The contributions of Carl Jung and Carlos Byington to an ethical education*[1,2]

Rayanne Saturnino de Araujo Valim[3]
Orcid: 0009-0007-3890-4338

Abstract

Ethical problems are present in every dimension of human life. Discussions of education and ethics are scarce and insufficient, and they fail to offer practical proposals capable of addressing the current context. Profound Pedagogy and Symbolic Pedagogy offer reflections that may provide a foundation for a non-moralistic ethical education. In this sense, the aim of this study is to identify the contributions of Carl Gustav Jung and Carlos Byington to pedagogical practice, especially with regard to ethical education. To this end, the research method guiding this study is a conceptual analysis of the theoretical reflections of Jung and Byington on education. According to these perspectives, one possible path toward an ethical education would consist in establishing, within the educational system, a pedagogy centered on personality development, encompassing all dimensions of Being in both students and teachers. In this way, one may conceive of an ethical education that is not centered on the teaching of a specific moral code, insofar as ethics is understood as a structuring function of consciousness. We thus see that Profound Pedagogy and Symbolic Pedagogy offer reflections that may help address the ethical question within the pedagogical relationship and, ultimately, contribute to a better world.

Keywords

Analytical Psychology – Profound Pedagogy – Symbolic Pedagogy – Ethical education.

***** English version by Maria Isabella Ramos Nogueira. The author take full responsibility for the translation of the text, including the titles of books and articles and the quotations originally published in Portuguese.

1- Data availability: The complete dataset supporting the findings of this study is available within the article.

2- I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Sandra Augusta de Melo, who made this work possible; Maria Helena Mandacarú Guerra, who enabled me to deepen my understanding of Symbolic Psychology and whose careful reading improved this work and corrected mistaken perceptions; Céline Lorthiois for her experiential teachings on Profound Pedagogy; and Maria Isabella Ramos Nogueira for her availability and for the careful translation of this work, contributing to the broader reach of this research.

3- Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto, Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Contact: saturninorayanne@gmail.com

https://doi.org/10.1590/S1678-4634202652292751por
This content is licensed under a Creative Commons attribution-type BY 4.0.

Introduction

This study focuses on certain contributions of Dynamic Psychology[4], which take into account deep aspects of Being based on the notion of the unconscious. These approaches—most notably psychoanalysis, analytical psychology, and symbolic psychology—give priority to the study of the human psyche, and what is of particular interest here is the construction of subjectivities and mental functioning.

Child development is an important object of study within these approaches, since they are grounded in the understanding that childhood is the period in which the basis of psychological functioning throughout life is constructed. For this reason, this field of knowledge may be considered to have important implications for the field of education and to make important contributions to it. In this sense, the aim of the present study is to identify the contributions that Analytical Psychology, developed by Jung, and Symbolic Psychology, developed by Byington, may offer to pedagogical practice, especially with regard to ethical education.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) was a psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and the founder of Analytical Psychology. For a time, Jung was an important follower of Freud and became the first president of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA). During this period, they maintained a close collaboration, engaging in intense discussions of clinical cases and their theoretical formulations. However, in 1913, following the publication of the book *Transformações e Símbolos da Libido* in 1912, Jung broke with Psychoanalysis, something Freud could not bear. The two eventually drifted apart, culminating in Jung's resignation as president of the IPA. In summary, Jung's major disagreement with psychoanalytic theory centered on the conception of libido. For Jung, libido consists of universal psychic energy, present in everything (Silveira, 1968), whereas for Freud libido is sexual and everything is an extension of it. Byington (2005), however, considers that the unelaborated emotional dimension in both men also contributed to their separation. From that point on, Jung founded a new line in psychology, referred to as Complex Psychology, Depth Psychology, or Analytical Psychology.

Carlos Amadeu Botelho Byington (1933–2019) was a Brazilian psychiatrist and Jungian analyst. Initially, he specialized in cardiology. At a certain point, he became acquainted with Freudian ideas and was captivated by Psychoanalysis. Later, he had the opportunity to meet Nise da Silveira (1905–1999), and through her he encountered Jung's ideas. He decided to study at the C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich, where he underwent analysis with Marie-Louise von Franz (1915–1998), considered one of Jung's foremost disciples. In his final course paper, *Autenticidade – a dualidade na unidade*, he proposed an integration between the theories of Freud and Jung, which became the foundation of Symbolic Psychology.

Although Jung and Byington made significant proposals and reflections regarding the educational process within their theories of the human psyche, these ideas are still little known or entirely ignored among educators. This is because, during both initial

4- Dynamic Psychology is here employed in the conception presented by Byington (2008) as being composed of: the personal unconscious and the sexual instinct (psychoanalysis); the collective unconscious and the process of individuation (analytical psychology); and the instinct for power centered on social affirmation (individual psychology).

CC BY

and continuing teacher education, teachers are not exposed to these theories. In view of this, the research proposed here is justified insofar as it may help broaden teachers' understanding of the deep aspects of the psyche and their implications for the learning process and for the formation of the identity of students and educators themselves, thereby contributing, more specifically, to a possible ethical education.

Thus, the aim of this study is to systematize the main contributions of these two authors—Jung and Byington—to thinking about an educational practice capable of contributing to an ethical education.

Barreto (2009, p. 93) states that we currently live in a civilizational climate "marked by an unprecedented ethical crisis." Well into the twenty-first century, despite the major technological advances and the broad intellectual development achieved by modern society, climatic and political catastrophes, political and economic crises, and the worsening of interpersonal relationships persist. In this regard, Taille, Souza and Vizioli (2004, p. 93) state that:

> [...] perhaps never have complaints about human behavior been so frequent and so radical. Some of them are: spheres of political power corroded by corruption; organized crime growing before our very eyes and extending its influence; urban violence increasing and taking on the contours of barbarism; incivilities poisoning personal relationships; mutual distrust fraying the social fabric; terrorism reshaping the world order.

This alarming scenario reminds us that we cannot think of the school and educational practice as dissociated from the rest of society. The major ethical crisis (Asmann, 2009) in our society inevitably reverberates within the school and in pedagogical relationships.

