



FUTURITY
OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.57125/FS.2024.12.20.04>

How to cite: Scarnera, P. (2024). The Orpheus' and Eurydice's Myth as a Decoding Grid for the Psychic Damages Caused by Losses Incurred by the COVID-19 Epidemic. *Futurity of Social Sciences*, 2(4), 60-83.
<https://doi.org/10.57125/FS.2024.12.20.04>

The Orpheus' and Eurydice's Myth as a Decoding Grid for the Psychic Damages Caused by Losses Incurred by the COVID-19 Epidemic

Pasquale Scarnera

Clinical Psychologist/Psychotherapist, Innovation, Planning and Research Section in the Social Cooperatives "Questa Città" and "Campo dei Miracoli" in Gravina in Puglia (BA), Italy,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0719-6830>

Correspondence email: linosca@questacitta.it.

Received: June 19, 2024 | **Accepted:** September 7, 2024 | **Published:** October 1, 2024

Abstract: This work aims to offer a guideline for treating losses from the COVID-19 pandemic. Psychoanalysis has proven to provide multiple levels of interpretation of both dreams and clinical material, as well as myths, which, for this reason, can also act as an interpretative grid of many current clinical situations, being paradigmatic of human dramas, conquests and tragedies. However, the classical psychoanalytic approach has often used stereotypes that have led to prefabricated and caricatural interpretations, leading to the loss of the richness of suggestions that myths can give to clinical interventions. The Orpheus' and Eurydice's myth, being descriptive of the loss of the object of love, which is the most devastating and destructive of losses, can prove helpful in framing the

clinical paths to be faced in repairing the damage suffered and in resuming the lost opportunities of development, due to the restrictions imposed by the containment measures of the covid-19 pandemic. The present work presents semiological and psychoanalytic integrated approaches to interpret this myth, proposing itself as an intervention grid for the treatment of losses suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic, also able to overcome some of the difficulties inherent in other approaches. In particular, "Orpheus' error" presents some suggestions for adopting the clinical approach, which has found support in longitudinal research carried out in the field with a different methodology.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Gender Equality, Loss of Evolutionary Potential, Orpheus' and Eurydice' myth, Psychoanalysis, Semiology

Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental Health

The disastrous COVID-19 pandemic has caused a high number of sick and dead people and has entailed, starting from the beginning of 2020, political choices aimed to contain the spread of the virus that have had heavy effects on the lifestyle of individuals and populations, with equally heavy repercussions on personal, social and economic integration levels. The health crisis has caused enormous stress on hospital health services due to the unexpected and critical increase in the demand for health care and a heavy economic regression due to the need to try to curb the spread of the infection through measures aimed at containing the circulation of the virus, i.e. drastic limitations of physical contacts between people. The measures, albeit with some differences between the States, have been similar at a global level and inevitably have produced heavy repercussions at both the socio-economic and health level: in addition to the dramatic repercussions of the covid-19 pandemic on the hospital systems of all the world, timely research has revealed an increase in anxiety, depression and perception of stress in the general population (Salari et al., 2020), as well as an increase in post-traumatic stress disorder, mainly widespread among women, people aged 40 or younger, unemployed people, people suffering from chronic psychiatric disorder, students, and finally people who were frequently exposed to information about the covid-19 pandemic disseminated by the mass media (Xiong et al., 2020). The increase in care work for women, the uncertainty of their working conditions and the related unpredictability of the possibility of continuing to support their families (for adults up to 40 years of age), destruction of lifestyles and the impoverishment of social relations (especially for the youngest), in addition to the fear of being infected and the efforts made to avoid it (for all the groups considered), can explain these results, which can lead to an aggravation of disability, for people already suffering from mental disorders, and to a general worsening of inequalities between people, since the richest ones have been able to contain better the heavy effects on the economy of the covid-19 pandemic, thus also limiting exposure to stress connected to them.

Chronic stress heavily affects the Hippocampal Formation, the Prefrontal Cortex and the Amygdala, leading to impairment in memory, learning, higher cognitive functions and emotion regulation (McEwen et al., 2016). However, these relapses could have a different meaning if referred

to adults or people in developmental age: in the first case, the recovery from the damage should result in the restoration of the levels of functioning and adaptation prior to the stressful period, subject to the changes made necessary from contingent situations and new learning; in the second case, recovery from damage should extend to the lack of development of skills that would otherwise have been possible in the absence of prolonged stress. Therefore, psychosocial and socio-economic limitations, on the one hand, and damage to cortical structures, albeit reversible, on the other, represent an explosive mixture whose effects could only be assessed through future studies, being the COVID-19 pandemic a global catastrophe which is unprecedented in history. However, measures have been taken to contain its spread and provide psychosocial support for the population, both in high-income countries and in low- and middle-income countries (Kola et al., 2021).

Especially in high-income nations, the social changes connected to the increase in wealth and to the progressive specialisation required for access to work have led to the creation of a sort of social moratorium due to the transition from adolescence to adulthood: it has been proposed to call *Emerging Adulthood* (EA) the age group between 18 and 25 years, meaning a period in which young people are engaged in study activities, seeking more intimate and stable love relationships, residence outside the family nucleus, exploration of possible identities, search for meaning for one's life, and strategies of social integration connected both to the vision of the world thus consolidated, and to the social status achieved through studies, experiences, and established love relationships. Unlike childhood and adolescence, specific biological markers do not correspond to this evolutionary phase, as they represent a cultural product present above all in the wealthiest societies, which can economically support this moratorium. The activity of exploration of the identity characteristic of this phase also involves the risk of incurring alcohol and substance abuse. Moreover, being the result of cultural constructions, it does not necessarily have to take place during the age above group, as they are possible advances and postponements, depending on the circumstances that occur for the individual persons, as well as the resources that they may have to support it, which may also vary based on specific circumstances. Therefore, there may be people who enter the EA phase before the age of 18 if circumstances force them to become adults prematurely and others who enter later for reasons deriving from their internal psychological problems and personal or economic insecurity. Similarly, this phase can end before the age of 25 or later, depending on whether or not a satisfactory and stable level of personal, social and economic integration has been achieved (Arnett, 2000, 2007). Having to abandon to move on to an evolutionary phase characterised by stability, constancy of relationships and one's vision of the world, EA must include a series of emotional and cognitive transformations that enable the definitive transition to adulthood. For this reason, UNESCO has recognised this age group's particular needs, prioritising policies that support their participation in social life at all levels (UNESCO Institute, 2013). Therefore, biological and psychosocial conditions can support actions aimed at recovering the damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals and the youth population. However, there are no consolidated experiences of intervention in similar situations.

Life Cycles and Gender Differences

Different cataloguing of life cycles, within which biological, psychological and social parameters converge, are present in different eras and cultures, such as the Classical and the Middle Ages, in Europe, and in different cultures and ethnicities, such as Hindu and Jewish: the nine phases recognised in the Classical Ages become six in the Middle Ages, while the Hindu culture has four stages, unlike the Jewish one, which recognises fourteen. These catalogues, defined by behavioural characteristics built on psychological and social skills acquired over time, are socially recognised and accepted; therefore, they represent frames of reference within which people can build their identity narrative, with consequent social integration and acceptance of roles connected within it, or marginalisation and risk of stigmatisation, in case of deviation or refusal of the same (Arnett, 2016).

Ancient Greek Culture provided various ways of scanning human life, the most detailed of which, proposed by Solon during the Archaic Era, recognised life cycles scanned in periods of seven years each, which were also acquired in the Classical Era and later by Hippocrates, through whom they also spread in Roman culture. This scan was based on biological and psychosocial parameters. It was entirely independent of the Roman legal scan, which was more straightforward, as it included the stage of *infants (7 years)*, *impulses (12 years)* and *puberty (14-25 years)*, unlike biological and psychosocial scans, which could be much more complex and articulated (Kosior, 2016). The archaic and classical subdivision, proposed by Solon and taken up by Hippocrates, provided for the following succession of stages: 1) *0-7 years*, characterised by the emergence and loss of milk teeth; 2) *7-14 years*, during which the first signs of puberty appear; 3) *14-21 years*, during which the body is still growing, and shows a change in the colour of the skin, with the appearance of hairs on the face; 4) *21-28 years*, during which the body reaches its maximum strength; 5) *28-35 years*, when the man is ripe for marriage and to have children; 6) *35-42 years*, when a man's mind is well mature and unwilling to do nonsense; 7-8) *42-56 years*, when a man is at the peak of his ability to think and speak; 9) *56-63 years*, when man still has his abilities, but his speech and his wisdom give weak proofs of excellence; 10) *63 years and over*, meaning that there was no yet death.

