceives the object as 'an incompletely interpreted subject' (Viveiros de Castro, 2018, p. 360). The point of view does not create the object but forges the

very subject instead. In other words, it is not the subject that creates the perspective, but the perspective that creates the subject. Hereby, everyone knows the world, but the world they know is not the same—epistemology is constant, ontology is variable. The concept of animism is therefore put into perspective: it is not a matter of attributing a soul to things, but of calling into question how things themselves exist. In other words, what is at stake here is not a subject who, separated from the object, can know the world through thought, but perspectives that displace subject and object—everything that exists in the cosmos can be a subject, just not simultaneously.

In seeking to overcome relativism and universalism, the conception of metaphysical continuity and physical discontinuity, that is, a common spirit and specification through the body, Amerindian perspectivism makes a case for multinaturalism and ontological plurality. In a symmetrically inverse logic to that which conceives culture through its universal aspect, culture is here the varying aspect and nature, in turn, is taken as homogeneously universal—not as transcendental, but associated with different ontologies. The ontological turn allows us, therefore, to highlight the potential of different ways of being and possible worlds—it moves from the conceptualisation or description of culture to the possibility of experiencing other worlds.

Neither Freud nor Lacan had access to the most recent discussions in the field of anthropology, especially those that throw light on the consequences and limits of a certain way of conceiving nature and culture, taking the path opened by structural anthropology further. If anthropology was in the past an important ally for the great thinkers of psychoanalysis, it could not be different today. With this in mind, how do the considerations brought by Amerindian perspectivism, especially about nature and culture, provoke psychoanalysis? If it is possible to question the idea of culture as a symbolic dimension divorced from nature, how can we grasp the issue of culture in contemporary psychoanalysis? What would be the contribution of psychoanalysis itself to the scope of cultural experience? Although it is not possible to exhaust the further developments that these questions might foster, from the path taken so far we are going to outline some aspects of a definition of cultural experience in psychoanalysis which can be on a par with the displacements caused by Amerindian perspectivism.

CHARTING A COURSE TO DEFINE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

As we have seen, when we talk about culture in psychoanalysis, often the first idea that comes to mind is the imposition of cultural predicates that include or exclude certain forms of satisfaction—a perspective grounded above all in the neurotic paradigm. The way in which they shape drive restriction is certainly an important aspect of what Freudian psychoanalysis termed civilised sexual morality. The displacements brought forth by contemporary

anthropology, in turn, start from the perspective of the Amerindian peoples, in which multinaturalism and ontological plurality allow the creation of different worlds. Culture, in this context, cannot be thought of as a product or externally imposed on man, but is located between the self and the world: it is less important to conceptualise culture or delimit its function than to understand it as a process not to be found in man—or built from a single, external, and static nature—but in a dimension between intentionality, an attribute that humans share with other beings, and multiple natures. The word ‘located’ here is not arbitrary and it is precisely at this point that we can appreciate the contribution of psychoanalysis to a certain conception of cultural experience that seeks to further the criticism posed by contemporary anthropology to modern European thought. From an epistemological perspective, it is not so much about resorting to anthropology to elucidate psychoanalysis, as it is about outlining some contributions of psychoanalysis to the conception of cultural experience. It is not a matter of transposing Amerindian thought to the analytical past, but of envisioning paths in psychoanalysis that admit of a displacement of the modern division between nature and culture and its reverberations in the analytical experience.

One of the authors who seems to displace the conception of culture as a regulator of the drive is precisely Donald Winnicott. Winnicott (1967/1975), in his text ‘The Location of Cultural Experience’, hints at an interesting criticism of a certain understanding of culture in psychoanalysis which, along with the discussion of Amerindian perspectivism, shows a fruitful path towards a notion of cultural experience in contemporary psychoanalysis:

Freud, in his topography of the mind, found no place for the experience of cultural things. He gave a new value to inner psychic reality and from that came a new value to things that are real and truly external... but perhaps it has not reached the point of telling us where, in the mind, cultural experience is found. (Winnicott, 1967/1975, p. 133)