However, Taille, Souza and Vizioli (2004) found that studies relating ethics and education, besides being limited in number, are characterized by a low empirical dimension, with theoretical, speculative, and critical studies predominating. Moreover, the authors found virtually no research addressing concrete pedagogical proposals for the ethical formation of students in the school context. Although this is an urgent issue, ethical education still does not receive due importance either in the theoretical field of research or in pedagogical praxis within the school setting.

Another relevant aspect identified by Taille, Souza and Vizioli (2004) in their review article on ethics and education was the presence of references to Freud, Piaget, and Kohlberg, but not to Analytical Psychology or, still less, to Symbolic Psychology, although Byington (1996, 2011) systematized a consistent pedagogical proposal known as Symbolic Pedagogy, in which a strong ethical dimension can be observed.

Taille, Souza and Vizioli (2004) concluded, based on the literature review they conducted, that practice is largely absent from academic discussions on ethics and education. According to the authors, "[...] it seems that we are at an impasse: the situation is critical, but no one knows what to do; there is a pessimistic diagnosis, but there is no project" (p. 103). Based on this finding, the authors proposed three hypotheses to help explain this scenario: 1) the prevailing opinion is that the ethical and moral formation of the human being is not the school's role; 2) the Brazilian experience with the subject "Moral and Civic Education" turned the issue of ethics and education into a taboo; 3)

there is fear surrounding the topic, since it can easily lead to coercive, authoritarian, and moralistic practices.

It is important to emphasize that ethical education is not the same as moral education, although both are commonly used as synonyms (Taille; Souza; Vizioli, 2004). According to Asmann (2009), the distinction between ethics and morality must go beyond attributing the former to public life and the latter to private life. For this author, ethics should be understood as "[...] theory of morality, as moral philosophy, that is, as the rational study of the moral experience of human beings," whereas morality consists of the "[...] actual behavior of individuals in relation to the rules and values proposed to them" (Asmann, 2009, p. 87). In other words, morality refers to what is considered right or wrong in people's behavior in light of rules or cultural conventions, whereas ethics concerns the theoretical study of morality and such behaviors.

The approaches of Dynamic Psychology may contribute to overcoming some of the obstacles related to the discussion of ethics and education, especially Profound Pedagogy, developed by Céline Lorthiois, and Symbolic Pedagogy, developed by Byington. Both educational proposals are grounded in Jung's Analytical Psychology.

Accordingly, the discussion begins with Jung's contributions to reflection on an ethical education, with particular emphasis on the work of Profound Pedagogy formulated by Céline Lorthiois. It then turns to Byington's contributions through his formulation of Symbolic Pedagogy.

The research method adopted in this study is conceptual analysis. The theoretical scope delimiting the study is constituted by the reflections of Carl Gustav Jung and Carlos Byington on education, especially with regard to the development of ethical notions in children. The main conceptual sources are Jung's *O desenvolvimento da personalidade* (2013), Lorthiois's *Pedagogia profunda: Jung na educação* (2019), and Byington's *A construção amorosa do saber: o fundamento e a finalidade da Pedagogia Simbólica Junguiana* (2011)[5].

Contributions of Jung to an ethical education

Carl Gustav Jung did not produce a work specifically on education, nor did he develop a pedagogical proposal. However, throughout his writings, he offers relevant reflections on education. In general, Jung (2013) proposes that the knowledge provided by Analytical Psychology concerning the development of the psyche should be used by the teacher first and foremost on himself or herself. Otherwise, there is a risk of trying to correct in the child what has not yet been corrected in oneself, which will not lead to the desired ends. Moreover, Jung attributes the educational problem to the mistaken idea that only the child should be educated, there A construção amorosa do saber: o fundamento e a finalidade da Pedagogia Simbólica Junguiana by excluding the educator's personality from the educational process (Jung, 2013). For him, "[...] hidden within the adult there is a child, *an eternal child, something still in the process of formation and that will never*

5 - Translation note: English titles of the works mentioned: *Jung's The Development of Personality*, *Lorthiois's Profound Pedagogy: Jung in Education*; and *Byington's The Loving Construction of Knowledge: The Foundation and Purpose of Jungian Symbolic Pedagogy.* Titles without confirmed published English editions are provided here in translation for reference.

CC BY

be finished, something that will require permanent care, attention, and education" (Jung, 2013, § 286, author's emphasis).

Jung (2013) considers that childhood disturbances may reflect the parents' psychic activity, especially their unconscious aspects. This occurs because of the child's profound bond with the mother's and father's psychic attitude, as well as with what the parents themselves have not elaborated. While the child is still in a state of great psychic unconsciousness, he or she remains in a situation of undifferentiation in relation to the psyche of the parents and/or caregivers (Jung, 2013). In Jung's words (2013, § 84), parents should "[...] always be aware that they themselves may, in certain cases, constitute the primary and principal source of their children's neuroses." By this, Jung (2013) does not intend to instill guilt in parents for all problems; rather, his purpose is to draw attention to this possible causal relationship when the child presents a symptom.

This issue gives rise to important implications for the educational relationship within the school environment. Very often, the child displays disturbing behaviors that affect both learning capacity and school performance. A teacher, principal, or coordinator who understands this psychic dynamic will realize that, in many cases, it is not enough merely to attend to the child. It is necessary to broaden the process to include the family as well, so that the parents may also be addressed, with children's symptoms being presented to them as a possible expression of the problems and conflicts experienced within the family environment. Jung (2013, § 107) states that "the disturbing behavior of such children is much less an expression of their own inner life than a reflection of the disturbing influences of the parents." This happens because the young child does not yet possess individuality or a will of his or her own. For Jung (2013), it is around the ages of three to five that we can say the child possesses an individual psyche.

Moreover, according to Jung (2013), the school contributes to the formation of the child's consciousness. Even if the school institution is unaware of this, it helps the child in his or her struggle for psychic independence from the parents, since it is the first environment in which the child is apart from the family. Thus, the school should not restrict its role to cognitive development through objective instruction, but should consciously contribute to the development of all aspects of personality, since it already does so unintentionally—that is, without observing the effects of its actions or judiciously directing its efforts.

