

Treatment of Socio-spiritual Disorders, the Greatest Concern of the Modern Governance: Alchemical, Jungian, and Biblical Approaches

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Abstract

This paper delves into the different approaches in the treatment of social disorders from multiple perspectives, including alchemical, Jungian, and biblical approaches. By exploring the narrative of demonic possession in biblical texts, we investigate the concept of mental and spiritual illness, contrasting it with contemporary psychological and psychiatric views. The role of spiritual entities, mind viruses, and the significant function of psychotherapists in addressing societal mental health crises are examined. This paper also draws on the depiction of these themes in Iranian cinema, particularly the film "The Kingdom of Solomon," as a cultural reflection of these ideas.

Keywords: Jung, Alchemy, Governance, Social disorders

Introduction

In social disorders, we are dealing with contagious and growing numbers of patients or subjects that cannot be treated with traditional psychological or pharmacological treatments. These disorders, increasingly considered endemic within certain cultures and social environments, tend to resist conventional treatments over time. This persistence is concerning, particularly regarding the infringement on social laws and the deterioration of human relationships and social coexistence.

The treatment of social disorders has evolved significantly over time, encompassing various paradigms from ancient alchemy and Jungian psychology to religious narratives. In the context of religious traditions, a multitude of diseases and disorders are often thought to be caused by metaphysical reasons. One prominent story from the Bible, particularly in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is the tale of demonic possession and exorcism. This story, often interpreted as a metaphor for psychological disorders, provides a rich ground for exploring the intersection of spirituality and mental health (Bible Gateway).

While the metaphysical approach cannot be explained by the standards of scientific articles and the repetition of such experiments and beliefs are not standard protocol, there is no doubt that the serious practitioners of such ceremonies find them indispensable for addressing unexplained yet significant phenomena. Historical and contemporary research supports the notion that religious rituals and beliefs can have profound psychological and social effects (Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012). It is also proven that religion has the capacity to bring order to society without the use of excessive force, contributing to social cohesion and moral regulation (Durkheim, 1912).

A major challenge in social therapy is the high number of individuals with serious psychological disorders who are unwilling to approach standard treatment. Such problems cannot be left unaddressed without posing serious concerns for public safety and health. Non-compliance with treatment is a significant barrier in mental health care, often necessitating alternative approaches to engage these individuals effectively (Kazdin, 2008).

In this paper, we investigate both conventional and non-conventional practices in social therapy, with an emphasis on spiritual and social disorders. We employ the methods of Jung, biblical narratives, and other cultural and psychological frameworks to delve into the critical issue of socio-cultural diseases. This comprehensive approach aims to provide a holistic understanding of the interplay between mental health, spirituality, and societal norms.

An example of Alchemical Approach in Religion

Alchemy, with its symbolic and transformative processes, provides another layer of understanding to the treatment of social disorders. The alchemical process of transmutation, transforming base metals into gold, can be likened to the psychological process of individuation, where an individual integrates various aspects of the self to achieve wholeness (Eliade, 1962). In sociology, the Alchemy might be considered as promoting a habit of consumption of therapeutic substances i.e. Opium or Hom to contrast severe social disorders like violence or anxiety.

In Zoroastrianism, the concept of "Hom" (also known as "Haoma" in Avestan) holds a prominent place, deeply intertwined with both religious practices and the broader spiritual philosophy of the ancient faith (Boyce, 2001). Haoma is a sacred plant and its associated ritual drink, integral to Zoroastrian ceremonies and the religious life of the community (Mackenzie, 1968).

The Hom ritual drink is mentioned frequently in the *Avesta*, the central holy texts of Zoroastrianism. This sacred beverage, derived from the Haoma plant, was believed to have divine properties, granting wisdom, strength, and immortality to those who partook in it (Dhalla, 1938). The preparation of Haoma involved a complex series of rituals, including the grinding and mixing of the plant, which was then offered to the divine beings as a symbolic act of devotion and a means to obtain spiritual benefits (Boyce, 2001).

In Zoroastrian theology, Haoma is often associated with the divine figure of the same name, who is considered a spiritual entity that mediates between the divine and human realms (Mackenzie, 1968). The drink was thought to be a conduit for divine grace, fostering a

closer connection between worshippers and the divine. The ritual of Haoma not only served a religious function but also symbolized the purification and renewal of the soul, reinforcing the ethical and moral teachings of Zoroastrianism (Dhalla, 1938).

Moreover, the veneration of Haoma in Zoroastrianism reflects the broader significance of natural elements within the faith. The plant and its drink are emblematic of the larger cosmic struggle between order and chaos, embodying the transformative power of sacred rituals in maintaining the harmony and balance of the universe (Boyce, 2001).

The role of Haoma extends beyond mere ritualistic practice; it represents the integration of natural and spiritual realms, where the physical act of consuming the drink is imbued with profound metaphysical significance. Through this sacred rite, Zoroastrianism underscores the importance of maintaining a deep connection with the divine, as well as the ongoing quest for spiritual enlightenment and moral integrity (Mackenzie, 1968).

Biblical Perspective on Spiritual Disorders

In the New Testament, the story of the Gadarene demoniac (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39) illustrates the concept of demonic possession, where a man possessed by numerous evil spirits is healed by Jesus. The spirits, named Legion, are cast into a herd of pigs, which subsequently drown in the sea. This narrative highlights the ancient belief in spiritual entities as causes of mental and physical maladies.