The classification of women, apart from that relating to childhood, was developed, unlike for males, based on the ability to access the status of wife or mother (Kamen, 2007). Girls could get married once they reached sexual maturity (around 14 years, with the appearance of menarche), and fathers could make marriage vows without consulting them, usually with males more than twice their age (Smith, 2005). Greek women were, therefore, considered to lack the ability to give consent. There was no term in the ancient Greek language for rape, although the use of force and violence was punishable by law: the abduction of a girl was considered on a par with theft, and in some respects, it was similar to marriage because, like the latter, it did not require the consent of the girl, and also did not necessarily imply violent sexual contact, often ending with the marriage between the kidnapper and the kidnapped, agreed with the father or other family member having the role of legal guardian of the same (Sorkin Rabinowitz, 2011). The Myth of the kidnapping of Kore by Hades, therefore, represented the marriage paradigm in Ancient Greece regulated by agrarian cultural paradigms because Kore, daughter of the Goddess Demeter, who guards agriculture and the cult of wheat, was abducted in the Underworld without choosing it, as happens with the wheat seed,

which sinks into the earth, disintegrates and reproduces, multiplying in generating ear, without having chosen to do it (Scarnera, 2015).

In all cases, marriage was considered a tool to guarantee the continuity of the paternal lineage, which was obliged to provide a dowry to the daughters, which could not manage it independently: the husbands acquired the right to manage this dowry in the interest of their family unit. They were obliged to return it to the bride's father in the event of divorce, which often occurred when no children were born. In such cases, the couple's male could have concubine children and legitimise them, making them his legitimate heirs. The promise of marriage, however, included quantifying the dowry to be assigned to the bride. At the same time, the fathers of low lineage could have recourse to assistants in the search for a husband for their daughter (Apolito, 2009). This situation was generalised for the Greek/Roman culture: marriage, during antiquity, was a fundamental event for various social classes. However, the legal marriage was reserved for both Roman and Greek City/State citizens. Therefore, a hard struggle was needed to acquire the right to legal marriage for some less privileged strata of society in order to legitimise one's children. Conversely, giving birth to legitimate children was considered an essential duty for women, and marriage was an opportunity for exchanges of sometimes copious gifts between families, so it had to be regulated according to written contracts; for people of low social status there was, therefore, no single ceremony that could make marriage official (Larsonn Lovén, 2010). Although legal marriage was, in most cases, a male-ruled affair, it was preceded by a complex ritual that interested females; through it, they accessed the status of procreators, becoming of fundamental importance for the community. The role of procreation, however, was aimed above all at ensuring male heirs, to the point that females were obliged to marry a relative of their father if the latter had not had male children, even if already married. The modality of access to this status was considered of little relevance, to the point that the Greek language used the same term, *gamos*, to indicate both marriages and kidnappings, and the verbal form *gamein* to indicate both the sexual act and that of getting married, for the husband. On the contrary, the same language used three terms to indicate the female maturity for procreation: *parthenos* (female who had the first menarche, and dangerous due to her reproductive capacity not controlled by a male); *nymphé* (female mature for procreation in transition to marriage) and *gyne* (married female and mother, incardinated in her husband's home). Before getting married, the Greek girls sacrificed their toys and clothing to Artemis, Hera and Aphrodite, protective goddesses respectively of childbirth, family life and seduction, then took a purifying bath: *marriage, therefore, represented a symbolic death for them*. Although marriage in ancient Greece may have been assimilated to kidnapping and symbolized during rituals, it did not exclude unions born of love, especially among the lower classes, in which the gender divide in daily life was less marked. Nor did it rule out that love was an ideal to be pursued after having constituted the couple, despite the verb used to indicate the relationship of the bride with the groom, *damazein*, meant both to be subject to a husband and to tame an animal.

The Myth of Orpheus and Eurydice as a Metaphor for an Interrupted Development Trajectory

Orpheus, the son of Apollo, the Olympian god of prophecy and oracles, of music, song and poetry (Atsma, n.d. a), and of Calliope, the eldest of the Muses, goddesses of music, song and dance (Atsma, n.d. b), was a musician with extraordinary abilities, who for this reason was part of the adventure of the Argonauts. However, he was not physically strong: according to the myth, the oaks used to build the Argonauts' ship followed him, enchanted by his music, which also protected the crew from the song of the Sirens (Karanika, 2010). The name *Orpheus* is commonly traced back to *orphao* (deprived, orphan, greedy) and *orphe* (darkness), that is, a deprived person longing for dark things (Casadiegos, 2012), and his figure inspired poets, philosophers and priests, whose beliefs and arguments referred to the role and function of the Underworld in regulating the conduct of living people (Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristobal, 2008; Edmonds III, 2004), and for this reason they called themselves *Orphics*.

The myth narrating Orpheus' experience in the Underworld tells that Orpheus and Eurydice, a Naiad Nymph, protector of springs and streams (Atsma, n.d. c) married for love, but Eurydice died, and Orpheus went to the Underworld to bring her back to life. The known versions come from Virgil (Mangieri, 2003) and Ovid (Miti3000.it, n.d. a, b), Latin poets of the 1st century BC, which represent, however, re-workings of older versions: in fact, this myth was known to Socrates (Sanasi, n.d.), a philosopher who lived in the fourth century BC.

The Roman marriage rite, to which the two poets above refer, was not so different from the Greek one, apart from the role of the *haruspices* in drawing auspices from the bowels of the animal that was specially sacrificed (the rite continued only if the auspices were favourable): the bride gave her toys to a deity the day before the wedding, thus symbolising the symbolic death of her identity as a *nymph*, she wore elegant clothes and a veil, which covered a unique hairstyle and a crown of plants; the spouses shared a spelt focaccia with her husband and signed the wedding contract—then followed a banquet and a procession similar to the Greek one. The groom simulated kidnap the bride, in memory of the Rape of the Sabines perpetuated by Romulus after the foundation of Rome; female work tools were transported inside the marital home and were also invoked protective deities of marriage (Jupiter and Juno, for the protection of marital relationship, Venus for the protection of love, Diana for the protection of births, and Fides, as the personification of the virtues required of the wife); the following day the bride wore the matron's clothes and prepared a banquet reserved for the relatives of the spouses (Di Paola, 2000).

