

REVIEWS

Mothers Matter

PAUL W. ASHTON

Review of: *Mother Nature: Art & Psychology in Conversation*. Exhibition at the Sasol Art Museum in Stellenbosch, Western Cape, South Africa, November 11, 2010, to February 14, 2011. Curated by Elzan Frank.

At the starting point of this exhibition is a quote from Martin Buber “In the beginning is relation.” The curator, Elzan Frank, says that this quotation is her response both to the statement in St John’s gospel “In the beginning was the Word,” and to classical child psychoanalysis, which, by its nature, dishonors the mother-child relation. It is also her way of paying tribute both to Motherhood itself and to female research psychologists. For me, this “relation” also refers to the relation of an individual to life itself, which may be symbolized by the mother-child connection (or disconnection), and, within the context of the exhibition, it also refers to the connection between Psychology and Art.

The whole exhibition is a balancing act between the concrete and the symbolic, between psychological and artistic ways of seeing, and between seeing images as metaphors of the human condition itself versus the danger of being pulled into a one-sided view of things.

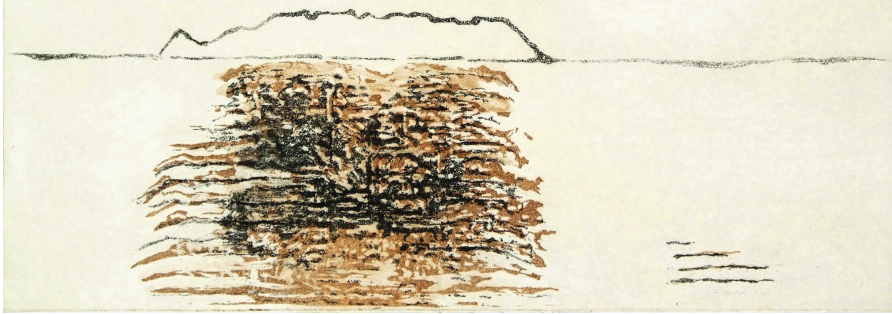
One of the first images in the exhibition is a sculpture by Claudette Schreuders in which a woman thrusts her baby forward as if to say “Look at her, she is what she is!” (Actually there are no clues as to the child’s gender.) *Eclipse*, the title of the work, suggests that part of the mother’s role will be to bear that feeling of being eclipsed by her child(ren). That idea can



Eclipse by Claudette Schreuders, 2003, painted bronze (By permission of the artist.)

also be extrapolated into other life situations, for example, projects we might undertake that are destined to eclipse us rather than to demonstrate how great we are. It suggests the necessity of submitting to something outside of oneself but, at the same time, of fostering its potential (like parenting a child).

An installation by Lyn Smuts comprises a sound bite of a baby crying and then the voice of Christina Goodall singing an ancient-sounding, wordless cradle-song within the pentatonic scale. A sonograph depicts in visual form the notes being sung. The work was constructed from a sonograph made by O. Wasz-Hockert of a newborn’s cry (which demonstrates a perfect 5th) that was worked into a sugarlift aquatint by Smuts. When Goodall visited the studio, Smuts asked her

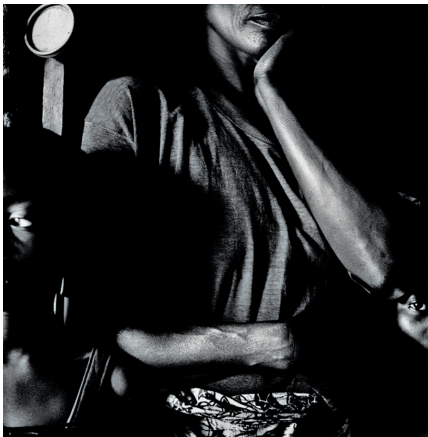


Neonate Cry by Lyn Smuts (By permission of the artist.)

to sing the sonograph from the aquatint, which she did, and another sonograph was made, and this is what was shown on screen. Astonishingly, for me, the sonograph traced an outline of Cape Town's Table Mountain, with Devil's Peak on its left. The mountain is a powerful symbol of containment for us in Cape Town. This is art at its most artistic (symbolic) where a universe of meanings erupts from simple ingredients and the mind is set free to float on the dreamy sounds of a mother's voice.