Jung (2013) proposes that there are three types of education: 1) "education by example," which takes place through the influence that the educator's personality exerts on students; its effectiveness is grounded in the fact that it does not pass through consciousness, operating through a kind of psychic contagion. For this reason, the educator's self-knowledge becomes fundamental, since its absence may lead to a harmful influence; 2) "conscious collective education," which refers to the education of any group, in different contexts involving rules, principles, and methods; 3) "individual education," whose aim is to develop the individual's character. Jung (2013) suggests that individual education should be offered to any child who shows resistance to collective education.

Another Jungian theory relevant to education is that of psychological types. Jung categorized the functioning of consciousness into four functions (thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition) and two attitudes (extraversion and introversion). These functions

and attitudes combine so as to constitute eight psychological types: the extraverted thinking type, the extraverted feeling type, the extraverted sensation type, and the extraverted intuitive type; the introverted thinking type, the introverted feeling type, the introverted sensation type, and the introverted intuitive type (Jung, 2008; Silveira, 1968). Although all individuals possess the four functions and the two attitudes within the totality of their personality, some functions and attitudes are more conscious than others, guiding the relationship between subject (the inner world) and object (the outer world) (Toledo, 2010).

As Lorthiois (2019, p. 142) proposes, this Jungian typology should not be used in education to label students, "[...] but rather to enrich and refine the educator's way of seeing; insofar as educators themselves make use of this typology for self-knowledge, they become better able to perceive their students from this perspective." Thus, this understanding of personality has decisive implications for the student's learning process in at least two respects: the first concerns the teaching method, and the second concerns the teacher–student relationship. Depending on a person's psychological type, he or she will be more inclined to learn through certain educational methods.

This highlights one of the problems of the traditional educational system, which operates through methods that predominantly favor the learning style of the extraverted thinking type—those who fall outside this typology are regarded as inadequate or insufficient. Another issue that arises concerns the teacher–student relationship, which is fundamental within the scope of an ethical education, considering the typology of each. A teacher will encounter difficulties and obstacles in teaching and relating to a student whose typology is opposite[6] to his or her own. There is also the further problem that "[...] reinforcing only one of the functions may cause symptoms in learning or pathologies in personality" (Sargo; Moreira, 1996, p. 8).

Jung drew a clear distinction between ethics and morality, as Gorresio (1997) shows: morality concerns the customs, rules, and codes established by a given culture; ethics refers to the duties determined by the Self—the deep self, the totality of being that encompasses the whole psyche—in harmony with the self-realization of personality. This definition of ethics is more specific and has a subjective dimension that Asmann's does not have. It is a "[...] voice of self-orientation, a self-regulating and self-dynamizing activity of the psyche" (Gorresio, 1997, p. 113). From this perspective, it follows that it is not the ethical function of pedagogy to establish universal moral norms, but rather to contribute to the process of the child's personality development and realization. For this to be possible, the teacher must constantly undergo the development of his or her own personality[7].

In Analytical Psychology, ethical education does not mean moralizing education. It is not a matter of teaching students a specific moral code, but of helping them move toward the development and realization of their personality by listening to the voice of their Self. "This means saying yes to oneself [...] which requires much more than the

6- According to Silveira (1968), the thinking and feeling functions are rational functions of judgment and are opposed to each other; that is, if a person's principal function is thinking, the inferior function will be feeling, and vice versa. Sensation and intuition are irrational functions and are likewise opposed to each other. Therefore, if a person's principal function is sensation, the inferior function will be intuition, and vice versa.

7- To gain a deeper understanding of how the relationship between teachers' and students' psychological types manifests itself in the classroom, we may turn to Saiani's work (2002).

CC BY

mere observance of the demands of collective moral standards" (Gorresio, 1997, p. 114). In practice, this listening to the Self may lead to the emergence of conflicts (listening to one's inner voice versus obeying collective norms) (Gorresio, 1997). However, this is not a matter of disregarding the Other, since this listening to oneself arises from the process of individuation, of personality development. In this sense, "individuation is 'becoming one' with oneself, and at the same time with the whole of humanity, in which we also include ourselves" (Jung, 2011, v. 16, § 227).

As can be observed, Jung's direct discussion of education is limited; however, it is possible to identify contemporary works grounded in the understanding of the human psyche developed by Jung that have significant implications for education (Cardoso, 2007; Sargo, 1998, 2005; Luzes, 2007; Lorthiois, 2019). I consider the work of Céline Lorthiois the most prominent, since it gave rise to a pedagogical practice called Profound Pedagogy.

Cardoso (2007) implemented a psychopedagogical intervention, grounded in Analytical Psychology, with a group of 22 children. Her aim was to contribute to the expansion of the children's consciousness. To this end, she structured the intervention around the concept of archetype, which, for Jung, consists of a kind of psychic genetics, universal patterns present in all human beings and functioning as an instinctive form of imagining (Silveira, 1968). This common basis shared by all explains the emergence of identical themes in distant places and times. Through a number of activities involving the hero archetype, the author sought to contribute directly to the development of the children's personality, insofar as they were able to become conscious of aspects valued in the human being and symbolically projected onto the figure of the hero; she also included a variety of interventions and activities that valued all psychological types.

Claudete Sargo (1998), drawing on a Jungian understanding of the psyche, situated learning difficulties within a broader process: the development of the child's personality, which, upon encountering an obstacle, will at some point manifest as a symptom of difficulty in the learning of academic content. In addition, the psychopedagogue also identified a direct relationship between these difficulties and matriarchal and patriarchal dynamisms in early childhood (Sargo, 2005). This happens because these primary relationships, established at the beginning of life, form the basis of the individual's relationships with himself or herself and with the other. In this way, Sargo contributes to our thinking about an education centered on the development of the personality as a whole.