Virgil's and Ovid's versions do not mention pre-marital agreements: being Orpheus son of the god Apollo and Eurydice a minor goddess who protected the springs and streams, it was improbable. However, the events triggering the descent into the Underworld by Orpheus narrated in the myth were not reserved for supernatural beings, just as was not the possibility of marrying for love, which, compared to the dominant conventions, represented a deviation, therefore also a possible *exploration of identity* proper to the EA. Indeed, referring to the classification above of Solon, Orpheus was of marriageable age so that he could have been 28-35 years old or even

younger, but he was unable to access the following more mature stages of mental development because he died shortly after Eurydice, who died on her wedding day. *Therefore, the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice lends itself to representing the metaphor of an interrupted development trajectory.*

Myths and Myth Analysis

Although they do not deal with true stories or clinical cases, myths are ubiquitous in the Human Species and have interested psychoanalysis. Although not confirmed, they could refer to possible experiences and situations (Zachrisson, 2013). They are forged on stories told for centuries in vast areas of the planet, even using different languages, such as Greek and Latin, as well as poetry, sculpture and painting. They also come to us through various fragments and versions, often dating back to different periods or geographical areas, which maintain solid similarities and coherence. Therefore, assembling fragments and versions can help obtain a complete overview of the myth and sometimes a complete story, putting together more fragments and sections (Scarnera, 2016). Their exceptional capacity for permanence in time and diffusion in space, together with their tendency to be integrated by variations created in different eras and places, indicate a robust adaptive value of myths for human communities. Psychoanalysis has interpreted myths according to different models, using the interpretative techniques developed for the analysis of dreams and other phenomena of clinical interest (Carli, 2017; Kaës, 2004; Nanni, 2004; Pacifico, 2000; Romeo, 2005), which, however, are unable to thoroughly examine their adaptive potentialities: in fact, already Freud (1899, 1973) specified that, in the analysis of poetic creations, so as with dreams and neurotic symptoms, over-interpretation is necessary, as they result from multiple condensed motives and impulses. Furthermore, the uncritical approach borrowed from Classical Psychoanalysis (Jones, 1948), which attributes to the symbols used in myths systematic representations of a limited number of repressed contents (such as birth, love and death, Self and blood relatives), can lead to stereotypical and caricatural interpretations, when compared with the uncensored narrative modes that characterise myths, which explicitly describe incest, parricide, matricide and castration (Sels, 2011), rather than veiling them, as happens in patients' dreams and symptoms. This uncritical approach leads to the following conclusions:

- a) since the symbols found in the myths can be traced back to a few repressed contents, applying the psychoanalytic method to myths is reduced to a mere and ephemeral intellectual exercise;
- b) since psychoanalytic treatment frees from repression, it should lead to the disappearance of symbolic production (including that of dreams and works of art and genius); and, as a consequence of a) and b),
- c) since it is impossible to psychoanalyse the communities in which the myths dwell, psychoanalysis is not a helpful science to anthropology, and vice versa.

Differently, Jung (1921) assigns the classification proposed by Jones (1948) to symptomatic actions rather than to symbolic productions, which he also distinguishes from semiotic ones for their function of pushing towards psychic transformation rather than mere communication, as happens

with the signs of language. Symbols are, therefore, produced when the ego is absorbed in an intense conflict originating from its adherence to theses and antitheses that deny each other until reaching a block of the will that suspends consciousness in favour of an activation of the unconscious, which leads to the formation of the symbol through the integration between intellectual functions and lower and more primitive impulses. Thus, The symbol integrates the previously irreconcilable contents, pushing consciousness towards change. Therefore, from this perspective, the symbols used in myths represent the tool for overcoming the psychic blocks that a specific social group experienced when they were produced. *Therefore, the interpretation of myths should be conducted at a dual level: one referring to the characters and the other to the psychosocial context within which they are placed. This implies being able to deal with both signs, symptoms and symbols. Therefore, it requires the availability of a tool that allows interpretation without limiting itself to semiology, psychopathology or anthropology. According to Matte Blanco's (1975, 1981) proposal, the use of this tool does not require artificial procedures, as our mental functioning is necessarily determined by the integration of the principles that regulate the Unconscious System, as well as those that regulate Ordinary Logic.* Regulated from the Principle of Symmetry, “[...] the Unconscious System treats the inverse relationship of any relationship as if it were identical to the relationship. In other words, it treats asymmetrical relations as if they were symmetrical”. Therefore, the activity of this principle makes it possible to interpret similarities and identify phenomena, including those captured by Ordinary Logic and projections relating to psychopathology. While regulated by the Principle of Generalization:

[...] The Unconscious System treats an individual thing (person, object, concept) as if it were a member or element of a whole or a class that contains other members; it treats this class as a subclass of a more general class and this more general class as a subclass or subset of an even more general class and so on (to infinity). [...] In the choice of class and ever wider classes, the unconscious system prefers those propositional functions which, in one aspect, express a growing generality and, in others, retain some particular characteristics of the individual thing from which they started (Matte Blanco, 1981, pp. 43-44).

Therefore, the activity of this second principle makes it possible both to interpret the ordinary polysemy of the signs of language and to grasp the metaphorical and analogical relationships that relate them to contents that are present, although not explicitly declared, such as symptoms and symbols. Furthermore, unlike dreams and clinical phenomena observed in the treatment of psychopathologies, myths are structured in the form of narratives, that is, products resulting from secondary-level mental processes, of course highly asymmetric, albeit resulting from the mythopoeic activity, which is generative of metaphors and images capable also of arousing profound symmetrical identifications between listeners/readers and the personages of the myth, as well as different interpretations by the formers. The asymmetry provided by the narrative structure can, therefore, have an interpretative value like the metaphors and images used, as it is potentially indicative of a path of psychic transformation that affects the protagonists of the myth during their vicissitudes (Scarnera, 2011).

According to Barthes and Duisit (1975), although the sentence can be described at different levels (phonetic, phonological, grammatical, contextual), which are in a hierarchical relationship between them while maintaining their internal correlations that allow their autonomous description, none of these levels can provide a meaning independently of the others: a phoneme does not mean anything unless it is articulated within a word, and this takes on its total value when it is integrated into a sentence. Similarly, the narrative consists of a hierarchy of levels constituted in the production and fruition through the horizontal succession of words and phrases and the vertical passage from one level to another. The narrative can be analysed at the Functions, Actions, and Speech level. A Function reveals its meaning only when integrated within an actor's general line of Action, and this Action receives its meaning as it is placed within a Discourse that is produced through a specific Code. The Function represents a unit of the content of the Narration, made up of Functional Units, in turn, made up of larger units (Groups of Sentences of various lengths) or smaller than the Sentence (Syntagms and Words), which can correlate with others same level, or assume their meaning only by integrating at a higher level. Functional Units can be Distributional and Integrative.

The former refers to actions that open, maintain or close an alternative historical trend, activating or resolving an uncertainty. They are Cardinals (or *Nucleuses*) within the narrated story and are both consecutive (following one another) and consequential (the existence of one unit makes it possible for another to come true). However, the logical order of the narrative need not necessarily coincide with the chronology through which the narrative is exposed. They are both necessary for the narrative and sufficient for themselves. They can be identified only through their implications: they open when a term lacks an antecedent of the same type, and they close when another of its terms implies no further consequence; moreover, they are always logically incomplete, although they can be named and self-sufficient, as they take on their meaning within a broader context, assuming the role of a simple term for another broader sequence. The latter are integrative to the former and include indices or descriptive indicators of personality traits, feelings, atmosphere, and philosophy, which help to decipher the contexts and situations narrated. They are catalytic (*Catalysis*), that is, they enter into a relationship with the Nucleuses in a parasitic and chronological way since they describe what separates two moments of the narration, weaving an expansive relationship with the Nucleuses in order to maintain contact between the narrator and the user. *In summary, it is impossible to cancel a Nucleus of a Narration without altering it, and it is impossible to cancel a Catalysis without altering the Discourse of the Narration.*

The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, as a narrative, can be broken down into Nucleuses and Catalysis associated with them and interpreted according to the Principles of the Unconscious System.

Orpheus' and Eurydice's Myth and some Critical Observations on its Interpretations

Nucleus 1: Marriage

The musician Orpheus and the nymph Eurydice get married for love, that is, outside the conventional contract between the groom and the bride's families. Eurydice's father is therefore absent, as is Orpheus's, so the marriage is transgressive also from the point of view of the

aggregative contract between families. The term *nymph* represents both a *nymph*, or a minor divinity, and a *girl of childbearing age, travelling for marriage: Orpheus marries the nymph Eurydice, thus means that a man named Orpheus marries a girl named Eurydice (Generalization), and vice versa (Symmetry)*. That is to say that this (mythical) marriage can be generalised to any marriage celebrated outside the conventional codes and that any couple created in this way can identify with it. The myth does not refer to the age of Orpheus, who could, therefore, also have been younger than that conventionally recognised as the optimal age for a man's marriage, which is 28-35 years.