Based on this observation, Winnicott makes use of the idea of location to discuss the cultural experience. It is interesting to note that the English psychoanalyst dedicates a large part of the article’s introduction to the chosen epigraph: ‘On the seashore of endless worlds children meet’ by Tagore. What Winnicott hints at is that Tagore’s poem contributed to his discussion on the location of cultural experience. In his words: ‘I understood, however, that *the game, in fact, is not a matter of internal psychic reality, nor of external reality either.*’ (Winnicott, 1975/2019, p. 134, emphasis in the original). The word ‘shore’ is used to designate the coast, the seaside, that is, a space of mobile and fluctuating borders that constantly oscillates on the threshold between sea and land. No wonder one of the synonyms for ‘shore’ is ‘border’: it suffices to walk along the beach for one to realise that the edges of the sea oscillate infinitely, leaving an impression of numerous lines that intertwine like mountain ranges in an impressionist painting. In Tagore’s poem, a few stanzas ahead of the one chosen by Winnicott, we read ‘Children have their play on the seashore of worlds’ (p. 134). The expression ‘seashore of worlds’, in our view, highlights the central point of the Winnicottian

argument about the location of cultural experience: neither internal nor external, it is a transitive force, an indeterminate crossing between the internal and the external.

It is precisely from a paradoxical dimension, from the 'realm of the between two', to use an expression by Pontalis (2005), that Winnicott (1975/2019) establishes an essential relationship between illusion, transitional objects, playing, and cultural experience. The field of potential phenomena is related not only to playing, but to the entire cultural experience. We are in the dimension of the illusion that allows the baby to create the world and emerge from a certain non-differentiation with its environment, an ontological source of creativity, of access to reality and the possibility of experiencing culture. This is so because it is a place forged by the symbol of union or, in his words: '*this is the place that I set out to examine, the separation that is not a separation, but a form of union*' (Winnicott, 1967/1975, p. 136, emphasis in the original). The location of the cultural experience is heir to the illusion and creation of this space-time:

I used the term 'cultural experience' as an extension of the idea of transitional phenomena and play, without being sure I could define the word 'culture'. The emphasis is actually on experience. Using the word 'culture', I am thinking of inherited tradition. I am thinking of something that belongs to the common fund of humanity, to which individuals and groups can contribute, and which we can all benefit from, *if we have a place to store what we find*. (Winnicott, 1967/1975, pp. 137–138, emphasis in the original)

Now, in this passage a paradox is evident: culture presupposes a tradition and, on the other hand, 'those who offer us a cultural contribution are never repeated, except as deliberate citation, plagiarism being the unforgivable sin of the cultural field' (Winnicott, 1975/2019, p. 138). However, the simultaneity between originality and acceptance of tradition as the basis of innovation cannot happen if there is not 'a place to store what we find'. Hence, more than defining what culture is, Winnicott hints at the contribution of psychoanalysis to this subject, by showing that it is necessary to create a space-time so that culture can be experienced. The potential space, since it forms a continuum with the experience of illusion, stresses the potentiality (not for nothing does the expression 'potential' characterise this concept) of updating creativity in a dimension that is not associated either with material reality or with the plane of psychic reality—'children play on the seashore of worlds'.

In order to discuss the cultural experience in psychoanalysis, therefore, it is necessary to go beyond a dimension of regulation of the cultural heritage: as indicated by Winnicott, the cultural experience is articulated with the permanent tension of the task of relating internal and external reality—culture is experienced in a space-time of indeterminacy. As an experience that preserves 'formlessness', the cultural experience cannot just be an imposition, because it actualises the potential of creating worlds—culture and creativity go hand in hand. The cultural experience, therefore, is about relaxation, as opposed to the need to remain integrated: it is the experimentation of non-integration, that is, of lines not completely drawn between me and the world.

In this context, the cultural experience encourages the necessary bridge-building between the objective and the subjective, a task that is never completely finished. It is a 'war that, in fact, has no end'—assuming an end 'would consist in discovering something that is not true, that is, that what the world offers is equal to what the individual creates' (Winnicott, 1945/1978, p. 251). Cultural experience creates worlds, but not in a solipsistic way—it's a matter of separation and union.

