The Bond in Expressive Arts Therapy
Tinkuy, coloniality of power and imaginary

I am another you
Painting by Judith Alalu

In Expressive Arts Therapy we often say that the arts are at the center of the experience. That is to say, we trust in the transformative power of the arts if we let them manifest to their full potential, without prematurely interfering with interpretations or psychological understandings. Although this is a fundamental characteristic of our discipline, we must not forget that the arts occur in a secure bond with the facilitator or change agent.

In this essay, I would like to name three aspects to take into account in the bonds that expressive arts facilitators establish in with clients, groups, organizations, communities or students:

Tinkuy

In Calderon (2019) I have already extensively described the relationship between tinkuy and expressive arts therapy. Tinkuy or encounter in quechua, has multiple meanings that continue to be discovered in different ethnolinguistic investigations (Valiente, 2016). The image that best describes it for me is that of two rivers that converge and in that encounter eddies, frictions, chaos, confusion arise and finally a new river emerges. Allen (2002) tells us that "Tinkuys are powerful, dangerous places full of liberated and uncontrollable forces (...) a mixture of different elements that brings something new into existence, and this new being (...) is endowed with vitalizing force." (p.205)

The tinkuy thus alludes both to the possibilities of vital transformation that occur in the encounter as well as the difficulties and frictions that may arise. The tinkuy is an essential idea in the Andean worldview that seeks balance and the possibility of continuing with the regeneration of the world. In the tinkuy differences are honored and the multiplicity is celebrated in a vital coexistence.

In our expressive arts work, the image of the tinkuy can inspire our encounters with the people, groups and communities with whom we work. The tinkuy can guide our ethics of encounter. It also invites us to integrate the complex and difficult moments that occur in any therapeutic or change encounter: when there are resistances and conflicts in the sessions, when people cannot enter to do art or blockages arise that prevent access to the imaginal space. The tinkuy encourages us to see these moments as part of a process towards transformation where something new can emerge.

The tinkuy seeks to promote encounters with people's resources. On many occasions the people or groups that seek help are disconnected from their strengths and their symptoms or problems are more present. Clients or communities identify with a negative or pathological way of being in the world. The tinkuy reminds us of the importance of integrating the perspective of health into people's lives and preventing them from focusing only on what is not working.

When there is no tinkuy, conflict, stagnation and disease arise. In our expressive arts sessions we must revive the fluidity of the tinkuy and its promise to bring something new to the world by honoring multiplicity.

Coloniality of power

The term coloniality of power has been elaborated by Anibal Quijano (2007), a Peruvian sociologist who refers that the consequences brought about by the conquest in Latin America are still valid in our contemporary society. A group of power continues to exercise control over a large majority, imposing a way of being in the world above other visions. This impact occurs on many levels: cultural, educational, economic, social and even existential. As Maldonado-Torres (2007) says, coloniality: "...remains alive in school textbooks, in the criteria for good academic work, in culture, in common sense, in the

peoples' self-image, in individual aspirations, and in many other aspects of our modern experience. In a sense, we breathe coloniality on a daily basis in our modernity." (p.131)

In every therapeutic encounter with the arts, beyond living in a specific territory, we have to keep in mind how the dynamics of power and coloniality are updated. As expressive arts facilitators we have to ask ourselves how we have internalized the coloniality of power throughout our history, what aspects of us are colonized. Does my mind has greater preponderance over my emotions? Does my body express its vitality freely? Do I impose my ideas about art, change and transformation with the people I work with?

Likewise, we have to ask ourselves what type of bond the people with whom we work have in relation to the coloniality of power, how they have internalized these inequalities. Where do clients place us facilitators in relation to power? Do they give us power and control over their lives? How do we respond to that? What role do they want us to play? What aspects, emotional, cognitive or bodily, of the clients are subjected to?

In turn, all this leads us to value the role that expressive arts facilitators have in the decolonization process. Here the phenomenological approach of our field and the emphasis given to listening to the images that arise would be helping us in this process and avoid falling into the imbalance of colonization. In other words, the space of decentering and imaginal reality is a place of equality and freedom above any type of domination. The arts understood in this way would be helping to strengthen bonds free of coloniality of power.

Imaginary

Just as we are aware that we work with the internal creative resources of the person (their imagination), we must also take into account the imaginary of the place where we find ourselves. In (Calderon 2015) I define imagery as:
-Nature, geography, and/or spaces of the place.
-Vision of the world that the inhabitants of that place have or had
-Myths
-Traditional and modern forms of creation (arts and handicrafts)

The imaginary is also related to the pacha, one of the most important divinities of the Andean world. The pacha is the space, time, world of a specific place. We must ask ourselves as facilitators what is the connection we have with our pacha, that is, with nature, artistic traditions, worldview, myths of the place where we are going to work. Likewise, we must investigate how our clients or groups have internalized their bond with their imaginary.

Imaginary is also a great resource to create and nurture our expressive arts practice. Just as we have art materials or musical instruments, we also have everything that the pacha of the place where we work can offer us. Nature and the space where we work also imagines and expresses itself and can participate in the encounter between expressive arts facilitators and their clients and communities.

However, in Latin America Quijano (2007) warns us: "In a very broad part of the worldwide population, the **imaginary itself was colonized**." (p. 123, emphasis mine). In other words, the resources present in our pacha are being made invisible and restricted. How then to make the tinkuy with our imagery, as I am proposing, if it is subdued? In turn, in the Andes, individual or collective illnesses are understood as a "dislocation" from the pacha. "Distanced from their Pacha, people—and culture—run the risk of becoming distorted, falling ill" (Kreimer, 1993).

Due to all this, it becomes more important to integrate the imaginary of the place where we work as a way of reestablishing the lost health as a consequence of the coloniality of power and reconnecting with an invaluable source of resources.

After reviewing these three ideas it is important to remember that in our expressive arts work the arts are at the center in a vital and transformative tinkuy between the client, group and community with the facilitator. The tinkuy inspires the way of approaching this therapeutic bond like two rivers that come together and bring a new vital force. This tinkuy takes place in a space that has a particular imaginary with which we can enrich our sessions. Recover the dialogue with the pacha and everything it can offer us. All within a perspective that seeks to transform the coloniality of power into more egalitarian and liberating bonds between us and our multiplicity.

I am another you

I am the sovereign Atahualpa and his pain, rage, and impotence.
I am the grandeur of his empire and the resignation of its destruction. His supposed fratricide and his humiliated generals.
I am the Marques Governor Francisco Pizarro and his urge to eat everything up, his blindness and insanity. His poverty, his deceit, and his unbreakable determination.
I am José María Arguedas, his anguish and depression, his beehive. I am the beauty of his song, his Don Diego in perpetual dialogue with sly foxes everywhere in Peru.
I am the Lord of Sipán, his majesty and his fears. I am all the Mochica governors, those who clung to power and those who made their culture flourish.
I am the Pacha that heals you and that sickens you. The one that waits calmly for you to look at her, hear her, and feel her in order to give you all she has to give.
I am the lord of intermediate spaces; I live in the kingdom of "in-between."
I am in one place and the other, at the same time. I am your rage and joy, your fear and fortitude, a torrent that stirs everything up and renders it transparent.
I am the maker of chaos and humor, a Baal Shem Tov who flashes in his frantic dance, leaves his body and confuses himself with God.
I am the encounter between the sea and the sun at dusk, the sand, the salt, the waves, the wind, and those infinite lighted shades of color that die and are reborn.
Infinite lighted shades of color.
You, too, are another me.

Jose Miguel Calderon

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