Ovid narrates that Hymenaeus, god of marriages involving virgin girls and of fertile age, participates in celebrating this union but does not draw good wishes from it; therefore, according to Roman custom, marriage should not have been celebrated. However, it is celebrated anyway, and Eurydice dies after being bitten by a snake. Valenti (2016) interprets Ovid's version of the myth using the Freudian paradigm and interprets as ambivalent both the colour of sunlight that envelops the presence of Hymenaeus (of dawn, a symbol of the arrival of day and sunset, a symbol of the arrival of the night), and that of the snake, which kills with its poison and renews its life by changing its skin, also attributing this symbolism to the snake shape of the puffs of smoke emanating from the torch of Hymenaeus. Consistently, ambivalence is also present in object relations, and therefore, Eurydice represents the oldest object of desire, namely the mother, whom Orpheus then married. Since Eurydice died from a snake bite following the consummation of the marital sexual intercourse, Orpheus unconsciously represents the death of Eurydice/mother as a punishment for the fulfilment of his incestuous desire, which was acted towards a virgin mother, being Eurydice a nymph. The fantasy of the mother/virgin, again in perspective proposed, is defensive, concerning the threat of castration resulting from the discovery of sexual differences between males and females and to the infantile theory derived from it, namely that females do not have a penis because it has been removed. The disavowal of sexual differences allows one to deny the implementation of sexual relations between parents. Therefore, it defends from the anxiety and anguish arising from the overcoming of the Oedipus complex, as the mother/virgin does not have sexual relations, and therefore also, paternity is disowned.

However, Virgil narrates that Eurydice is bitten by the snake while trying to escape from the rape attempt carried out by Aristeo, a bee breeder. In the Sicilian or Italian tradition, Aristeo is a giant (Atsma, n.d. d). The motif of the giant chasing the nymphs is also represented by the hunter Orion, a giant chasing the Pleiades nymphs (Atsma, n.d. e): that is to say that this motif symbolises, by generalisation, the condition of nymphs/girls of fertile age, when they are the object of desire, not reciprocated, by gigantic men, or by males much more significant than themselves, as happened in the Greek/Roman culture of arranged marriages. The mortal bite of the snake, in the Virgilian version, therefore inserts a narrative Catalysis in the Nucleus that places the ambivalence of the snake bite in a cultural context opposed to the free choice of the object of desire by girls, connoting it in a somewhat different way, compared to what Valenti (2016) does, who does not consider this Virgilian variant, hence the point of view of Eurydice, regarding the free choice of the object of love.

Nucleus 2: The Descent (Katabasis) into the Underworld

Moreover, Valenti (2016) continues that since the sexual relationship between Orpheus and Eurydice was consummated despite the bad omens detected by Hymenaeus, the death of Eurydice assumes the magical value that characterises the regressions to Primary Narcissism, which is characterised by disinterest towards things and people, megalomania and omnipotence of thought, which Orpheus expresses with his ability to make even stones and trees to move, at the rhythm of his music, which allows him, for this quality, also to descend into the Underworld, although he is alive.

The belief in the existence of this kingdom, for Valenti (2016), reinforces Orpheus' defensive disavowal, which leads him to believe that Eurydice's death did not occur. The Underworld, always according to Valenti (2016), was a place of containment and residence of the dead Eurydice; it represents both the Unconscious and the uterus, as it was believed that its access was located in the Tenarus, a peninsula surrounded by water: being in the uterus is therefore equivalent to living in an undifferentiated state and being in the Underworld is equivalent to being devoid of any desire. Therefore, the condition for accessing it is that of self-castration. The latter condition strengthens the ambivalent feelings towards the mother, who arouses both desire and fears of castration both on the part of the father and on the part of the mother's vagina, already invested with ambivalent feelings related to the loss of the breast following weaning.

Differently, seen from a different perspective from that proposed by Valenti (2016), according to Zatkalik (2013), in musical language (and in the Unconscious, in general), sensory experiences are transformed, condensing or fragmenting the object perceptions, dissociating from it and associating with another, giving rise to contradictory and simultaneous, bizarre and unusual representations. In musical language, on the other hand, the fragmented themes are condensed, the condensed ones are fragmented and developed, and the harmonic ambiguities clarified, to the point that even in the violated expectations, there is the hope (and the certainty) that in the end they will be satisfied: the musical language, unlike the oneiric one, is therefore structured in such a way as to anticipate future events, perceived as desirable, although unexpected and surprising while using the mental processes that characterise the dream language. It, therefore, gives an intelligible form to the language of the Unconscious and, to the extent that the latter is comparable to the Underworld, allows it to be crossed unscathed: *it, therefore, represents the hope of overcoming a condition perceived as unpleasant and harmful, which is, in fact, that of the Underworld. Therefore, according to this perspective, music represents an instrument capable of giving shape to the undifferentiated rather than an expression of the omnipotence of Primary Narcissism: Valenti, confusing the analysis of the myth with that of people, attributes to Orpheus a grandiose description of the effects of his music which instead is made by the myth, which enhances the effects of music to induce movement and arouse emotions in people, generalising them to animals, plants and stones.*

Nucleus 3: Orpheus' Supplication

Master Basho told the monks: I will give you one if you have a stick. If you do not have it, I will take it off (Shibayama, 1977, p. 301)

Ovid's version of the myth narrates that Orpheus, having reached the depths of the Underworld, begs the divinities of that place, Hades and Persephone, to re-weave the prematurely shattered destiny of Eurydice, relying on the amorous passion which, in the Italic version inherent in the marriage between the two (Scarnera, 2015), pushed Kore/Persephone to descend into the Underworld to join Hades (the Greek version, otherwise, narrates that Kore was kidnapped by Hades, by agreement with her brother Zeus, father of Kore), while acknowledging that each living being is destined to die and that the death of each is determined by fate. Orpheus, therefore, tries to arouse the identification between Kore/Persephone and himself, as both descended into the Underworld for love. In addition, he is also aware that he can give his death for her, and not by chance: in fact, he claims that, if he had not been granted the requested grace, he too would have remained in the Underworld; that is, he would have died. *Orpheus, therefore, tries to negotiate both with death, whose inevitability and fatality he recognises. With his feelings for Eurydice, as he is undecided between dying like Eurydice and living without her, Orpheus did not, therefore, incorporate the definitive absence of the death of Eurydice, remaining tied to her. The Catalysis introduced by Ovid denotes Orpheus' inability to live without Eurydice.*

Nucleus 4: Orpheus' Mistake

The man who walks alone has no direction in which to turn (Bozza, 1993, p. 51)

Both Ovid and Virgil report that the gods of the Underworld consent to Orpheus bringing back Eurydice on the condition that she follows him and that he does not turn around until he has returned to the surface. Arriving near the light, Orpheus turns around, loses Eurydice forever and is no longer allowed to go down to the Underworld. While looking for a reason for the loss of both of them, Virgil reports that Eurydice accepts her situation and impotence. At the same time, Ovid recounts that Eurydice vanished without complaining, unable to complain about having been loved.

Valenti (2016) claims that by disobeying the paternal law, that is, the prohibition on looking back, Orpheus regresses, fixing himself on the maternal figure with whom he identifies, thus developing a love for children and melancholy, as lost for the second time the mother/Eurydice, remains identified with a lost object, therefore in a melancholy condition, which also represents the sadism of the superego towards the ego, resulting from ambivalence.

According to Nucara (2009), turning back represents nostalgia for a past condition, in Orpheus' case of the love affair with his mother, which is generally opposed by the paternal, anti-nostalgic function, which urges the child to look forward, that is to project into the future by imagining new scenarios, new perspectives, and new relationships. The failure of Orpheus, therefore, involves remaining tied to his mother and identifying with her, a condition associated with the lack of an effective paternal relationship (such as the one that characterised Orpheus' relationship with his father, Apollo, who was scarcely interested in his children), is often underlying the homosexuality reported in many clinical cases present in the literature.