The Gadarene Demoniac in the Gospels

1. **Matthew 8:28-34:** This account describes two men possessed by demons, who recognize Jesus as the Son of God. The demons beg Jesus to cast them into a herd of pigs, which then rush into the sea and drown.
2. **Mark 5:1-20:** Here, a single man is possessed by a multitude of demons named Legion. The demons plead not to be sent out of the region and instead enter a herd of about two thousand pigs, which drown in the sea.

3. **Luke 8:26-39:** Similar to Mark's account, this narrative also details a man named Legion possessed by many demons, who are cast into pigs by Jesus, resulting in the pigs' demise.

These biblical accounts are foundational for understanding early perceptions of mental and spiritual disorders and their treatments through exorcism (Bible Gateway, n.d.).

Jungian Perspective on Spiritual Disorders

Carl Jung's analytical psychology offers a complementary perspective to these biblical narratives. Jung proposed that myths and religious stories, including those of demonic possession, reflect deep psychological truths and archetypes. From a Jungian standpoint, the demonic figures can be seen as manifestations of the Shadow archetype, representing the unconscious, repressed parts of the psyche (Jung, 1968).

The Role of Archetypes

In Jungian psychology, the concept of archetypes—universal, primordial images and symbols residing in the collective unconscious—plays a crucial role in understanding human behavior and mental disorders. The figure of Legion can be interpreted as an archetype representing chaotic, destructive forces within the psyche that, when unacknowledged, can lead to psychological disturbances (Jung, 1968).

Transmutation and Healing

In the context of spiritual disorders, the alchemical approach emphasizes the transformation of negative psychic energies into positive, life-affirming forces. This transformation is akin to the exorcism in the biblical narratives, where the expulsion of demons leads to the restoration of mental and spiritual health (Eliade, 1962).

Psychotherapy and Societal Mental Health

Psychotherapy, distinct from psychiatry and psychology, focuses on understanding and treating the underlying spiritual and mental factors contributing to societal mental health issues. Psychotherapists address the spread of mind viruses—negative patterns of thought and behavior that permeate society, much like infectious diseases.

Mind Viruses and Cultural Transmission

The concept of mind viruses, introduced by Richard Brodie in his book "Virus of the Mind: The New Science of the Meme" (Brodie, 1996), refers to ideas or thought patterns that spread like biological viruses, infecting individuals and societies. These mind viruses can manifest as harmful behaviors and attitudes, such as profanity, promiscuity, deceit, and violence, which perpetuate mental disorders and societal dysfunction.

Mind viruses operate by exploiting the host's cognitive processes, embedding themselves deeply within the culture and collective psyche. Unlike traditional mental disorders, which are typically confined to individuals, mind viruses can spread rapidly through populations, facilitated by media, social interactions, and cultural norms (Brodie, 1996; Blackmore, 1999).

These mind viruses lack the identity and destiny attributed to spiritual entities like demons but function similarly to biological viruses by hijacking the host's mental processes. This analogy to biological viruses, which commandeer the host cell's protein synthesis machinery for replication (Koonin & Dolja, 2013), underscores the insidious nature of mind viruses in shaping collective behavior and thought.

The mind viruses are also a byproduct of political discourse and projects by opposing governments to inflict damages to the integrity of the opposing nations and governments, as we explained in the context of psychological warfare (Davoudpour, A.R., 2024).

The Role of the Psychotherapist

The psychotherapist's role is to identify and treat these mind viruses, aiming to restore mental health at both individual and societal levels. This approach requires a deep understanding of the cultural and historical context of mental disorders, as well as the spiritual dimensions of human experience. Psychotherapists work to unravel these negative thought patterns and replace them with positive, constructive ones, much like the process of individuation in Jungian therapy (Jung, 1968).

Psychotherapists also play a crucial role in educating society about the dangers of mind viruses and promoting mental hygiene practices to prevent their spread. This proactive approach is essential in addressing and mitigating the widespread impact of these cultural and mental pathogens (Dawkins, 1976).

Cultural Reflections in Cinema

The Iranian film "The Kingdom of Solomon" serves as a modern cultural reflection of the ancient themes discussed. The movie portrays King Solomon's battle against demons and supernatural forces, echoing the biblical narratives of spiritual warfare and possession. This cinematic representation underscores the enduring relevance of these themes in contemporary society.

The Kingdom of Solomon

In "The Kingdom of Solomon," demons and evil spirits manipulate and control humans, leading to widespread violence and chaos. The film illustrates the belief that only through faith in God can one overcome these malevolent forces, highlighting the spiritual dimensions of mental and social disorders (Bahrani, 2010). This depiction aligns with the Jungian view of integrating the Shadow and the alchemical process of transformation to achieve psychological and spiritual wholeness.

Conclusion

The treatment of social disorders through alchemical, Jungian, and biblical approaches offers a multifaceted understanding of mental health. By integrating these perspectives, we can appreciate the complex interplay between spiritual, psychological, and cultural factors in the manifestation and treatment of mental disorders. The role of the psychotherapist, akin to that of Jesus or Solomon, is crucial in addressing and healing these deep-seated issues, ultimately contributing to the well-being of society.

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