Another significant work, grounded in Analytical Psychology and with important repercussions for education, is that of Dr. Eleanor Luzes (2007). The author founded what she calls the "Science of the Beginning of Life" (SBL), which extends from preconception to the first three years of life. She states that, during this period, the most structuring beliefs of personality are formed and that, when negative, they help explain destructive behaviors and people's inability to love themselves, as well as to love the other and their surroundings. By disseminating this knowledge, Luzes (2007, p. 4) hopes to contribute to the reduction of a variety of social ills, such as infant mortality, disease, and criminality, since, in her view, these are associated with primary relationships at the beginning of life.

Lastly, special emphasis should once again be given to the work developed by the pedagogue Céline Lorthiois (2019), which culminated in the formulation of what the

author called “Profound Pedagogy”, also grounded in the understanding of the human psyche developed by Jung and consisting of an effective union between Pedagogy and Psychology. In addition, Lorthiois (2019) also uses Subtle Touches[8], the dance of peoples, contact with nature, and the observation of children as tools.

The main proposal of this pedagogy is “[...] to fill the gap left by current educational practices, which have not yet included care for the child psyche” and which ignore children’s inner and unconscious life (Lorthiois, 2019, p. 12–13). In short, it is a matter of including the soul in education for the child’s unfolding and for the prevention of illness, embracing the child in his or her totality (body, mind, creative capacity, dreams, and soul). In Lorthiois’s words (2019, p. 298):

> The aim of the educational process, in Profound Pedagogy, is the child’s self-knowledge and psychic health. In general, we propose activities and contents that are not strictly school-based; however, when all aspects of students’ development are taken into account, we observe that a healthy child knows what he or she wants and learns what he or she wants, that is, does not present learning difficulties.

In this educational proposal, “[...] the acquisition of content, competencies, skills, and good manners becomes secondary” (Lorthiois, 2019, p. 11), since the curriculum is life itself. It is necessary to understand that everything the child does has meaning and purpose related to the roots of the past and expresses the archetypal developmental needs of his or her consciousness. This perspective encourages the educator to adopt the stance of an observer, thereby providing learners with greater freedom of expression (Lorthiois, 2019). Some elements are fundamental in this pedagogical approach: contact with the basic elements of nature (water, earth, fire, and air), dreams, non-directed activities, craft techniques, expressive techniques, manual activities, play and games, dances, etc.

A criticism that this approach directs at the traditional school, and which directly engages with the ethical question, concerns the exclusion from school environments of songs and games[9] that present aggressive or violent aspects. The claim is that such elements may stimulate violent behavior in children. However, this prohibition seems to ignore that aggressiveness constitutes an archetypal and natural aspect of the human being, and that the perception of aggressive aspects in cultural productions for children could, in fact, help the child deal with this dimension of his or her being, learning to experience aggressiveness in a normal, conscious way rather than in a shadowy and unconscious one (Lorthiois, 2019).

Jung’s reflections on education, together with the contemporary works mentioned above that are grounded in Analytical Psychology, present a view of education directed

8- Subtle Touches are bodywork practices proposed by Pethö Sándor that “[...] promote the regulation of muscle tone and are intended to act on all levels of being: the physical, the mental, the psychological, and the spiritual.” These touches basically consist of light touch applied to specific points on the body (the soles of the feet, the back, the legs, the abdomen, etc.) and may be performed in circles, through gliding movements, by gentle pressure, or by means of blowing (Lorthiois, 2019, p. 13).

9- As an example, Lorthiois (2019) refers to the children’s song *Atirei o pau no gato*, toy weapons (or imagined ones), and even the game of cops and robbers.

toward the development of the personality as a whole, rather than merely the teaching of curricular content. This educational proposal seeks to contribute to the process of becoming conscious of Being and therefore fulfills an ethical function, insofar as it helps the individual connect more consciously with the Self/Central Archetype[10] and continue in the process of individuation (becoming the Self), thus being oriented toward ethical behavior. However, this ethical function remains imprecise in the Jungian perspective[11], constituting, perhaps, "the most confused and ambiguous part of his work" (Byington, 2008, p. 116). By presenting a clearer understanding of the shadow and of evil, and of ethics as a structuring function, Carlos Byington offers greater support for thinking about an ethical education.

Contributions of Byington to an ethical education

Carlos Byington wrote and reflected extensively on pedagogical practice based on the formation and development of the personality as a whole. His book *A construção amorosa do saber: o fundamento e a finalidade da Pedagogia Simbólica Junguiana* (2011)[12] presents significant contributions to thinking about the educational process from the perspective of symbol elaboration. The main reflections of Byington on education are presented below.

Byington developed several critiques of purely rational teaching. According to the author, there is a lack of research evaluating the real usefulness of studies in everyday life, that is, how much of what we study actually has practical implications for life (Byington, 1996). According to the author (Byington, 1996, p. 14), this lack of research would itself be a defense, a way of avoiding "[...] the recognition of the failure of purely rational pedagogy and of a gigantic waste of time and resources." For him (Byington, 1996, p. 19), teaching must be linked to the applicability and usefulness of the content taught; otherwise, teaching "[...] is equivalent to introducing a tick into the student's brain, one that sucks memory and intelligence for itself rather than for the student's life."

When schools reduce teaching to a merely rational dimension, they teach about culture and society only on the plane of ideas, without living them inwardly. In this way, an artificial separation is established between what is taught and the application of this knowledge to life and work (Byington, 2011). Byington proposes that there is a type of work—one that makes possible the lived experience of the rational concepts learned—that is of fundamental importance for a living education, helping to insert the student into society and culture. Thus, it is not possible to teach life merely through ideas, which is what rational teaching does, whereas Symbolic Pedagogy "[...] transcends exclusively rational intelligence, which frequently turns into the tyranny of IQ used in selection tests" (Byington, 2011, p. 24).

10- The Self is the regulating center of the psyche and, according to Byington (2011), the Central Archetype is its principal archetype, coordinating all the others.

11- Although Jung's discussion of ethics is limited, Neumann expanded this discussion within Analytical Psychology in his book *Depth Psychology and a New Ethic* (1991), in which he presents a conception of ethics based on the process of individuation, unrelated to collective values (Byington, 2008).