Differently, from a Jungian point of view, according to Zabriskie (2000), the dead cannot project themselves towards the future (i.e. going back to the light of Orpheus), maintaining a continuity with

the past (i.e. the turning back of Orpheus), therefore Orpheus, descending in the Underworld and having made contact with the world of death, works, as an artist, a transgression, which allows him to draw from the formless world of death the resources necessary to create new forms.

According to the Bionian perspective (Parsons, 2018), in conditions of linear temporality, events are more or less predictable and allow the person to manage his own life and orient it towards an imagined future, while in the condition of absent temporality that characterises the Unconscious and dreams there is no one before and after, events are unpredictable and therefore no future can be imagined and managed. However, dreams are part of every person's life. They are made possible by a psychic function, the Alpha Function described by Bion, which allows you to use emotional experiences to think in such a way as to allow the person to dream even when awake. Therefore, Orpheus turns to look at Eurydice because he cannot dream of her, an attitude necessary in a dimension in which linear temporality is absent, such as the unconscious/underworld.

From a cognitive point of view, Orpheus remains tied to his knowledge already possessed (according to which people make noise when they walk), then turns around, being unable to contain the experience of being in a way inhabited by shadows and to give space to a knowledge that, for him, remains inaccessible. Therefore, Orpheus remains tied to knowledge limited to what is perceived through the senses and cannot access a form of independent knowledge (Scarnera, 2015). Orpheus then returns to obtain sensory confirmation of an immaterial presence, that of Eurydice's shadow. That is to say that he cannot access the mental operations that make it possible to imagine possible scenarios, even if not accurate: that is, skills that are acquired, in general, starting from adolescence.

According to an evolutionary perspective, in his journey towards the conquest of adult identity, the adolescent must go through a condition that contains the need to separate himself from parental objects, with which he has internalised relationships that place him in a childlike position, and to remain tied to them: being still immature, he does not have the autonomy necessary to live independently from them, although he struggles to conquer it. He then alternates distancing and conflict with rapprochement and reconciliation (Nicolò & Zavattini, 1992): he looks forward and backwards, unlike the infant, who can only look above, being utterly dependent on primary objects, which, for this reason (Carli, 1987), are, for him, good by definition. Therefore, Orpheus is unable to overcome the adolescent phase. That is, he turns around because he cannot tolerate the absence of Eurydice, as she is essential for his definition of himself: *he loses her forever because he cannot return alone from the Underworld, leaving behind his identity as a teenager, similarly to what a nymph does when it becomes a gyne*. Not incorporating her absence due to her death, Orpheus still depends on Eurydice's presence to regulate himself in the world once back to the surface, not having developed the ability to regulate himself in her absence. *Orpheus turns back because he has not gotten over his mourning*. According to another point of view, Orpheus turns to look, in Eurydice, for the Self Object or the external regulator of self-esteem and ideals necessary for the excellent autonomy of the person, when the same still has deficiencies in the formation of his personality (Kohut, 1987, 1994). According to a further perspective, Orpheus turns away. After all, he cannot pursue his Ideal ego because his personality structure is still immature.

Nucleus 5: Orpheus' Mourning

Returning from the Underworld, Virgil recounts that Orpheus fasted for seven months while Ovid did it for seven days. Both argue that Orpheus refuses any relationship with other women, even though they desire it, singing incessantly about the lost Eurydice. His was, therefore, a traumatic mourning. Ovid adds that the men of Thrace drew from it a pretext to justify their homosexual love towards adolescents, without, however, making any reference to any homosexual tendencies of Orpheus, although they cannot be excluded, according to the psychodynamic interpretations set out above, proposed by Valenti (2016) and Nucara (2009).

In Medicine, the signifier *trauma* means *injury produced in the body by any agent capable of sudden, rapid and violent action* (Treccani Dictionary, [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/trauma_\(Universo-del-Corpo\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/trauma_(Universo-del-Corpo)/)). In Psychology, it is not possible to accurately translate this definition: faced with the same events, not all people perceive them in a traumatic way (IIntema et al., 2021), while a dagger wounds people's bodies in the same way. *It is, therefore, necessary that the processing of the experience required by these events exceeds the processing capacity of the person who remains traumatised: psychic trauma is a relationship between the event and the person, which involves damage to the person. Without damage, only experience remains, good or bad.*

The models mainly used in literature to interpret the elaboration of mourning and possibly treat its pathological aspects are those with a psychoanalytic orientation, which interpret the work of mourning as a way of redefining the relationship with the lost object, and those relating to the attachment bonds theory, which sees this work as a process of destruction and subsequent reconstruction of the *Internal Working Models* built based on passed recurrent patterns of relationship with the lost object. Both these models have associated the work of mourning with that done by the infant during the archaic phases of psychic development (Middleton et al., 1993). According to these models, the work of mourning is analogous to the process of development of the ego, the ideal of the ego and superego (Freud, 1899, 1973), the internal world (M. Klein), thought (W. R. Bion), language (J. Kristeva), regulatory representations of self-esteem and ideals (H. Kohut), models of the Self and the World (J. Bowlby), that is, a psychic work aimed at bridging the internal absence of psychic structures, processes or representations, which manifests itself as such due to the loss of different forms of relationship with the objects that performed the functions that are revealed to be missing after the loss, whose external absence ends up being balanced by the construction of an internal presence, which replaces the external absence. Similarly, the mourning process reproduces the same dynamics, with the substantial difference that the external absence of the object is practical and definitive rather than illusory or temporary (Scarnera, 2018). Therefore, it requires autonomy and separation, most radical and definitive, from the lost object, unlike during temporary losses.

Nucleus 6: The Dismemberment of Orpheus

Virgil and Ovid say that Orpheus 'mourning ended with his dismemberment and beheading by the Maenads and that Orpheus' head was carried by a river and continued to sing of Eurydice. In the end, the head of Orpheus is recovered on the island of Lesbos, and becomes an oracle (Fanocle, n.d.) located in a cavity in the earth (Braccini, 2012).

According to a perspective proposed by Ferenczi, both Orpheus and Eurydice have undergone a separation and an effective and definitive loss rather than an illusory and temporary one. They show an aptitude for despair, helplessness and affectivity, typical of mourning within a psychic configuration that allows the development of intellectual operations, decidedly detached from affectivity, which remains inaccessible due to the fragmentation resulting from the trauma: in the myth, this condition is represented partly by the Underworld, where affections are not possible, and partly by the dismemberment of Orpheus and the continuing to sing of his head, who transformed him into an oracle, that is an entity that guides and directs those who ask for advice (Smith, 1999). It is, therefore, possible to affirm, by generalising, that those who make the journey to the Underworld can acquire the ability to orient and guide those who are unable to do so independently. Or they can become a psychotherapist.

According to Valenti (2016), Orpheus' melancholic mourning ends with his beheading, or with the castration, by the Maenads, who are openly sexed women. For Valenti (2016), however, this beheading is equivalent to suicide, which allows him to interact with Eurydice because he cannot further regress, having reached the last stage of regression, that is, reunification with the maternal object.