In a very different mode is the series of images painted by Doret Ferreira entitled *Cry-baby* (not illustrated). In this series, a screaming

infant, newly born, refuses to (cannot) be pacified by the well-intentioned ministrations of those around it. Over the series its wide, screaming mouth becomes less of a feature, but it is only when the carers give up trying and leave the child alone under a night sky that it stops crying and falls asleep. This brought to mind Bion's idea that reverie is what is needed to contain a child's fears, not "doing" and in that doing denying the child's experience. It also highlights the idea that an action, even when driven by a negative conscious motivation, as in this case where one can imagine the parents shouting "Shut Up!!" before abandoning their



Jodi Bieber, *Untitled*. From the series, *A Weapon of War—Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. (By permission of the artist.)



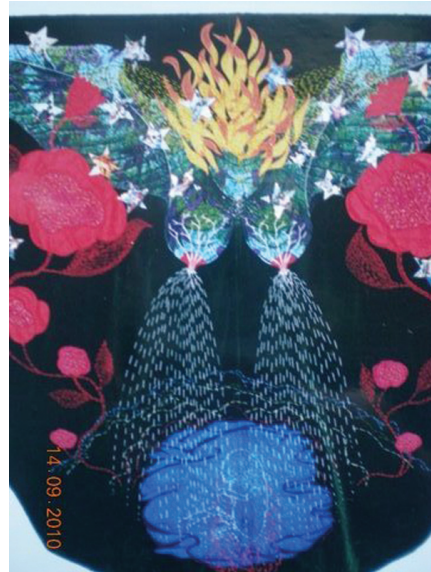
Jodi Bieber, *Untitled*. From the series, *A Weapon of War—Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. (By permission of the artist.)



Shakti by Leonora Van Staden (By permission of the artist.)

child to the night, may be the “right” thing. The final images also suggest an element that I did not think was adequately addressed by the exhibition: Nature itself, the Great Mother, here in the form of the night sky, may be a substitute, an effective container, when the “real” mother is absent.

Of course, real Nature, like human nature, can be destructive as well as creative—but there is a difference. Perhaps it is that the destructiveness of a tsunami or hurricane can be accepted as part of Nature’s “blindness” or unconsciousness, but the destructiveness of human beings cannot be separated from the idea that they are at least partially conscious and that this is what they choose to do! Jodi Bieber, whose famous picture of Aisha was on the cover of *Time Magazine* last year, portrays the survivors of rapes perpetrated by soldiers in Africa. Perhaps, if one can get past the stark horror of these women’s stories, we can see these works as referring also to the rape of the land perpetrated by humankind—the land used and abused.



Guardian Angel by Sandra Kriel. Embroidery, photographs, mixed media on cloth, 1995–1996. Collection of the artist. (By permission of the artist.)

As a psychological container, Elzan placed a matriarchal or archetypal-female figure in each room as well as a “pieta,” or mother-and-child. The main room gets two of each, perhaps because the content apart from these is so disturbing and involves violence and illness that results in death. Here a modern, acrylic-on-canvas *Shakti* and a mixed media *Guardian Angel* offer us some support and demonstrate the power of woman as the Great Mother; even though, there is their ever-present potential to become “Terrible.”

“In the beginning is relation,” but the theme of lack of relationship is also represented, for example, in the rape victims photographed by Jodi Bieber or the displaced people—migrants, exiles, and refugees—as seen through the lens of Sue Williamson’s camera (not illustrated). Absence makes its presence felt in a cold image by Lola Frost, *Lady with a cigarette* (not illustrated), which makes one ask: “Where is her child?” A wall of interactive text with the theme “having your mind in my mind” adds yet a further dimension.



Nanny and Boy by Simone Scholtz (By permission of the artist.)

The photographs of various *Nannies* in an up-market part of Cape Town, by Simone Scholtz, demonstrate the loving care of these “secondary caregivers” but also the absence of the “primary caregivers.” These examples of absence, or absent relationship, paradoxically evoke their opposite in the viewer . . . we feel through them what it is that should be there. One of the mysteries to me as an analyst is that nannies are so forgotten despite having often been the growing child’s most significant care-person during his or her early years. It has seemed to me that many of the children or adults that I have seen would have been much worse off but for their nannies. And yet the nannies have been forgotten, at least by consciousness.

There is a portrait of an African woman entitled *Annie Mavata* and painted by Dorothy Kay in 1956. This portrait demonstrates another example of good mothering, where one is seen, known, and loved by another *as one is*.



Nannies by Simone Scholtz (By permission of the artist.)

In this case, *Annie* is “seen, known and loved” by Dorothy the artist who, one feels, honors her subject by painting precisely what she sees. *Annie Mavata* was chosen by Elzan Frank to set the tone of “don’t mess with us.”