12- Tranlation note: English title of the work mentioned: *The Loving Construction of Knowledge: The Foundation and Purpose of Jungian Symbolic Pedagogy*. This title is provided in translation for reference.

This teaching, marked by a purely rational dominance, presents controversial characteristics: it transmits knowledge exclusively at the conscious level, ignoring the totality of the Self; it privileges the extraverted thinking and sensation typologies, with little or no space for the development of the introverted feeling and intuition functions; and it leaves the feeling function aside, resulting in a form of teaching devoid of emotion and love (Byington, 2011). This last issue is problematic in a culture such as the Brazilian one—emotional, mystical, and erotic; such rationalized teaching is not consistent with our way of being (Byington, 2011). In this way, the feeling function may be considered a necessary path for the development of ethics.

Moreover, with reference to Jung, Byington (2011) suggests that rational teaching is permeated by power relations, which prevents a loving relationship with knowledge and very often condemns that relationship to disinterest. This would even help explain the pursuit of study exclusively as a means of obtaining a diploma, leading to the replacement of love by "[...] power, which comes to use knowledge solely within competition in the labor market, without any relation to love and vocation" (Byington, 2011, p. 36). This separation between the pursuit of knowledge and vocation may help explain the ethical problems experienced today in relation to professional irresponsibility of various kinds, since the choice of a profession has been guided by a rational teaching based on power rather than on love.

Byington identified a dissociation between the subjective and the objective that helps explain the resistances and obstacles placed in the way of the educational perspective proposed by Symbolic Pedagogy. The persecutions carried out against Science during the Inquisition caused a deep wound in the scientific field, so that, upon regaining power within the Universities, Science enacted a pathological dissociation between the objective and the subjective, becoming purely rational, materialistic, and reduced to objectivity (Byington, 2011). From that point on, objectivity and truth came to be attributed to science, while subjectivity and mysticism were associated with religion. Thus, if, on the one hand, science brought freedom of teaching to the University by expelling religious intolerance from that space, on the other hand, it curtailed that freedom when it reduced truth exclusively to objectivity (Byington, 2011).

This scientific perspective, which links truth to objectivity, seems to ignore that the Ego's capacity for knowledge is partial (Byington, 2011). The Ego is only a small part of a much greater whole, endowed with innumerable limitations. From a logical point of view, a small part is not capable of encompassing a whole that is greater than itself. For this reason, the author (Byington, 2011, p. 67) proposes that the search for knowledge makes sense when it integrates objectivity and subjectivity; that is, the processes of learning about and apprehending the external world must be connected to the individual's existential and experiential process, in the search for the "[...] totality provided by the process of symbolic elaboration, systematically coordinated by the Central Archetype of the Self." For Byington (2008), the process of symbolic elaboration is formed by structuring symbols, functions, and structuring systems, all constituted by polarities (conscious–unconscious, normal–pathological, life–death, etc.). Symbolic elaboration consists in not reducing the meaning of a symbol to a single pole, but rather in understanding this whole system as

CC BY

relationships, insofar as we integrate the contents of symbols into consciousness. In this way, he proposes that the objective teaching of the school curriculum must be related to the students' existential process in the development of personality, through the constant elaboration of symbols[13].

The symbol was chosen as the unit of the psyche, capable of connecting the subjective and the objective, revealing the world to us through our existential process (Byington, 2011). Everything is symbolic; each lived experience is a symbol of the Self; truth, as existential reality, is also symbolic (Byington, 2011, p. 40). In his words (Byington, 2011, p. 43), the "[...] symbolic method of knowing thus becomes the experience of the permanent revelation of mystery; it is always, subjectively and objectively, the Universal Whole to which we belong and which, in showing itself to us, also reveals who we are." Therefore, his educational proposal is called Symbolic Pedagogy, because it grounds the possibility of integrating opposites in the symbol, in the search for the development of totality. This becomes possible insofar as symbolic teaching gives life to learning by integrating objectivity with subjectivity; that is, it includes the educator's and the students' fantasy, without disregarding scientific knowledge (Byington, 2011).

In the context of education, this dissociation between the subjective and the objective helps explain the movement of resistance to Symbolic Pedagogy, or even to Profound Pedagogy. Scientific thought, restricted exclusively to the rational, associated the subjective with error, something incompatible with truth, while the objective is endowed with all virtues (seriousness, depth, consistency, honesty, harmony, and peace); however, it ignores that objectivity can never truly attain such virtues without encompassing subjectivity (Byington, 2011).

For the author, incorporating subjectivity into the scientific field only becomes a problem when the subjective and the objective are confused. "When they are brought together, they complement one another and make action much more integrated and efficient," Byington (2011, p. 59) states in defending his teaching approach. If we are able to do this, whether in the scientific or pedagogical field, it will be possible to relinquish rationalism from its place as controller of the world and to begin a symbolic path of wisdom, one that will lead Being toward a loving connection with knowledge (Byington, 2011).

Byington (1996, 2011) proposes a teaching method centered on lived experience, believing that this fosters the symbolic development of the psyche. To this end, the author emphasizes the need for a loving transferential bond between teacher and student, which contributes to "[...] the affective-emotional formation of the identity of the Ego and the Other" and to learning without forgetting (Byington, 2011, p. 20). It is a transferential relationship

13- In order to exemplify the process of symbolic elaboration, I present below an example described by Byington (2008, p. 77-78): "While walking down the street, a patient came across a *Rottweiler* that attacked him. He was frightened, but the dog's owner held it by the leash. The dog is the symbol, fear is the function, and the precautionary methods form the structuring system. The elaboration of this symbol, its function, and its structuring system continues to this day. As time went by, the patient began to feel indignant that such dogs were being bred. He learned that one had attacked a child. He followed the discussion of the law prohibiting large dogs from being on the street without a muzzle and strongly approved of the initiative. [...] Three months ago, he encountered another *Rottweiler*. He became so frightened that, although the dog was on a leash, he crossed the street. He turned pale and his heart raced. [...] he telephoned a *Rottweiler* breeder to find out when a new litter would be born. He visited the puppies twice a week for a month, and today he no longer feels afraid. [...] he returned to having a normal relationship with the symbol, the function, and the structuring system of precaution."

because, just as in the therapeutic setting between therapist and patient, there are also normal and defensive transferences taking place between teacher and student (Byington, 2011). By assuming these characteristics of teaching, the teacher may make study playful, emotional, comic, and dramatic, as a possibility for learning without forgetting.