The Maenads, however, were women, worshipers of the cult of Dionysus, the god of intoxication, madness, wild frenzy, sensual pleasure and drunkenness, vegetation and wild beasts, as well as rebirth (Atsma, n.d. f, g). Therefore, Maenadism, in a cultural context in which female sexuality was functional only to the gestation of the children of males, represents the female sexual liberation and rebellion against repression, hence the free expression of this gender sexuality. The dismemberment of Orpheus, therefore, represents the failure of his personality in response to the sexual request posed by the Maenad, or his inability to process the current experience, which is therefore experienced as traumatic about the regulatory and aggregator function of Eurydice/mother, proved inadequate to elaborate the experience in progress: in fact, in the Lacanian perspective (Lacan, 2010), between 6 and 18 months, the child, while experiencing a fragmented perception of himself, receives from external objects (the mother and other significant persons) unitary reflected self-images, with which he identifies himself. In this way, through the aggregating function of the fragmented parts of himself originating from the reflected image transmitted by the significant objects, he obtains a unitary self-image, which, however, is alienating since it is confused with fragmentary self-perceptions and also rivals with the latter, because discordant to them. In this way, the person's identity is constructed and guaranteed by others in a conflictual manner. After acquiring language (Lacan, 1953), both the Subject and the Object cannot be defined independently of the linguistic oppositions that build the chain of signifiers. Therefore, from this

point of view, Orpheus cannot tolerate the loss of Eurydice because she, as a significant object/subject, defines his identity as a lover, in which Orpheus recognises himself: in addition to being an object of love, Eurydice is a signifier subject, therefore represents, by generalisation, every possible Orpheus' object/subject of desire, and Orpheus every person who is unable to accept a loss of an object/subject that signifies himself. Orpheus turns to look for Eurydice's gaze because he seeks, through it, the confirmation of his own identity, which he perceives as vacillating, following the experience of the descent into the Underworld. *Therefore, a specific compromised capacity for self-definition and self-regulation characterises the Orpheuses. Each person can, therefore, become an Orpheus, faced with traumatic losses.*

To the extent that the lost object is also an ego signifier, the death of the object entails the loss of meaning of the ego, hence its symbolic death: Orpheus does not overcome mourning because, unlike Eurydice, he does not die. After such a loss, nothing can be as before, and yet Orpheus continues to sing about Eurydice, continuing to desire her: he cannot live in the absence of a sign-object/subject-signifier, which means him. *With death, however, Orpheus himself becomes an absence, so the song of Orpheus' head, after his dismemberment by the Maenads, assigns to the music the status of an entity independent of the efficiency of the senses of those who create it: music can also be heard in the absence of sensory stimulation, as happens for the dream perceptions, which are perceived as accurate, although they are not. The singing of Orpheus' decapitated head means that Music (and creativity, in general) is generated within the psychic space created by the absence of the ego.*

Quite singularly, from a philosophical-religious point of view, in a similar way Socrates argued, in his *Symposium*, that the gods questioned by Orpheus did not appreciate his stratagem to access the Underworld without dying, so they only gave him an image of Eurydice, who disappeared in the light, unlike what they did for Alcestis, who gave her life to save that of her husband, and who was able to return from the Underworld thanks to the help of Hercules, moved by her gesture.

Nucleus 7: The Reunion between Orpheus and Eurydice

According to Ovid, the head and lyre of Orpheus reached the coast of the island of Lesbos, where a ferocious snake tried to devour Orpheus' head. However, Apollo, the father of Orpheus, petrified the animal as it was, with its jaws open wide. At the same time, Dionysus transformed the Maenads into trees, saddened by the loss of the singer of his mysteries: Apollo, therefore, stopped the flow of time by petrifying the snake, while Dionysus deified the Maenads by elevating them to immobile and lasting witnesses of Orpheus' enterprise. In this way, Orpheus' enterprise was also deified as a symbol of the integration of the Apollonian with the Dionysian, as well as inspiring the social innovations emerging from the method of katabasis (that is, descent) in the Underworld, practised by the so-called *Orphics*.

Still, according to Ovid, having returned, being dead, to the Underworld, *Orpheus recognises the places, that is, he symmetrically recognises his death, and finds Eurydice again, with whom he walks, preceding or following her, and turning to look at her.* From the asymmetry that it was, basing itself both on the prohibition of *turning back* placed on Orpheus and on the role conventionally

assigned to women in marital relations, the relationship between Orpheus and Eurydice becomes equally symmetrical. *Being dead, Orpheus can recognise Eurydice, who was also already dead, like any nymphe who is getting married.*

Gender equality, in the Orpheus and Euridice myths, starts in love relationships born outside the conventions and codified rules and is reached with the death of both genders. Therefore, making contact with death, descending into the Underworld, and regressing in the uterus can allow the development of cultural changes and the otherwise deficient personal ability to process traumatic events.

Discussion

The cultural changes suggested by the Catalysis presented in this myth can be those necessary to face a marriage outside the economic guarantees, such as the availability of a marriage dowry, and psychosocial ones, such as being part of an alliance between two already established families. Other changes concern the free choice of the object of love, which should have been implemented by those who wanted to marry for love, outside the marriage contracts between parents rather than for convenience (nucleus 1). The changes in the personal capacity to process events suggested by the Nucleuses of the same myth, on the other hand, concern the ability to confront, for a male, the female sexual demand coming from such a marriage (nucleus 6), such as that, precisely, between Orpheus and Eurydice. Finally, the remaining nuclei indicate the steps a male would have to take to achieve these results, according to the proposed analytical perspective, which describes various psychic configurations involved in losing the love object.

It is regrettable that there is not, or is not known, a myth that describes a process of similar psychic transformation from the female point of view: the cultural changes inherent in economic autonomy that have occurred for males and, to a lesser extent, for females, now diffused in developed societies, indicates greater freedom of choice of the object of love for both sexes, but this does not mean that gender equality has been achieved, as regards both sexuality (nucleus 6), relations between males and females (nucleus 7), and their families of origin.

The above multiple interpretations synthesis of Orpheus' and Eurydice's myth supports the psychoanalysis ability to access different layers of meaning, underlying both the dreams and inner experiences lived by people and the myths themselves. The myth above basically deals with the loss of the object of love, which is the most devastating and heartbreaking loss, which, as such, can represent, by generalization, any loss of a strongly desired object. In a context such as that of the losses due to covid-19 pandemic, the analysed myth can provide an attractive interpretative grid, which can also act as a guide in the therapeutic paths that in particular may concern young people, who may have experienced various types of loss, due to the measures implemented to contain the spread of infections: loss of romantic, sexual and friendships relations; loss of external regulation to learning processes, due to both the presence of teachers and belonging to the class-group; loss of recreational activities; loss of routine activities, that is, markers of time scans and regulation of daily activities. *The various interpretative paradigms, however, show differences regarding the possible directions these paths could take, synthetically attributable to merely constative paths aimed at*

gaining an account of what happened and paths aimed at overcoming the psychic conditions they have made the events traumatic. For example, Valenti (2016), as regards the first paradigm, seems to give little importance to the conclusion of the myth, as he considers it a variation developed by Ovid, sustaining that Orpheus, having died, once arrived for the second time in the Underworld, he does not turn to look at Eurydice (instead, according to Ovid, he does: see Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, book XI) because he cannot regress further, having reached the final stage of regression and the definitive reunification with his dead mother. That is to say that Valenti (2016) creates confusion between levels: The Underworld represents an imaginary dimension, according to the point of view of those who venture into it, or a symbolic dimension, for those who want to narrate about it and it cannot be an actual dimension until the opposite is proved, that is, that the Underworld exists for really. Therefore, the changes that occurred in those who had faced a descent into the Underworld should be ascribed to their imagination, while the changes that took place in the Underworld, narrated in the form of a myth, should be interpreted as symbolic. Therefore, the mysteries for which Dionysus grieves and the changes in the way of relating between Orpheus and Eurydice should also be read in a symbolic key, according to Ovid's conclusion: *Orpheus recognises the places of the Underworld, of which he retains memory, unlike the dead, who cannot do it. Orpheus' return to the Underworld is, therefore, symbolic.* As regards the second paradigm, based on the recognition and distinction between the imaginary, symbolic and fundamental level, it does not allow the established in a predetermined form a referenced horizon or a pre-defined point of arrival, being able instead to lead to unexpected evolutionary perspectives, and also highly creative and innovative: the scanning of the myth into Nucleus and Catalysis, also allows us to identify a possible transformative path underlying the difference between starting conditions and final results, which however can be characterised differently, depending on the interpretative paradigm used and the established transformative objectives, which may vary according to the resources, expectations and aspirations of the individuals concerned. That is to say that the interpretative methodologies should not either be confused because they would give different results if they were referred to anthropological research or clinical interventions: in the first case, the interpretative indices of the analysed symbology must be sought in the historical and cultural contexts of reference (of the myth, in this case), while in the second they must be sought in the context of life and the experiences of the patients treated.

Conclusions

In the current historical situation, however, patients, regardless of their position in specific developmental stages, share the restrictions imposed by the containment measures of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, recurrent reaction patterns can, therefore, be identified, which can be useful in clinical interventions.