It is interesting to note that, from Latin, the word *culturae* refers to the 'action of treating', 'cultivating', 'caring'. The cultural experience, as a process of differentiation and indifferentiation, updates the possibility of feeling alive and continuing to exist in time. Ogden (1994/1996), inspired by Winnicott's considerations, states that when we're reading a book, watching a film, or truly coming into contact with a cultural experience, something human is updated. It is neither possible nor necessary, in this experience, to distinguish what is part of oneself or what is part of the other; for Ogden, a posteriori, what we find are transformations of myself that I did not know before—the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate but interrelated. Culture as an experience, therefore, entails the possibility of updating the continuity of being, of creating a kind of reservoir of updates with which we contribute and by which we are permeated as long as there is a space for this—it is precisely this space that allows us to experience the sensation of being alive and creating the world. The cultural experience, considered as an experience of the multiple and of non-integration, is one of the ways in which the subject is faced with his own opacity and, as such, can recreate and be recreated by collective agencies. It is a kind of practice of recognition in which the act of returning to oneself becomes impossible, since the self is a type of being for which permanence within oneself proves impossible.

Considering the provocations outlined by Amerindian perspectivism, we must stress that the analytical experience must be open to questioning the asymmetry of points of view of different beings—as well as the alternation between the roles of subject and object. This is due to the fact that, as we have seen, if in the naturalistic world of modernity nature is an external object to be known by the subject, the Amerindian interpretative convention follows the opposite principle: culture is the way in which every agent, human or non-human, experiences their own nature which, in turn, is multiple. In this context, the possibility of occupying a point of view is a matter of degree and situation, an interchangeable problematic and not a diacritical property of a certain kind. This exchange, in turn, only occurs in relationships between different beings, human and non-human. There is, thus, a shift from the epistemological problem of how we know the world to an ontological question about which beings participate in this world-building equation.

From the shifts brought forth by Amerindian perspectivism in the pairs of modern opposites, we find in Winnicott's considerations about the location of cultural experience some subsidies for a transformation in the conception of culture in psychoanalysis. When the potential for experiencing an indeterminate space, as theorised by Winnicott, meets

perspectivism, we get a glimpse of an alternative to modern epistemology and its separation between opposites such as subject and object and nature and culture. Cultural experience, thus, encourages us to rethink the analytical experience towards a process in which analyst and analysand—and why not other beings, too?—are engaged in the possibility of becoming more fully themselves through a zone of indeterminacy.

CULTURAL EXPERIENCE AND ANALYTICAL EXPERIENCE

If culture is not considered an exclusive attribute of the human in opposition to nature, but a potentiality of all beings and their points of view that comes to fruition in relations, what are the possible implications for the analytical experience? How can we conceive of the reverberations of the non-human environment, to use an expression by Searls (1960), as part of the potential experience of the indetermination of cultural and analytical experience? Two clinical vignettes are here mobilised, but multiple actors are present in them:

Suits walk hurriedly between cars, badges cluster on the sidewalks, blocking circulation. Buses, motorbikes, and ambulances seem to make constant noises—in the concrete jungle of the centre of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), the background noise is the result of the burning of fossil fuels. The office was strategically set up in that location a few years earlier: between the poorest and the wealthiest areas of the city—as a young psychoanalyst, I was eager to hear from people from all walks of life. Iris had recently been referred by a dear psychiatrist friend: borderline personality disorder—the authoritativeness of the medical discourse did leave room for doubt. Suicide attempts, passages à l'act: at the age of 20, the young woman had a long psychiatric record. For a few months, I saw her twice a week. Even the background buzz of the centre of Rio disappeared, everything was empty. Completely lost in that immensity, in an ice desert, I saw a mirage: when Iris spoke about Skadi, a recently rescued mutt, other affective tones coloured space-time. In the next session, I opened the door and there they were, among cars, suits, and ambulances: Iris and Skadi sitting on the sofa in the office's waiting room. Between Iris, Skadi, and I, there was more vitality. Each of us was more than one, but less than three. Today, I still see Iris once a week, and Skadi comes sometimes—all three of us talk.