In order to make formal schooling come alive and connect it to life, society, and culture, Byington (2011) proposes that the educator make intensive and creative use of expressive techniques, such as drawing, painting, clay, bodily, dramatic, and musical techniques, sandplay, Self puppets, meditation, imagination[14], writing, and even oracular techniques. According to the author, such techniques help bring the subject's subjectivity into the learning of the objective knowledge conveyed by the school curriculum, contributing not only to learning, but also to the development of personality.

Thus, Byington (2011, p. 21) argues that the method of learning in Symbolic Pedagogy is the same one naturally experienced at the beginning of life in the formation of identity—"[...] based on lived experiences and primary emotional relationships"—and, for this reason, constitutes "[...] the most fertile model of learning throughout existence," and cannot be forgotten. In other words, Byington proposes an experiential approach linked to the process of personality development, in which emotional relationships have a major impact on the learning process and on the formation of the identity of the Ego and the Other.

The proposal of Symbolic Pedagogy is not reduced to a knowledge about things, as occurs in rational pedagogies, but above all encompasses a Knowing How to Be, insofar as it contributes to the development of the individual's existential intelligence. This intelligence consists in the "[...] capacity to apply the content of teaching to any dimension of the Self, and not exclusively to the rational dimension" (Byington, 2011, p. 24). For this, it is necessary to include in teaching all the dimensions of Being: body, nature, society, idea, image, emotion, word, number, sound, silence, and emptiness, nurturing in Being, through these dimensions, wisdom rather than mere erudition (Byington, 2011). Within this proposal, the individual may perceive knowledge affectively, rather than as the distorted view of knowledge as power.

Byington (2011) considers that one of the main contributions of Symbolic Pedagogy is the "return of existential drama to learning" (p. 33), since learning symbolically about things consists precisely in understanding what they are for and how this connects to the Whole, including ourselves. This leads to the cultivation of transcendence and to an experience of the sacred insofar as we live the symbols. The dimension of the sacred has a fundamental place within Symbolic Pedagogy, but it is not connected to any specific religion; it refers only to re-linking (the connection of the part to the Whole) (Byington, 2011). Byington (2011) places special emphasis on the Christian myth, since we live in a predominantly Judeo-Christian culture. Likewise, Lorthiois (2019, p. 266) understands that questions of spirituality and religiosity constitute the fundamental bases of Profound

14 - Byington (2011, p. 311) considers imagination to be the most important structuring function; he states, "if the Psyche were a bird, its wings would be imagination." He calls this function the "transcendent structuring function of imagination," since he understands it to include the transcendent function elaborated by Jung.

CC BY

Pedagogy, in the sense of "[...] rediscovering oneself, connecting with the group and with the universe, and re-linking with our capacity for progress oriented toward service."

As for the teacher's role, it is central in Symbolic Pedagogy. As Jung and Lorthiois also maintain, Byington holds that the educator's personality matters more than the content he or she teaches. To put Symbolic Pedagogy into practice, teachers must have authenticity and existential wholeness. They must be committed both to the formation of their own personality and to that of their students. Without this, no matter how innovative and constructivist teachers may aspire to be, they run the risk of transmitting to their students a lack of love for knowledge (Byington, 2011). In this proposal, teachers must commit to developing their own creativity in order to associate the subjective and the objective, uniting them in the symbol during the pedagogical relationship with the student (Byington, 2011). However, it is necessary to recognize that, for teachers to be able to work from this pedagogical perspective, they must be supported by structural and systemic conditions that make this path viable.

Byington (2011) presents several examples that help us imagine what teaching grounded in Symbolic Pedagogy would be like. A Botany teacher, while drawing attention to the deformations of the ecosystem, might compare them to the tale of Frankenstein. It would also involve studying and learning about the animals that live in the school environment and with which students may maintain an affectionate relationship. The teaching of the French Revolution should not be reduced to events, characters, and dates. Byington proposes that it should include a dramatization in which students may live through the historical event with the full emotional and subjective range of its characters. For Symbolic Pedagogy, the teaching of Physics, Chemistry, and Biology cannot ignore that these sciences exist within us from birth. Thus, Byington (2011, p. 97) gives the example that a teacher should teach "the physico-chemical processes involved in tea and cakes prepared by the class. Digestion, from the production of saliva to the moment the cake becomes part of the fecal mass. The urine resulting from the tea, filtered by the kidneys and becoming part of the ecosystem." He also proposes relating the "filtration system of the kidneys to the pollution of the Tietê River and the Guarapiranga Reservoir."

Although there is much more to be said about Jungian Symbolic Pedagogy, we will now focus on the concept of the shadow, fundamental for thinking about an ethical education within this approach. For Byington, the shadow is formed through processes of fixation and defense, both personal and collective, in the "[...] normal development of Consciousness [...], which is understood as the path of truth, fullness, and the Good" (Byington, 2008, p. 16). Fixation and defense are concepts from Psychoanalysis, which are expanded and revisited by Byington (2008). For him, during the normal development of consciousness, which consists in the process of symbolic elaboration, symbols may become imprisoned—that is, they may become fixated—which, in turn, leads to the triggering of defenses, always regarded as abnormal and pathological. "When the structuring functions become fixated in the elaboration of symbols, they come to express them in the Shadow in a partial, distorted, inadequate, and frequently destructive way" (Byington, 2008, p. 74). It is this fixation in the process of symbolic elaboration that explains, among many other things, the violent attitudes—ever more frequent—in school environments.