In this regard, longitudinal research, which evaluated young people in Emerging Adulthood before and during the covid-19 pandemic, found higher levels of cognitive failure, rumination and intrusive thoughts during the lockdown, compared to the previous period, which was however negatively correlated with the levels of mindfulness, that is a psychic attitude characterised by: 1) the ability to identify and describe in words the thoughts and experiences experienced; 2) tendency to

be aware and recognise one's thoughts and feelings; 3) the ability to be aware and present to oneself, while ignoring and excluding possible distractions; 4) tendency to objectively consider one's feelings and thoughts, without judging them; 5) tendency to remain calm and objective in dealing with feelings and thoughts that usually arouse emotional responses. Furthermore, although the levels of intrusive thoughts, rumination and cognitive failures during the lockdown increased for everyone, this did not happen for intrusive thoughts, for the group showing an increase in mindfulness scores. In contrast, cognitive failures and rumination remained stable or decreased (Lopez et al., 2021), confirming mindfulness as a psychic attitude able to prevent stressful and traumatic experiences.

Implications

The psychic loss processing, as it is based on the examination of the internal implications deriving from the loss of external objects, as well as on the re-elaboration of one's internal resources in a way that is useful for overcoming traumatic and non-recoverable losses, can, be realised only starting from a condition of mindfulness, as previously described, or an attitude that makes it possible to observe and elaborate internal psychic processes, therefore this condition could represent an intermediate goal, to be reached prior to the actual re-elaboration of the losses and internal resources necessary to overcome them, which can be achieved within the clinical setting.

Suggestions for Future Research

Orpheus' error can represent both a condition underlying the denial of actual events, as in the case of the widespread denial of the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic/vaccination, and a condition from which to develop new personal and social potentiality. Furthermore, the interpretative grid extracted from the analysed myth using the principles of the Unconscious System can be adapted to any irrecoverable loss found in real life. Similar work can, therefore, be conducted on other myths, extracting further grids applicable in daily clinical practice, being myths paradigmatic of human dramas, conquests and tragedies. In clinical practice, however, it is also necessary to orient the transformative potential of these grids, shaping them based on the patient's resources, needs, and catalytic connections within the cultural context in which he lives.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge Dott. Saverio Marvulli organised a Lyon web conference to discuss the damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; Prof. Andrea Bosco and doctors Nicoletta Di Masi and Antonella Lopez for their contributions to the webinar.

Conflict of Interest

None.

Funding

The Social Cooperative " Questa Città " of Gravina in Puglia (BA), Italy, supported the work.

References

- Apolito, M. (2009). *L'adulterio nel diritto greco. Riflessioni sul diritto nell'antico oriente mediterraneo*. Napoli: Museopolis Press. <http://www.oltreilchiostro.org/pdf/juridica/005.pdf>
- Arnett, J. J. (2000). A Theory of Development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469–480. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469>
- Arnett, J. J. (2007). Emerging adulthood: What is it, and what is it good for?. *Child Development Perspectives*, 1(2), 68–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2007.00016.x>
- Arnett, J. (2017). Life stage concepts across history and cultures: Proposal for a new field on indigenous life stages. *Human Development*, 59(5), 290–316. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000453627>
- Atsma, A. J. (n.d. a). *Apollon*. Theoi Project. <https://www.theoi.com/Olympios/Apollon.html>
- Atsma, A. J. (n.d. b). *Kalliope*. Theoi Project. <https://www.theoi.com/Ouranios/MousaKalliope.html>
- Atsma, A. J. (n.d. c). *Naiades*. Theoi Project. <https://www.theoi.com/Nymphe/Naiades.html>
- Atsma, A. J. (n.d. d). *Aristeus*. Theoi Project. <https://www.theoi.com/Georgikos/Aristaios.html>
- Atsma, A. J. (n.d. e). *Pleiades*. Theoi Project. <https://www.theoi.com/Nymphe/NymphaiPleiades.html>
- Atsma, A. J. (n.d. f). *Maenads*. Theoi Project. <https://www.theoi.com/Gallery/T62.1.html>
- Atsma, A. J. (n.d. g). *Dionysus*. Theoi Project. <https://www.theoi.com/Olympios/Dionysos.html>
- Barthes, R., & Duisit, L. (1975). An introduction to the structural analysis of narrative. *New Literary History*, 6(2), 237–272. <https://doi.org/10.2307/468419>
- Bernabé, A., & Jiménez San Cristobal, A. I. (2008). *Instruction for the Netherworld. The Orphic Gold Tablet*. Leiden: Brill. <https://doi.org/10.4000/kernos.1811>
- Bozza, E. (1993). *L'Unghia del Drago. Schegge di saggezza orientale*. Milano: Mondadori.
- Braccini, T. (2012). Orfeo, Publio e l'erebinthos di Damascio: ancora sulla fortuna delle teste profetiche. *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica*, (20), 191–210. <https://digital.casalini.it/10.1400/219124>
- Carli, R. (1987). *Psicologia clinica*. Torino: UTET.
- Carli, R. (2017). Per una definizione di psicoanalisi. *Rivista di Psicologia Clinica*, (1), 10–28. <https://www.rivistadipsicologiaclinica.it/ojs/index.php/rpc/article/view/667/710>
- Casadiegos, Y. P. (2012). Orpheus or the Soteriological Reform of the Dionysian Mysteries. *American Journal of Sociological Research*, 2(3), 38–51. <https://doi.org/10.5923/j.sociology.20120203.02>

- Di Paola, V. M. (2000). *Il fidanzamento ed il matrimonio nell'antica Roma*. Gruppo Storico Romano. <https://www.gsr-roma.com/forum/fonti/il%20matrimonio.pdf>
- Edmonds III, R. G. (2004). *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the 'Orphic' Gold Tablets*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511497896>
- Fanocle. (n.d.). *La morte di Orfeo*. <https://www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/llgalv/iperte/orfeo/letteratura/fanocle.htm>
- Freud, S. (1899). *Die Traumdeutung*. Edizione Italiana.
- Freud, S. (1973). *L'interpretazione dei Sogni* (E. Facchinelli & H. Tretti, Trans.). Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.
- Jones, E. (1948). The theory of symbolism. In *Papers on Psychoanalysis* (pp. 87-144). London: Maresfield Reprints.
- Jung, C. G. (1921). *Psychologische Typen*. Edizione Italiana.
- Kaës, R. (2004). Sogno o mito? Due forme e due destini dell'immaginario. *Funzione Gamma*, (426). <https://www.funzionegamma.it/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/due-forme-destini9i.pdf>
- Kamen, D. (2007). The life cycle in Archaic Greece. In H. A. Shapiro (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Archaic Greece* (pp. 85-111). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521822008>
- Karanika, A. (2010). Inside Orpheus' Songs: Orpheus as an Argonaut in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*. *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 50(3), 391-410. <https://grbs.library.duke.edu/index.php/grbs/article/view/1471>
- Kola, L., Kohrt, B. A., Hanlon, C., Naslund, J. A., Sikander, S., Balaji, M., ... & Patel, V. (2021). COVID-19 mental health impact and responses in low-income and middle-income countries: Reimagining global mental health. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 8(6), 535-550. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(21\)00025-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(21)00025-0)
- Kohut, H. (1987). *La guarigione del Sé* (S. A. Tatafiore, Trans.). Torino: Boringhieri.
- Kohut, H. (1994). *Narcisismo ed analisi del Sé* (S. A. Tatafiore, Trans.). Torino: Boringhieri.
- Kosior, W. (2016). Age and notions related to it in Greek non-legal sources-the contribution to the research of Roman law. *Roczniki Administracji i Prawa*, (16/1), 85-96. <https://bibliotekanauki.pl/articles/443695.pdf>
- IJntema, R. C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Burger, Y. D. (2023). Resilience mechanisms at work: The psychological immunity-psychological elasticity (PI-PE) model of psychological resilience. *Current Psychology*, 42(6), 4719-4731. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01813-5>