One of the photos in the series *Mother to Child Transmission*, by Benedicte Kurzen, shows a mother kissing her baby in the most natural and universal way (not illustrated, but this photograph breaks your heart). As a viewer of this work, especially if you have seen the rest



Annie Mavata by Dorothy Kay, 1956, oil on board. (By permission of Pretoria Art Museum.)



Red Moon by Marlene Dumas (By permission of owner.)

of the series, which ends with a tiny coffin and a series of numbered mounds on the earth (1651 was the highest number that I saw), one feels an impending doom; the child has been given life but also the seeds of death by the same mother. It is a painful image of the psychological truth that a mother may unwittingly be a destructive force in the development of a child. Though loving, she may be the child's worst enemy.

The exhibition contains a few works by Marlene Dumas, whose individuality and artistry are remarkable. Of particular note is her large oil-painting called *Red Moon*, which demonstrates that sense of mystery and discomfort that underlies great art. It is one of those works that encourages the viewer to have his or her own reaction to it and that reaction is usually strong but varied from person to person. Some who see the work think of death and despair, others see a liberated libidinous energy. The moon, a red one, connects with the cyclic nature of women, affirming their connection to the natural world.

Elzan is a psychologist with a deep compassion for those she treats. She has stood against some therapeutic practices that she considers abusive toward children but has a deep respect

for the work of C. G. Jung and the attachment theorists whose work begins with that of John Bowlby in the 1950s. The exhibition includes information about attachment theory, including the seminal work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, and contemporary contributions and expansions by Mary Main and by Mary Target, who worked with Peter Fonagy and formulated the idea of "having your mind in my mind." This idea is explored psychologically, through writing and examples given by Elzan, rather than artistically. A short video demonstrates the use of the Strange Situation Test, devised by Mary Ainsworth, as a means of assessing different types of attachment between children and carers. The areas studied by Jung and by Bowlby overlap in a unique way (*The Red Book* or *Liber Novus* is part of the exhibition), and although they are different, Elzan demonstrates how they complement each other.

This exhibition is remarkable for its bringing together of the fields of art and imagination—the symbolic—with those of science and critical observation, and all in the service of understanding the Nature of Mothering.

The exhibition ends with a sculpture of Mother Mary (not illustrated).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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PAUL W. ASHTON is a psychiatrist and Jungian analyst from Cape Town, South Africa. A family man, he has a deep interest in art, music, literature, and nature. He is the author of a monograph on Void States, *From the Brink* (2007), contributing editor of *Evocations of Absence* (2007), and contributing co-editor (with Stephen Bloch) of *Music and Psyche* (2010). He has also contributed chapters to *Psyche and the City* (2010) and *Jungian Psychoanalysis* (2010) and articles and reviews to *Spring*, *Mantis*, *Quadrant*, and *Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche*. He is the current editor of *Mantis*, the journal of the Southern African Association of Jungian Analysts. *Correspondence*: 3 Bolus Ave, Kenilworth, 7708, South Africa. E-mail: phfashton@telkomsa.net.

ABSTRACT

This review of an art exhibition *Moeder Natuur* (*Mother Nature*) pays homage to the vision of curator Elzan Frank as well as the many artists whose work was chosen to illuminate the symbolism of Motherhood in both Psychology and Art. The chosen illustrations demonstrate how symbols can both elucidate and help contain the often painful and conflicted feelings embedded in the theme of the nature of Motherhood.

KEY WORDS

Art, attachment, Jodi Bieber, John Bowlby, Marlene Dumas, Elzan Frank, C. G. Jung, Dorothy Kay, Sandra Kriel, Benedicte Kurzen, mother, Mother Nature, Nature, Simone Scholtz, Claudette Schreuders, Lyn Smuts, symbol, Lenora Van Staden

Healing Landscapes

SUSAN WILLIAMS



View to beach—White Strand of the Monks—at the north end of Iona (Photo credit: Clare Cooper Marcus.)

Review of: Clare Cooper Marcus, *Iona Dreaming: The Healing Power of Place: A Memoir*, Lake Worth, FL: Nicolas Hays, Inc., 2010.

While still living in London, a friend introduced me to the work of Clare Cooper Marcus, a Professor in the Departments of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. Her book, *House as a Mirror of the Self* (1995) was inspired by her reading of Jung's account of building his stone retreat at Bollingen on Lake Zürich. For Jung, building the tower at Bollingen played an important role in the "self-realization of the unconscious" (1963, 3): "I had to achieve a kind of representation in stone of my innermost thoughts and of the knowledge I had acquired. Or to put it another way, I had to make a confession of faith in stone" (1963, 223).