Another situation took place back in 2020 when, like true cyborgs, we were machine-analysts, traversed by networks of suffering that materialised in space-time on our screens. We almost couldn't talk: part of my symptoms overlapped with those of Fernanda, a renowned professional and mother of an 11-year-old boy locked in his room, wandering around the digital space and practically apathetic to any human stimulus. The conversation between us, Fernanda and I, in the short breaks of our busy schedules, only took place after my supervisor pointed out our inability to talk about João.

My first conversation with João was through the screen. Despite being separated by just a few kilometres, receiving him in person was still not possible (not just because of the pandemic, as we'll see shortly). (Translator's note: The expression for 'in person' used in the original text is the somewhat poetic 'em corpo vivo', which gains a special meaning when paired with the analysand's reply to the question about how he's doing: 'alive' ['vivo', in Portuguese].) The call is made, the screen lights up, and I see an unexpected figure: a French bulldog with a flat snout and pointy ears. Taken by surprise, I greeted the dog and started looking for João... in vain. Until I decided to ask the dog's name: Tobias. Tobias and I spoke for around three months—the sessions were very important and little by little we built a space for genuine exchanges, despite, until then, not having actually seen João: his voice came from Tobias' mouth. It was difficult to explain to Fernanda what was happening. It was a long way before João could appear in his human form—I still see him today, in the office. At 13 years old, he intrigues me every time I ask, intentionally or not, how he is: 'alive', he replies. Tobias never came to the office.

At different times, both clinical stories reveal the permeability between humans and non-humans and the importance of borders, initially not so well-defined, so that a process could be established. Being able to experience non-integration and becoming another with others is the inescapable condition both for the possibility of experiencing culture and for the analytical traverse—whether for the analyst or for the analysand. The analytical experience, therefore, goes hand in hand with the cultural experience: to paraphrase Tagore, analyst and patient playing on the seashore of worlds. Here, the Freudian maxim '*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*', at the suggestion of Ogden (2020), can be translated as: 'what had been experienced as other for itself ("it") is incorporated into the being itself (who I am, who "I should be", who I am becoming)' (p. 38).

The indissociation between the cultural experience and the analytical experience is related, therefore, not to what can be represented from an external nature, but to an open field of actualisation of possible virtualities between us and the world. What is at stake is, therefore, as Winnicott points out when commenting on Searls' propositions (Winnicott, 1984/1994), the possibility of creating a shared environment that does not coincide with the environment permeated by projections. In his words:

the environment in which I what I refer to in the concept of double dependence is an environment that, essentially, is not made up of projections. Later, the individual may come to a recognition of this in a sophisticated acceptance of 'shared' reality. (Winnicott, 1984/1994, p. 128)

The analytical experience, in its articulation with the cultural experience, cannot therefore be conceived as a process of adaptation to a supposedly shared external reality, but consists of an experience of 'between-ness'. Following Viveiros de Castro's considerations in the field of ethnography, one must take seriously the different possible worlds—between analyst and analysand, between different beings. It is interesting to note that, according to Ogden (2020)

who again borrows from Winnicott, one can make a distinction between two ways of conceiving psychoanalysis, even if there's some overlap between them: epistemological psychoanalysis and ontological psychoanalysis. The epistemological dimension can be thought of as a way of knowing the other whose goal is, through interpretation, to point to anxiety, stressing it as a counterpart to desire. In ontological psychoanalysis, in turn, the issue of knowledge of the other is placed in the background: it is a process in which analyst and analysand are engaged in the possibility of becoming more fully themselves.

However, the possibility of becoming fully oneself is not restricted to the development of an innate human capacity: creativity, in Winnicott's perspective, although it has a phylogenetic origin, must have its ontogenetic origin updated in the relationship with the other, such as the ones taking place between Iris and Skadi, Tobias and João. It is a matter of the actualisation of primary creativity and the feeling of being alive and creative in the world. In this process, 'we become more than we were before having this experience, before having introduced the experience into our personal pattern.' (Ogden, 2020, p. 32).