- Lacan, J. (2010). The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience. In D. Birksted-Breen, S. Flanders, A. Gibeault (Eds.), *Reading French Psychoanalysis* (pp. 97-104). Routledge.
- Lacan, J. (1953). Some reflections on the ego. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 34, 11-17. <https://lacantoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Some-Reflections-on-the-Ego1.pdf>
- Larsonn Lovén, L. (2010). Marriage in Ancient Greco-Roman sources and society. In L. Larsonn Lovén & A. Strömberg (Eds.), *Ancient Marriage in Myth and Reality* (pp. 1-11). Cambridge Scholars Publishing. <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/resources/pdfs/978-1-4438-2261-9-sample.pdf>
- Lopez, A., Caffò, A. O., Tinella, L., Di Masi, M. N., & Bosco, A. (2021). Variations in mindfulness associated with the COVID-19 outbreak: Differential effects on cognitive failures, intrusive thoughts and rumination. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 13(4), 761-780. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aphw.12268>
- Mangieri, C. A. (2003). *Publius Vergilius Maro—Georgicon Liber Quartus*. https://www.academia.edu/15920009/PUBLIUS_VERGILIUS_MARO_GEORGICON_LIBER_QUARTUS_scansione_e_traduzione_a_cura_di_C_A_Mangieri_
- Matte Blanco, I. (1975). *The Unconscious as Infinite Sets. An Essay in Bi-Logic*. Edizione Italiana.
- Matte Blanco, I. (1981). *L'Inconscio come Insiemi Infiniti. Saggio sulla Bi-Logica* (P. Bria, Trans.). Torino: Giulio Einaudi.
- McEwen, B. S., Nasca, C., & Gray, J. D. (2016). Stress effects on neuronal structure: Hippocampus, amygdala, and prefrontal cortex. *Neuropsychopharmacology*, 41(1), 3-23. <https://doi.org/10.1038/npp.2015.171>
- Middleton, W., Raphael, B., Martinek, N., & Misso, V. (1993). Pathological grief reactions. In M. S. Stroebe, W. Stroebe & R. O. Hansson (Eds.), *Handbook of Bereavement. Theory, Research and Intervention*. Cambridge University Press. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Warwick-Middleton-2/publication/232480143_Pathological_grief_reactions/links/57637bf008ae9964a16baa32/Pathological-grief-reactions.pdf
- Miti3000.it. (n.d. a). *Ovidio—Le metamorfosi: Libro Decimo*. <https://www.miti3000.it/mito/biblio/ovidio/metamorfosi/decimo.htm>
- Miti3000.it. (n.d. b). *Ovidio—Le metamorfosi: Libro Undicesimo*. <https://www.miti3000.it/mito/biblio/ovidio/metamorfosi/undicesimo.htm>
- Nanni, V. (2004). The grid of psychoanalytic elements and myth as a model of analytic experience. *Funzione Gamma*, (426). <https://www.funzonegamma.it/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/the-grid-of-psychoanalytic20e.pdf>

- Niccolo, A., & Zavattini, G. C. (1992). *L'adolescente e il suo mondo relazionale* [The adolescent and his relational world]. Roma: Nuova Italia Scientifica.
- Nucara, G. (2009). Mancanza perdita e ricerca del padre. Riflessioni psicoanalitiche sulla funzione paterna [Lack, loss and search for the father. Psychoanalytic reflections on the paternal function]. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis and Education*, 1(1), 19-31. <http://www.psychoedu.org/index.php/IJPE/article/view/11>
- Pacifico, R. (2000). Bion: i miti come modelli dell'esperienza analitica [Bion: Myths as models of analytic experience]. *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*, 34(4), 1000-1017. <https://www.psychomedia.it/pm-revs/journrev/psu/psu-2000-4-b.htm>
- Parsons, M. (2018). Why did Orpheus look back? 1. In J. Canestri & L. G. Fiorini (Eds.), *The Experience of Time: Psychoanalytic Perspectives* (pp. 35-43). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429481710-4>
- Romeo, P. (2005). Il mito nell'evoluzione del pensiero psicoanalitico e la sua utilizzazione nel trattamento analitico di gruppo. In *Koinos Gruppo e Funzione Analitica. Rivista semestrale di psicoanalisi di gruppo. Luglio-Dicembre 2005 N. 2*. https://irp.cdn-website.com/abfdd158/files/uploaded/Il_mito_nell_evoluzione_del_pensiero.pdf
- Sanasi, P. (Ed.). (n.d.). *Platone. Simposio*. <https://www.ousia.it/SitoOusia/SitoOusia/TestiDiFilosofia/TestiPDF/Platone/Simposio.pdf>
- Salari, N., Hosseinian-Far, A., Jalali, R., Vaisi-Raygani, A., Rasoulpoor, S., Mohammadi, M., ... Khaledi-Paveh, B. (2020). Prevalence of stress, anxiety, depression among the general population during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Globalization and Health*, 16, Article 57. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-020-00589-w>
- Scarnera, P. (2011). Symmetric logic and actuality of the Homeric hymn to Demeter: Maternal constellations and separation / identification of adolescents. *Rivista di Psicologia Clinica*, (1), 51-69. <https://www.rivistadipsicologiaclinica.it/ojs/index.php/rpc/article/view/162>
- Scarnera, P. (2015). *Madonna della Stella. Creare regolare e curare le comunità con le storie e con i luoghi* [Madonna della Stella. Creating, regulating and healing communities with stories and places]. Armando Editore.
- Scarnera, P. (2016). Myth as a tool for human behavior setting. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 4(7). <https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v4i7.1612>
- Scarnera, P. (2018). Nourishing the dead: The Refrigerium as symmetric cure for the death of significant people. *Rivista di Psicologia Clinica*, (2), 52-92. <https://www.rivistadipsicologiaclinica.it/ojs/index.php/rpc/article/view/724>

- Sels, N. (2011). Myth, mind and metaphor: On the relation of mythology and psychoanalysis. *Journal of the Jan Van Eyck Circle for Lacanian Ideology Critique*, 4, 56–70. <https://lineofbeauty.org/index.php/sjournal/article/view/76/72>
- Shibayama, Z. (1977). *Mumonkan. La porta senza porta* [Mumonkan: The doorless door]. Astrolabio Ubaldini.
- Smith, N. A. (1999). From Oedipus to Orpha: Revisiting Ferenczi and Severn's landmark case. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 59(4), 345–366. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1023499908798>
- Smith, A. C. (2005). The politics of weddings at Athens: An iconographic assessment. *Leeds international classical Studies*, 4(1), 1–32. <https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/6921/>
- Sorkin Rabinowitz, N. S. (2011). Greek tragedy: A rape culture?. *Eugesta*, (1), 1–21. https://web.archive.org/web/20180421191034id_/https://eugesta-revue.univ-lille3.fr/pdf/2011/Rabinowitz.pdf
- UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. (2013). *Youth matters: Equipping vulnerable young people with literacy and life skills*. Paris: UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000223022>
- Valenti FJ, 2016. *The womb and the tomb: A psychoanalytic interpretation of Ovid's Orpheus and Eurydice* [Unpublished master's dissertation]. University College London. <https://oxford.academia.edu/FabioValenti>
- Xiong, J., Lipsitz, O., Nasri, F., Lui, L. M., Gill, H., Phan, L., ... McIntyre, R. S. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health in the general population: A systematic review. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 277, 55–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2020.08.001>
- Zabriskie, B. (2000). Orpheus and Eurydice: A creative agony. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 45(3), 427–447. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1465-5922.00174>
- Zachrisson, A. (2013). Oedipus the King: Quest for self-knowledge–denial of reality. Sophocles' vision of man and psychoanalytic concept formation. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 94(2), 313–331. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-8315.2012.00655.x>
- Zatkalik, M. (2013). Hope for Orpheus and hope for Pan: Hope in the musical key. In G. Karabin (Ed.), *Hope in all Directions* (pp. 61–79). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9781848882591_007