Marcus, a pioneer in the psychological and social implications of design, explored the ways our psyches are shaped not only by our attachments to others but also by emotional ties to our physical environment—and in particular, our homes. While reading Marcus' work in my North London flat, I found myself unusually curious about the author's house in Northern California. Five years later, I find myself sitting in a kitchen in a large Berkeley home, looking out onto a lush yet rambling English-style garden, engaged in an interesting conversation with the woman who is renting space in her home to me, following my move away from London. I learn that she has recently published a book titled *Healing Gardens* (1999), and when I ask to see it, she replies, "Well, I wrote another book, which is more Jungian, that you may enjoy even more." I am taken aback upon hearing that the title is *House as a Mirror of the Self*. Just a few years earlier, I was in my London dwelling, immersed in this same book and wondering about the author and her home, only to discover that I am now living in it!

This startling synchronistic encounter with the author, which has had a lingering resonance, takes me to her recently published memoir, *Iona Dreaming: The Healing Power of Place*. Here, she shifts her focus from the house as a personal symbol to the vibrantly infused natural world, where the personal spirit can experience its link with the *anima loci*, or soul of the place.

In her latest book, Marcus has retired from a brilliant academic career and soon finds herself facing a life-threatening illness, which leads her on a six-month solitary retreat to the island of Iona, a ruggedly beautiful island in the Scottish Hebrides. The illness, we later discover, is cancer, though this is not yet another cancer memoir. Rather, it is a story about the healing power of place, reminding us that we not only go to people for healing, we go to places and to landscapes that awaken the ineffable in us, to settings where we can link past with present,



Greenbank, a typical house on Iona, looking across a mile-wide stretch of sea to the island of Mull
(Photo credit: Clare Cooper Marcus.)

beauty with pain and truth, and to spaces that allow something new to enter us.

Marcus' beautifully written memoir also opens with a synchronistic encounter. While standing in line for lunch at a conference in Scotland, an unknown woman turns to Clare and says, "I own a house on Iona. It's yours," and then she walks away, leaving Marcus dumbfounded as she secretly yearns to return to the island to live and write. Later that week the woman elaborates, "You know how thoughts drift through your mind and most of them you don't say out loud? . . . Well . . . I knew I had to tell you that I have a house on Iona."

In the initiatory rites of tribal and traditional societies, one must heed the call and leave behind an earlier life to move toward a new constellation. Joseph Henderson, a founder of the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco, furthered Jung's exploration of the parallels between the psychological and spiritual searching of the modern-day individual with religious rites of passage from earlier eras. *Thresholds of Initiation* (1967/2005), Henderson's seminal study on this subject, theorizes that there is an "archetype of initiation" that is still alive and operative in the lives of contemporary persons.

Iona Dreaming draws the reader into a modern-day initiatory story of a woman in her sixties heeding that call. Leaving behind

the familiarity and comforts of career, home, family, and friends, she opens her soul to the rhythms and magic of the island of Iona; to the value of solitude and silence; and to the animated world of landscape, stone, sea, tides, birds, and animals. In Celtic lore, there are “thin places,” where the veil between the worlds is thinnest and where something of that other invisible dimension can seep through. Iona is one of these places. Legend says that the Druids once came here for initiation and that the potential priestly initiates were set afloat in an oar-less boat. Where the boat landed indicated whether they were ready or not for the initiatory experience.

Here, with this landscape as backdrop, the author surrenders to a rich tapestry of dreams and synchronicities along with memories that surface of a childhood in wartime England. The author along with her mother and brother were evacuated from war-ravaged London to the English countryside, where they were housed on the Rothschild estate. There, Marcus was awakened to the holding capacity as well as the soothing and healing power of the natural world. The link between this childhood refuge and the place she journeys to later in life to face all that was left behind is potent.

So, Marcus muses, “why are we endlessly fascinated by the meeting of land and water, the edge of things?” (2010, 183). I, too, am drawn to that question. The early Celts had a sense that living on edges—boundary places—and within liminality is particularly powerful for one’s spiritual development. The island of Iona is made up of places with evocative names—the *Coire Sianta* (Sacred Hollow), White Strand of the Monks, *Straidnam Mavbh* (Street of the Dead), *Sithean Beag* (Little Fairy Mound), and Hill of the Angels, reminding us that we are traveling in a place and state of being, where the usual lines between the mythical and modern day-to-day reality intermingle.

Throughout this journey, Marcus’ weekly phone sessions with a Jungian analyst serve as support and guide as she faces hard realities,



Lichen covered and etched by the weather, St Martin's Cross has stood outside the main entrance to Iona abbey since the eighth century. (Photo credit: Clare Cooper Marcus.)

including her wartime experience, the aftermath of two diagnoses of cancer, along with the words never spoken to her deceased parents and ex-husband. We get a feel, as well, for the atmosphere of Berkeley in the 1960s and 1970s, and the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, which took the life of her ex-husband and father of her two young children.

