

## Writings and creativity – racism and the *echoes* of slavery

“Deep down, we all have a need to state who we are and what we are doing and to leave behind something we have done, because this life is not eternal, and a legacy of deeds can be a form of eternity.”

José Saramago, Portuguese writer

The relationship between author and work is a constant theme in literature and arts in general. As a legacy, the work, on the one hand, maintains a connection with the author; on the other hand, it exists *per se*, constituting a somewhat homogeneous body that remains regardless of the biography and the existence of the author.

This relationship is established in any art modality in which the common denominator is the process of creation. A literary work is, above all, a product of the creative exercise of its author, in the same way an artwork is intimately connected with the artist.

On the one hand, the function of the creative exercise to the author or the artist as a need to express the Self in the world, as José Saramago said. On the other hand, the projection of these contents in the world, in a “mediumistic” function of *coagulatio* of aspects of the collective that had not been formulated as such yet. Marcel Duchamp, an artist of the historical avant-gardes of the first half of the 20th century, whose artistic and theoretical production remains a milestone in art history to this day, when speaking of the creative process in visual arts in 1957, says:

“Let us consider two important factors, the two poles of the creation of art: the artist on the one hand, and on the other the spectator who later becomes the posterity. To all appearances, the artist acts like a mediumistic being who, from the labyrinth beyond time and space, seeks his way out to a clearing.”

These two aspects impregnate the work, whether it is a manuscript or, in the visual arts, an art object.

Rainer Maria Rilke, an author born here in Prague, addresses these unique aspects of the individual by treating the text as a work of art and explaining its value as a creative work.

“A work of art is good if it has arisen out of necessity. That is the only way one can judge it. So, dear Sir, I can’t give you any advice but this: to go into yourself and see how deep the place is from which your life flows; at its source you will find the answer to the question whether you must create. Accept that answer, just as it is given to you, without trying to interpret it. Perhaps you will discover that you are called to be an artist. Then take the destiny upon yourself, and bear it, its burden and its greatness, without ever asking what reward might come from outside. For the creator must be a world for himself and must find everything in himself and in Nature, to whom his whole life is devoted.” (Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a young poet*, 1903).

The aspects of the cultural Self contained in a work are the elements that somehow locate it in time and space. Not only do these elements speak of the author’s cultural context, but also of the peculiarities of the time.

In this sense, the author's language choices, including vocabulary and expressions, also place the text in a given time. Terms that mean one thing at one time can read differently at another.

C G Jung's work is extensive and was written over many years. As any work that remains in the written history of the civilization, it contains several aspects that add the author's geniality to conceptual issues related to the collective and to his own issues—conscious, unconscious, dark, numinous issues. And, as any work, it expresses propositions that reveal a cultural Self dated back to a given time and place.

All his originality notwithstanding, Jung is an European author from the late 19th century and first half of the 20th century. Thus, many of the questions he addresses leave his speech culturally dated. Not only in ideas but also in vocabulary. For instance, the use of the term "primitive", as an anthropological concept referring to "other" societies, i.e., to the *Other* in relation to the European man of the late 19th century, can be found in several key works of that time, including Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough*.

In Jung's work, there are many dated elements carrying ideas that we now understand as prejudiced. Not only his description of the so-called "primitive" societies but also the way in which he refers to women, using the concepts of Anima and Animus, among others.

Despite all this, his writings converge to concepts that extrapolate time and space, such as objective psyche and archetype. For Jung, these concepts have a universal value, rather than being specific to a given culture.

These "flags" in his text are, in my opinion, part of a personal extract that every work, written or visual, contains. They are important for placing

author and text in time. And I believe that only the author himself can answer for them.

## JUNG'S WRITINGS, IAAP AND QUESTIONS CONCERNING INDIGENOUS AND AFRICAN-HERITAGE POPULATIONS

In Latin America, and more specifically in Brazil, traumas caused by European colonization and slavery are deep scars that play essential roles in our culture to this day.

The colonization of Latin America began with one of the largest genocides in human history: the elimination of indigenous peoples throughout the continent. Then, the enslavement of surviving indigenous populations and of Black Africans provided a setting for colonization founded basically on expropriation of wealth, violence, and rape of indigenous and Black peoples.

Attempts at reparation or redress of this issue through apologies have been insufficient and inadequate. Especially when such apologies come from privileged social strata or mostly white social groups.

This is a fundamental issue: who is entitled to be the voice when speaking of reparations. When an "apology" is a sole act in the reparatory process, we are usurping the place of speech of those affected by these issues. In the case at hand, we continue to deny a voice to populations of indigenous and African heritage and take it upon ourselves to speak for those who have the legitimacy on this issue. Most such apologies take on a

paternalistic tone. They continue to diminish the *Other* who has a legitimate voice in the matter.

Conversely, the institutional initiatives that best address such issues are those that focus on creating spaces and opportunities for debate and on raising consciousness around the issue, as the present symposium does. Furthermore, those that stimulate investments in the development of mechanisms to expand access by these populations, thus mitigating their exclusion and increasing their participation at all institutional levels.

One particularly successful initiative in Brazil, despite the controversy it has engendered, has been the establishment of affirmative action policies, a quota system for admission to public universities. Indigenous and Black applicants are given an advantage for access to higher education. Eligibility for such programs is based on self-reported belonging to one of these excluded groups.

Research data show that this initiative has not only expanded access of these populations to higher education, but also that, while applicants admitted via these programs perform worse academically at first, at the end of their graduate studies, their performance is already equal to that of students who had access to previous better education. This demonstrates that a key point in promoting greater equality and repairing the deep wounds of exclusion is the dyad of increasing consciousness alongside creation of mechanisms to increase access by these populations to spaces from which they have been excluded, including universities, other educational institutions, or any other training programs.

I believe it is our duty at the IAAP as an institution to be aware of the exclusion of indigenous populations and populations of African heritage in the field of analytical psychology. However, I believe our task in this respect

should be not to apologize about certain aspects of Jung's work, but to increase consciousness of this issue. To discuss this topic in training program seminars and in the various instances of debate within each of our societies.

I would now like to give voice to Grada Kilomba, a Portuguese artist of African heritage who, in my opinion, summarizes this issue in a poetic way.

GRADA KILOMBA – While I write – art work at [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)