Byington proposes the existence of two types of shadow—the Circumstantial Shadow and the Chronic Shadow. The circumstantial shadow is formed by symbols fixated in the unconscious, whose defenses are not yet entrenched in the person and can be confronted more easily by the Ego. The chronic shadow, in turn, is under repression and cannot easily be elaborated by the Ego. When left untreated, the circumstantial shadow may become a chronic shadow and trigger a neurosis. Byington (2011) proposes that the circumstantial shadow may be treated in the school and family environment by educators and parents. However, when this shadow becomes chronic, it must be treated by the therapist in the consulting room. In both types of shadow, "[...] reality is distorted by defenses and, for this reason, the Circumstantial Shadow and the Chronic Shadow are pathological" (Byington, 2017, p. 62). For Byington, the pathological is everything that departs from the normal development of Consciousness, hindering or preventing it.

Byington suggests that there is an archetypal development of Consciousness, which takes place through the elaboration of symbols, instances capable of uniting all poles (consciousness vs. unconsciousness; subjective vs. objective; good vs. evil; shadow vs. light; etc.). Byington (2017) understands consciousness as the path toward the realization of the whole archetypal potential of Being. According to Byington (2019), we need to confront the symbols present in the shadow, which may be dynamized by structuring functions so as to promote the development of Consciousness and of ethics. Byington (2008) recognizes ethics as a structuring function. Structuring functions are responsible for extracting the meaning of symbols in such a way as to contribute to the formation of Consciousness and the development of Being (Byington, 2008, 2017).

From these considerations, we may think of an ethics that takes into account the developmental needs—of oneself and of the Other—coordinated by the Self (Central Archetype). In conceiving ethics as a structuring function, Byington highlights its potential to structure either Consciousness or the Shadow and, for this reason, this function must accompany the processes of symbolic elaboration. This conception of ethics justifies thinking about a pedagogy centered on the development of personality, insofar as it aims to promote an ethical education.

In conceptualizing the Shadow as synonymous with Evil[15], the fixation of any symbol in the shadow has direct implications for the structuring function of ethics (Byington, 2008). For this reason, thinking about ethics from the perspective of Symbolic Psychology necessarily passes through the concept of the Shadow. When symbols are elaborated—removed from the shadow, where they are held by fixation or defense—the process of symbolic elaboration is resumed, becoming a "[...] generative source of the Good" (Byington, 2019, p. 224). For him, the path of the good is expressed in the normal flow of development, whereas evil arises when this development is interrupted by fixations and defenses.

More broadly, what Byington is proposing on the basis of the foundations of Symbolic Pedagogy is a systematic interrelationship between education and mental health. In this sense, he states that "[...] during the practice of Jungian Symbolic Pedagogy, the

15 - For Byington, evil is anything that hinders the development and growth of Consciousness.

CC BY

great role of prophylaxis against mental illness [...] falls to the educator" (Byington, 2011, p. 46). Considering that the student's shadow reflects, to a large extent, aspects of the family shadow, the school, in constant contact with the family, may contribute not only to the formation of the student's personality and character, but also to the strengthening of the family nucleus by adopting the principles of Symbolic Pedagogy in its teaching (Byington, 2011).

An educator who learns to act from the perspective of Symbolic Pedagogy possibly becomes capable of "[...] recognizing the interaction between creative and defensive structuring functions in Education, [and] becomes able to transcend objective teaching and to work with the Good and the Evil within that intimate area of Being where personality is formed" (Byington, 2011, p. 49). This statement by Byington synthesizes the ethical function of Symbolic Pedagogy, which, in addition to offering a possible understanding of the origin of evil and its causes, also presents a possible proposal for an ethical education insofar as it contributes to the elaboration of symbols fixated in the Shadow, so as to make them useful in the structuring of Consciousness.

In summary, Byington (2011) proposes that school teaching be linked to the totality of human existence for the construction and humanization of Being. In view of this, Symbolic Pedagogy aims to include reason and emotion, thought and feeling, subjectivity and objectivity, so that individuals may live more fully. In this way, through this and its effects on collective consciousness, the construction of a better, more ethical world is believed to be possible.

Final considerations

In summary, one of the major contributions that the approaches of Dynamic Psychology can make to pedagogical praxis concerns a proposal for an ethical education—something that constitutes an urgent and highly relevant issue in contemporary society.

For an ethical education to exist, it is essential to broaden the conception of education so that it may go beyond the purely rational teaching of curricular content from a purely objective perspective. It is necessary to include the soul of both child and teacher in the teacher–student relationship, since both need to be whole within a relationship whose ultimate aim is the development of both personalities.

In Profound Pedagogy and in Symbolic Pedagogy, evil is not understood as something natural and intrinsic to Being, but as the product of an interruption in the normal development of Consciousness. Thus, on the basis of this understanding of the formation of human subjectivity, education may carry out important prophylactic work in relation to mental illness and the presence of ethical problems in our society.

It is possible to affirm that the proposals of Profound Pedagogy and Symbolic Pedagogy are not restricted to a purely philosophical, theoretical, or critical discussion, as happens with many proposals for an ethical education. These are approaches with practical application which, although still little known in the field of education, present a possible proposal for dealing with the ethical problems of society within the pedagogical

relationship, insofar as this relationship contributes to keeping the individual on the path of consciousness.

As we have seen throughout this study, the educational theories formulated from Analytical Psychology and Symbolic Psychology may offer possible responses to the hypotheses put forward by Taille, Souza and Vizioli (2004) in order to understand the resistances to an ethical education. The first hypothesis states that the prevailing opinion is that the ethical and moral formation of the human being is not the school's role. The theories presented here have shown that the school not only can contribute to the ethical formation of students, but can also encompass the family environment and its members. The second hypothesis states that the Brazilian experience with the subject "Moral and Civic Education" turned the issue of ethics and education into a taboo. The third hypothesis points to the existence of fear surrounding the theme, since it can easily lead to coercive, authoritarian, and moralistic practices. These last two possible obstacles are also overcome by these theories, since they propose an ethical education as personality formation and not as a code of rules to be taught.