The book is structured into four sections beginning with “Journey to the Island,” where the reader senses the author’s initial excitement and apprehension about living on a remote island with no outer demands and few possessions. It is not just worldly comforts, friends, and family that she must leave behind, but the tyranny of a questioning mind that has typically found its answers through the intellect. As she settles into the slow rhythms of island life, Marcus discovers some of the lessons that come from being quietly and intimately attuned to the natural world; as well as lessons that come from her “Zen-like practice” as a waitress at the local hotel (2010, 46).

The flashbacks that surface of her World War II childhood are particularly evocative. Graham Greene wrote, “There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in” (1940, quoted in Marcus 2010, 56), and for this author, one need only look at this story to see how the acorn or seed of that truth has fulfilled its destiny in one woman’s life work. When the author recounts John Fowles’ experience of being evacuated with his family to the Devonshire countryside, Fowles’ words echo the paradox of such an opening in a time of devastation:

Despite the horrors and deprivations of the time, they were for me fertile and green-golden years. I learnt nature for the first time in a true countryside among true countrymen, and from then on I was irredeemable, lost as a townsman. (Fowles and Horvat 1979, quoted in Marcus 2010, 56)

In the second section of the book, “Looking Back,” Marcus recalls her state of mind after two bouts of cancer and the challenges to her body image following a mastectomy. In the chapter “Grasshopper Teaching,” the one I found most compelling, the author draws the reader into a moving account of turning into, rather than fleeing from, overwhelming fear while on a Vision Quest experience facilitated by three Jungian analysts in the Canadian wilderness. When paralyzed by crippling fear on a ropes course, she is eventually able to overcome the terror and move forward, through the solid yet sensitively attuned presence of the man who later becomes her analyst.

Though there is clearly an idealizing transference toward her analyst, this account made me think of the healing capacity of an analytic relationship that has the potential to offer something that was missing in our early lives as well as an awakening experience of what we long to move toward. For Marcus, this analyst offered an antidote to an absent father during an earlier time of terror as well as an experience of erotic awakening and a fuller engagement in a life that has the potential to

link the experiences of the body and the mind with the soul.

The final two sections of the book, “Approaching the Mystery” and “Dreaming with Eyes Wide Open,” take us further into the lessons of island consciousness, with both the analyst and the landscape serving as *anam cara*, the Irish or Gaelic word for soul friend. This is a compelling and insightful *confession of faith* that points beyond the personal story to a numinous experience of the healing power of place.

The author does not seem to be suggesting Iona as a travel destination for others in search of healing, but rather appears to be inviting the reader to find their own landscape or experience of *anima loci*, perhaps in a spirit similar to Jung at Bollingen:

At Bollingen, I am in the midst of my true life, I am most deeply myself. . . . At times I feel as if I am spread out over the landscape and inside things, and am myself living in every tree, in the splashing of the waves, in the clouds and the animals that come and go, in the procession of the seasons. (1963, 225)

This fascinating memoir offers much beauty and wisdom. What lingers for me are the words she quotes from an anthropologist who studied the Western Apache. I take these words as a reminder of how we come alive in certain landscapes and must return to that well from time to time to drink from and be nourished by that place.

. . . Wisdom sits in places. It’s like water that never dries up. You need to drink water to stay alive, don’t you? Well you also need to drink from Places.” (Basso 1996, 126–127, quoted in Marcus 2010, 55)

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SUSAN WILLIAMS is an adult, adolescent, and child Jungian analyst in private practice in Berkeley, California. She trained and practiced in London before relocating to the San Francisco Bay area, where she became a member of the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco in 2003. She is on the teaching faculty of both the adult and child analytic training programs. She has a special interest in the relationship between home, landscape, and psyche. She has lectured and taught on infant mental health, aliveness and deadness, and autism and autistic states of mind. She is an assistant editor of *Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche*. Correspondence: 3120 Telegraph Ave, Suite 12, Berkeley CA 94705, USA. E-mail: susanwjungian@comcast.net.