Perhaps it will thus be possible to think of both the cultural experience and the analytical experience from the point of view of the significant alterities that permeate us, keeping in mind that becoming oneself is also simultaneously seeing oneself inhabited by and as co-creator of different ways of being, a process which may be considered analogous to dreaming. For Ogden (2020), following Winnicott, the analytical experience concerns the possibility of dreaming and thus actualising other potentials of a space that is neither subjective nor objective.

To return to anthropology, the Yanomami, Krenak, and other indigenous peoples inscribe humanity in a web of relations that includes humans and non-humans, all endowed with intentionality. Dreaming, therefore, would be a way of updating this web, a possibility of connection between people and the broader cosmos. Limulja (2022) focuses on the collective dream of the Yanomami, which implies, above all, escaping the familiar. The word *mari* (dream) is not reduced to the nocturnal dream, but also encompasses other experiences connected to the concept of *nomai*, that is, 'leaving oneself', 'little death'. 'For the Yanomami, knowing how to dream is knowing how to see, seeing the invisible. The Yanomami theory of knowledge would necessarily go through *marimu*, that act of coming out of oneself, of fragmentation or partibility of the person' (Limulja, 2022, p. 12). The dream is conceived as an event, as creation, and not as symbolism or representation—it is not a plot restricted to the inner world. Yanomami dreaming, thus, not only articulates the social and the mental, but does so in a way that encompasses different beings.

If we heed the provocations of contemporary anthropology, the analytical experience, when articulated to the cultural experience, points to the possibility of dreaming beyond navel-gazing and thus becomes an instrument to 'postpone the end of the world' (Krenak, 2019). We must get out of the abyss where the indistinct reigns and build a new conception

that seriously admits the creation of other worlds, other natures, and other cultures. To achieve this, we must stop considering the other's perspective as a primitive, abnormal, pathological, immoral, or perverse form of thought, and take it in its full alterity, as something capable of transforming our own image, our own concepts—in short, our own world. Back to dogs (Skadi, Tobias, and Cayenne—Haraway's dog), it's interesting to point out that the species' scientific name is '*canis lupus familiaris*'. The familiar is always the place where the unsettling lurks. Haraway (2021), in her manifesto on companion species, states that one of the good things about the deep difference that might be found in dogs (but not only in them) is the widening of our scope of the mysterious: 'he enriches my ignorance' (p. 299), she says. Therefore, anthropology and, mostly, other possible worlds are indispensable allies to postponing the end of the world.

REFERENCES

- Costa, J. F. (1989). O grupo no pensamento de Freud. In *Psicanálise e contexto cultural* (pp. 57-104). Campus.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2010). *O anti-Édipo*. Editora 34. (Original work published 1972)
- Fanon, F. (2008). *Peles negras, máscaras brancas*. EDUFBA. (Original work published 1952)
- Freud, S. (2012). Totem e tabu. In *Totem e tabu: Contribuição à história do movimento psicanalítico e outros textos (1912–1914). Obras completa, 11* (pp. 245–327). Companhia das Letras. (Original work published 1913)
- Freud, S. (2020). O mal-estar na cultura. In *Obras incompletas de Sigmund Freud. Cultura, sociedade, religião: O mal-estar na cultura e outros escritos* (pp. 305–410). Autêntica. (Original work published 1930)
- Haraway, D. (2021). *O manifesto das espécies companheiras: Cachorros, pessoas e alteridade significativa*. Bazar do Tempo.
- Iannini, G., & Santiago, J. (2020). Mal-estar: Clínica e política. In S. Freud, *Obras incompletas de Sigmund Freud: Cultura, sociedade, religião* (pp. 33–64). Autêntica.
- Krenak, A. (2019). *Ideias para adiar o fim do mundo*. Companhia das Letras.
- Lacan, J. (1998). Função e campo da fala e da linguagem. In *Escritos* (pp. 238–324). Jorge Zahar. (Original work published 1956)
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1990). *O pensamento selvagem*. Papirus editora.
- Lévi-Strauss. (2018). *O totemismo hoje*. Edições 70.
- Limulja, H. (2022). *O desejo dos outros - uma etnografia dos sonhos Yanomami*. Editora Ubu.
- Lugones, M. (2014). Rumo a um feminismo descolonial. *Estudos Feministas*, 22(3), 935–952. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-026X2014000300013>
- Ogden, T. (1996). *Os sujeitos da psicanálise* (C. Berliner, Trans.). Casa do Psicólogo. (Original work published 1994)