In contemporary times, in the face of the various attacks on democratic institutions, the notion of "Education for Citizenship" has been emerging in Brazilian education, both in schools and in the official curriculum, evoking an understanding of rights and duties, social justice, social participation, and self-knowledge. This may be an entry point for Symbolic Pedagogy in schools, insofar as this kind of teaching expects students to develop competencies such as participation and responsibility in an experiential way, as Burgos (2025) argues. In this way, an ethical education could be incorporated into schools without carrying with it the fears that accompanied "Moral and Civic Education."

The Symbolic Pedagogy formulated by Carlos Byington conceives ethics as a structuring function of Consciousness, present in all symbolic elaborations, since it mobilizes the symbols fixated in the Shadow (Evil). In this sense, we may think of an ethical education in which the teacher helps the student elaborate those symbols fixated in the shadow, something that is possible when pedagogical practice is centered on the development of personality, which includes the student's and the teacher's psychic dynamic.

References

ASMANN, Selvino José. **Filosofia e ética.** Florianópolis: Departamento de Ciências da Administração / UFSC; Brasília, DF: CAPES: UAB, 2009.

BARRETO, Marco Heleno. A dimensão ética da psicologia analítica: individuação como "realização moral". **Psicologia Clínica**, Rio de Janeiro, v. 21, n. 1, p. 91-105, 2009.

BURGOS, Marcelo Baumann. Educação para a cidadania: a Base Nacional Comum Curricular pode contribuir? **Educação em Revista**, v. 41, e52738, 2025. https://doi.org/10.1590/0102-469852738.

BYINGTON, Carlos Amadeu Botelho. **A construção amorosa do saber**: o fundamento e a finalidade da Pedagogia Simbólica Junguiana. 3. ed. São Paulo: Linear B, 2011.

CC BY

BYINGTON, Carlos Amadeu Botelho. A sombra e o mal: o paradoxo do arquétipo central: um estudo da ética pela psicologia simbólica junguiana. **Revista da Sociedade Brasileira de Psicologia Analítica**, São Paulo, p. 221-229, 2019.

BYINGTON, Carlos Amadeu Botelho. Freud e Jung: o que a emoção não deixou reunir. **Junguiana**: Revista da Sociedade Brasileira de Psicologia Analítica, São Paulo, n. 23, p. 29-38, 2005.

BYINGTON, Carlos Amadeu Botelho. **Pedagogia simbólica**: a construção amorosa do conhecimento de ser. Rio de Janeiro: Record: Rosa dos Tempos, 1996.

BYINGTON, Carlos Amadeu Botelho. **Psicologia simbólica junguiana**: a viagem de humanização do cosmos em busca da iluminação. São Paulo: Linear B, 2008.

BYINGTON, Carlos Amadeu Botelho. **Psicopatologia simbólica junguiana**: um estudo do Mal e da ameaça de autodestruição da nossa espécie. 2. ed. São Paulo: Edição do Autor, 2017.

CARDOSO, Bruna Puglisi de Assumpção. Intervenção psicopedagógica institucional: os heróis e a busca da alteridade: aprendizagem em sala de aula. **Construção Psicopedagógica**, [online], v, 15, n. 12, p. 55-71, dez. 2007.

GORRESIO, Zilda Marengo Piacenti. A ética da individuação: um estudo sobre a ética do ponto de vista da psicologia junguiana. **Hypnos**, São Paulo, v. 2, n. 3, p. 112-118, 1997.

JUNG, Carl Gustav. **O desenvolvimento da personalidade**. Tradução de Frei Valdemar do Amaral. 14. ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2013.

JUNG, Carl Gustav. **Obras completas**. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2011.

JUNG, Carl Gustav. **Tipos psicológicos**. 2. ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2008.

LORTHIOIS, Céline. **Pedagogia profunda**: Jung na educação. [Middletown]: Publicação Independente, 2019.

LUZES, Eleanor Madruga. **A necessidade do ensino da ciência do início da vida**. 2007. Tese (Doutorado em Psicologia) – Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Instituto de Psicologia, Rio de Janeiro, 2007.

SAIANI, Claudio. **Jung e a educação**: uma análise da relação professor/aluno. 2. ed. São Paulo: Escritura, 2002.

SARGO, Claudete; MOREIRA, Suely Grimaldi. As modalidades de aprendizagem e os tipos psicológicos. **Revista Psicopedagogia**, São Paulo, v. 15, n. 39, p. 6-9, 1996.

SARGO, Claudete. **O berço da aprendizagem**: um estudo a partir da psicologia de Jung. São Paulo: Ícone, 2005.

SARGO, Claudete. A voz do self ouvida na dificuldade de aprendizagem. **Revista Psicopedagogia**, São Paulo, v. 17, n. 43, p. 23-29, 1998.

SILVEIRA, Nise da. **Jung**: vida e obra. Rio de Janeiro: José Álvaro, 1968.

TAILLE, Yves de la; SOUZA, Lucimara Silva de; VIZIOLI, Letícia. Ética e educação: uma revisão da literatura educacional de 1990 a 2003. **Educação e Pesquisa**, São Paulo, v. 30, n. 1, p. 91-108, jan./abr. 2004.

TOLEDO, Laylla Pereira de. **Contribuições do pensamento junguiano nas práticas psicopedagógicas**. 2010. Monografia (Especialização em Psicopedagogia) – Universidade Gama Filho. Ribeirão Preto, 2010.

Received on December 16, 2024
Revised on September 15, 2025
Approved on October 20, 2025

Editor: Prof. Marília Pinto de Carvalho

Rayanne Saturnino de Araujo Valim is a Basic Education teacher in the public school system; holds a degree in Pedagogy from the Federal University of Ouro Preto; a degree in International Relations from the Catholic University of Brasília; a postgraduate degree in Psychopedagogy from the Pontifical Catholic University of Goiás (PUC Goiás); a postgraduate qualification in Special and Inclusive Education for Autism and Intellectual Disability; and a master's degree in Political Science from the Federal University of Goiás.