ABSTRACT

This review opens with a story of the reviewer's uncanny, synchronistic meeting with Clare Cooper Marcus, a pioneer in the psychological and social implications of architectural design. Marcus' recently published memoir, *Iona Dreaming: The Healing Power of Place*, is an initiatory story of a woman in her sixties, following retirement from a successful career, who is facing a life-threatening illness that leads her on a six-month solitary retreat to the island of Iona, a ruggedly beautiful island with a rich Celtic history in the Scottish Hebrides. Marcus' journey of self-discovery and healing, guided by her work with a Jungian analyst, helps her link past with present and reconnect to more soulful and healing relationships with nature, landscape, and body. Memories of a childhood in war-ravaged London and a subsequent evacuation

to the English countryside illustrate how some of the seeds planted in the author's childhood have blossomed into a rich and powerful life's work.

KEY WORDS

anima loci, architecture, Bollingen, cancer, Celtic, dreams, healing, house, illness, initiation, Iona, Joseph Henderson, C.G. Jung, Jungian analysis, landscape, memoir, nature, power of place, Scotland, soul, spirit, synchronicity, Vision Quest, World War II

The Secret in Her Eyes¹

LILIANA LIVIANO WAHBA

Review of: *The Secret in Her Eyes*

(*El secreto de sus ojos*). Screenplay by Juan

José Campanella and Eduardo Sacheri,

based on the novel by Eduardo Sacheri,

The Question in Her Eyes (*La pregunta de sus ojos*), Buenos Aires: Galerna, 2005.

Directed by Juan José Campanella.

Produced by Muriel Cabeza. Buenos

Aires, Argentina, 2009.

Synopsis

Juan José Campanella helmed this crime thriller about judicial cover-ups and corruption in Argentina. Ricardo Darín stars as Benjamín, a former criminal court employee who wants to write a novel about an Argentine case from the 1970s in which a woman was raped and murdered. He confides his intentions to a judge with whom he's been secretly smitten for years, Irene (Soledad Villamil), but she expresses reservations about the idea, for reasons that eventually become apparent. Meanwhile, flashbacks set up the central story, unfolding in 1970s Argentina. In that narrative, Argentina has fallen under the control of a military junta and a fair trial has become an increasingly uncommon event in that nation's courts. A woman is found raped and murdered while her husband was at work, and two immigrant workers are essentially

forced into confessing to the crime. Benjamín then teams up with his colleague and friend, the lush Pablo Sandoval (Guillermo Francella), and the two go about identifying and tagging the perpetrator of the original crime. Subtle detail in a photograph alerts Benjamín to the possibility that a man named Gómez (Javier Godino) may have been the real culprit, but finding Gómez and obtaining conclusive evidence against him is no simple task. Moreover, as Benjamín and Pablo struggle to have the case reopened, they also find that bureaucracy and power in Argentine government have made this close to impossible.

The film, adapted from the novel by Eduardo Sacheri (who also co-wrote the script with the director), tells a story in which external facts symbolize key elements in the character's interior searching. A novel, a police story, a political plot, the drama of each character unfolds in the story: the ingredients make up a sensitive narrative where memories, desires, and torments are revealed in speech and silence. This silence revolves around a lacking, something missing that comes with and provides a meaning to every human experience.

The political background is 1974, a time of commotion in Argentina just before the military dictatorship. Juan Perón returns to the Presidency together with his new wife, Maria Estela Martínez de Perón (Isabelita), who takes over as Vice-President and is sworn in as President when he dies in 1974. Until she is overthrown in 1976, Isabelita's mandate is marked by confusion, leaving the country in social and economic chaos, with violent fighting between extremists both on the Left and the Right. With censorship, inflation, foreign debt growing frighteningly high, and investments paralyzed, the country is on the brink of disaster. Isabelita's right-hand man and close adviser is José López Rega—known as The Wizard—who was responsible for widespread embezzlement and injecting funds into the *Argentinean Anticommunist Alliance*, the so-called Triple A, an organization notorious for torturing, murdering, and all sorts of outrageous activities.

The extreme Left, in turn, kidnapped, killed, and provoked attacks, which created a state of panic among the population.

Such a climate is ripe for administrative stagnation, and, as shown in the film, mediocre, truculent individuals are appointed to key positions. Isabelita made General Jorge Rafael Videla Commander of the Army to help her strengthen the military powers and introduce strict social control measures. In 1976, she is deposed by a coup d'état, which is the beginning of the bloody military dictatorship led by Videla until 1981. In the film, the murder of the young woman and the somber future of her husband, who never recovers from the violent interruption of a happy marriage and the sadistic brutality to which she was subjected before dying, are at the same time a metaphor of the vilified and mistreated nation in the hands of a gang of sadists and the impotent depression of its citizens, who suffer all sorts of losses and grief.