- Ogden, T. (2020). Psicanálise ontológica ou 'O que você quer ser quando crescer?'. *Revista Brasileira de Psicanálise*, 54(1), 22–45.
- Pontalis, J. B. (2005). *Entre o sonho e a dor* (C. Berliner, Trans.). Idéias & Letras.
- Searls, H. F. (1960). *The non-human environment in normal development and in schizophrenia*. International Universities Press.
- Vieira, A. (1957). *Sermões*. Edameris.
- Viveiros de Castro, E. (1996). Os pronomes cosmológicos e o perspectivismo ameríndio. *Mana*, 2(2), 115–144. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-93131996000200005>
- Viveiros de Castro, E. (2018). Xamanismo transversal. In *Metafísicas canibais: elementos para uma antropologia pós-estrutural*. (pp. 171-181). Ubu Editora.
- Viveiros de Castro, E. (2015). Who's afraid of the ontological wolf: Some comments on an ongoing anthropological debate. *Cambridge Anthropology*, 33(1), 2–17. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26370550>
- Winnicott, D. W. (1975). A localização da experiência cultural. In *O brincar e a realidade* (pp. 152–164). Imago. (Original work published 1967)
- Winnicott, D. W. (2019). *O brincar e a realidade*. Ubu Editora. (Original work published 1975)
- Winnicott, D. W. (1978). Desenvolvimento emocional primitivo. In *Da pediatria à psicanálise: Textos selecionados* (pp. 218–232). Francisco Alves. (Original work published 1945)
- Winnicott, D. W. (1994). *Explorações psicanalíticas*. Artes Médicas Sul. (Original work published 1984)

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



Thais Klein é psicanalista, doutora em Teoria Psicanalítica pela Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) e doutora em Saúde Coletiva pelo Instituto de Medicina Social Hesio Cordeiro da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (IMS/UERJ), professora da Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), professora do programa de pós-graduação em Teoria Psicanalítica da UFRJ e coordenadora do Núcleo de Estudos em Psicanálise e Clínica da Contemporaneidade (NEPECC/UFRJ).

Thais Klein is a psychoanalyst, holds a PhD in Psychoanalytic Theory from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), and a PhD in Public Health from the Hesio Cordeiro Institute of Social Medicine at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (IMS/UERJ). She is a professor at the Fluminense Federal University (UFF), a faculty member of the Psychoanalytic

Theory graduate program at UFRJ, and the coordinator of the Study Group on Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Clinical Practice (NEPECC/UFRJ).



Juliana Vieira é doutoranda e mestre em Saúde Coletiva pelo Instituto de Medicina Social Hesio Cordeiro da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (IMS/UERJ). Integra o Centro Latino-Americano em Sexualidade e Direitos Humanos (CLAM) e é editora executiva da Revista *Sexualidad, Salud y Sociedad*. Especializada em Psicanálise na Contemporaneidade, Filosofia e Psicanálise, Saúde Mental e Políticas Públicas.

Juliana Vieira is a PhD candidate and holds a Master's degree in Public Health from the Hesio Cordeiro Institute of Social Medicine at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (IMS/UERJ). She is a member of the Latin American Center for Sexuality and Human Rights (CLAM) and serves as the executive editor of the journal *Sexualidad, Salud y Sociedad*. Her areas of expertise include psychoanalysis in contemporary times, philosophy and psychoanalysis, mental health, and public policies.