One underlying question that human beings ask themselves when faced with evil is about the effect on the witness. The images the protagonist sees, the images captured by the camera, the images we see as we follow the story become pregnant with horror. The frames of the film, of the imagination, the registered memories, questions that remain unanswered and open, the awe and longing, the gratuitous brutality on the threshold of purest beauty makes us wonder how we survive after being touched by evil.

The main thread of the film is Benjamín's² search, thirty years later, for some meaning, some possible resolution of his own love story, which is intertwined with a crime engraved in images that will not allow us to erase the gratuitous nature of the violence and indifference of destiny toward those who get hurt.

Benjamín Espósito is a federal justice agent whose chief is a corrupt, indifferent judge whose interest in justice is the least of his concerns. The young judge, Irene, full of ideals, well-educated, born into a prominent family, and still believing that principles define

actions and consequences, is introduced to this environment. Her life tends toward the conventional, however, and it takes a while for her to accept passion.

As for Benjamín, he is consumed by passion from the start. As his passion grows stronger, he finds himself further and further away from Irene and the possibility of at least restoring some justice, however preposterous it seems when compared with the evil committed. The identification of the murderer does not guarantee that he will go to prison; in a corrupt society, practices transgress morality and perverse psychopaths become valuable instruments immune to any inhibiting scruples. Instead of being punished, the murderer is rewarded.

The witness's feeling of impotence and incredulity, and his loss of trust in human values, brands the besotted Benjamín so deeply that he is inhibited from declaring his feelings. The plot unveiled before us shows in crude colors that this is no place for love to flourish, and the two-way street of vengeance takes on a tragic connotation: Morales does not avenge his dead wife; Benjamín does not feel good enough for Irene and lacks the courage to show his love.

She is to marry a prestigious figure, a *name*; in this society where everything is collapsing appearances still matter. Benjamín Espósito has not made a name for himself, and he lacks a socially recognized persona.

Espósito comes from *expositus*: an abandoned, foundling child. In the old days there were houses of foundlings, where mothers who could not keep their children left them to be collected by the nuns. The verb *exponere* means "to put out." In post-war Italy and Spain, these surnames were given to orphans of unknown parents. In Spain, the name was also given to children left to the nuns, which was a custom in Argentina in the early part of the last century as well. A law enacted in 1921 allowed the name to be changed so the stigma would be removed, after which the custom died out.

Either because the name comes from an orphan ancestor or because he himself was abandoned—we do not know, for it is not mentioned, except for his lamenting and feeling humiliated for not being able to offer a name, in other words status—Benjamín Espósito symbolically lives out the agony of abandonment. In the final analysis, his passionate, painful search is the desire to recover an origin. Lost as he is, he does not manage to fulfill his life.

Not enjoying the support and protection of a family, he feels incapable of offering such and lets himself be led on by apathy, fitting into an inferior professional status and feeling no desire to compete or to get ahead. This represents a defense to protect an insecure ego that is afraid to reactivate a rejection already suffered, the trauma of childhood and the narcissistic wound caused by abandonment. The abandonment complex is shown in both a personal and collective fashion; in the latter, the group complex presents itself in the nation that suffered violation under dictatorship, with people feeling impotent and unprotected against the abuse of power. Personal suffering and restraints are seen individually and collectively, in both instances symbolically representing the child exposed, the hero, and the orphan. In Greek myths, the child is usually exposed as a result of the mother's shame or by a tyrant who persecutes the child, or a mixture of both, also with the association of incest.

Jung describes the child archetype, emphasizing the motifs of insignificance, exposure, abandonment, and danger as obstacles in the way of individuation. He discusses the dangers of newly acquired consciousness, reflected in the symbol of the child, whereby a redemptive effect brings to consciousness a separation from the conflict situation that the conscious mind is unable to achieve. Jung notes, "The various child fates may be regarded as illustrating the kind of psychic events that occur in the en-telechy or genesis of the self" (1940/1977, CW 9i, ¶282).

Fordham, however, states that Jung's view is too optimistic for the resolution of the "essentially destructive act" of abandonment, a traumatic experience different from other loss, and he stresses the necessity of taking into account outer conditions as well as inner resources (1985, 2). Although, he does consider Jung's symbolic image accurate, as well as his description of the stage of personal infantilism of the misunderstood child with overweening pretensions that needs to be integrated.

The heroic protagonist of the film has to overcome the feeling of injustice and inferiority to perform the necessary detachment and separation from the mythical internal rejecting parents. Collectively, the orphan of the ashamed mother and the abusive and murderer father has to endure pain and go through the night where the precious stone, called the orphan by Hermes Trimegistus, "does not shine [any more] in the darkness" (Jung 1955–56/1976, CW 14¶13). The symbolic attitude helps to discriminate consciousness from undifferentiated destructive impulses and actions aimed at a possible present or future solution to a difficult or even extreme and impossible situation.

In an ambience of violence and decay, passion that fuels life is forbidden; it barely remains awake even though hidden and hushed. "A guy can change everything, his face, his house, his family, his girlfriend, his religion, his God. But there is something he cannot change—he cannot change his passion," claims Sandoval, Benjamin's assistant and friend. However, there is a curious double message concerning the murderer, who is passionately fond of soccer, Argentina's national sport. On one hand this metaphor points to a collective blindness, a pleasant escapism that dulls the conscience and sense of morals, whereas, on the other hand, it symbolizes a shared, enthusiastic passion that drives groups of supporters at some sports competitions, emotions in contrast to cynicism and indifferent cruelty. Symbolically, we may understand that the revolutionary forces,

ready to be called to fight against dictatorships, are lying ever present in the unconscious of violent and brutal men. It opens questions on the awesomeness of evil, and the polarity of sadistic and idealistic tendencies in the human mind.

Both female protagonists represent the possible in opposition to the impossible, a life felled, a life that will not come back, and expected redemption. The young woman's death occurred in the bloom of her youth, the promise of fruits to come, rays of light to illuminate her: the image of an anima raped, buried, lost. She has been frozen in time, lies mutilated; her sensuality, the body of desire, smashed. In her lacerated face is enclosed, in the final look, a testimony of her farewell to love. The real Irene will never be reached, fused as she is to the other, the dead, unattainable young woman, the victim of human brutality, the cruelty that wounds and tosses the refuse in some old trash dump.

Even if the guilty are at last punished, jailer and prisoner are joined together by the same fate, without any future; the crimes are not redeemed. Redemption is of another kind, impregnated in the same look that witnessed the horror, in the thawing out of memories.

Older and more mature, Benjamin is tormented by memories and needs to write them out, revive them, and find, in the image that haunts him, his splintered inner life. He has to understand what distanced him from Irene and his impassioned love. And so, the young woman who died and took his youth from him, enables him, by going back to himself, to find the other.

The exposed child and his sorrow seems to be integrated and transformed by the symbol of the right-hand of God (*Binyamin*), which in Cabala is described as Mercy or Grace and is associated with the Wisdom or Word of God that crowns the right-hand side of the Tree, an individuation process that opens the potentiality of transformation also for the sons and daughters of the suffering nation.

ENDNOTES

1. Winner of the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, 2010.
2. From the Hebrew name בִּנְיָמִין (*Binyamin*), which means “son of the south” or “son of the right hand.” In the old testament, Benjamin was the twelfth and youngest son of Jacob and the founder of one of the southern Hebrew tribes. He was originally named בֶּן-אוֹנִי (*Ben-’oni*), meaning “son of my sorrow” by his mother Rachel, who died shortly after childbirth, but his name was later changed by his father.

NOTE

References to *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* are cited in the text as CW, volume number, and paragraph number. *The Collected Works* are published in English by Routledge (UK) and Princeton University Press (USA).

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LILIANA LIVIANO WAHBA, PH.D., is a psychologist and Jungian analyst. Former President of the Brazilian Society for Analytical Psychology (SBrPA), she is a professor

of graduate and undergraduate courses in analytical psychology at the PUC São Paulo University. She serves as Director of Psychology of the Non-Governmental Association *SeremCena*, Theatre for Aphasics. She was the Honorary Secretary of the Ethics Committee of the IAAP and she was editor of *Junguiana*, the journal of the Brazilian Society for Analytical Psychology (SBrPA). She is the author of *Camille Claudel: criação e loucura* and of several articles and book chapters. *Correspondence*: Rua (Street) Catanduva, 66, 01246-060 São Paulo- SP, Brasil. E-mail: lilwah@uol.com.br.

ABSTRACT

Through a police drama, the film *The Secret in Their Eyes* (*El secreto de sus ojos*) is also a love story in which the protagonist, *Benjamín*, suffers from the impact of violence and the painful memories it raises. In a politically repressive, violent, and corrupt nation, an ambiance of evil dominates, and innocent victims perish. Benjamín’s weak persona and lower social status bring into consciousness the abandonment symbol, which inhibits the demonstration of love. This review looks at how his anima projection discloses the double aspect of his feelings: the stiffening of death and the awakening of passion. The film’s final redemption releases the painful memories and enables the integration of the abandonment complex.

KEY WORDS

abandonment, anima, Argentina, death, evil, love, persona, politics