

Nodes that Bond Podcast – Episode 3

“Dreams”

Portal sem Porteiras, Monteiro Lobato – São Paulo, Brazil.

July, 2020.

A smooth song plays. A woman’s voice (Adelita) enters:

“To share dreams.... What kind of world do we visit when our eyes are closed? Yesterday I dreamt of tigers. They were wondering around the street, I could see them through the window of my mother’s house. They were chilling by the sidewalk. First, I saw a female lion. Then, I saw a tiger. I felt complete fear and helplessness before the strenght and sovereignty of those animals so close to me. Fascination and fright in the same propotion. They would enter my home... I tried to close all doors with my keyes, but that was in vain. In three pulses they would slam the doors opened. They were not exactly aggressive, but absolutely powerful. They did not fear me, and came really close. There was not exactly an attack... but I felt it was just a matter of time before that happened... until their hunger came. Then, I woke up.”

Woman 1 (Sylvia Baptista):

“I would begin this by asking all of you to imagine a very sunny day, in an opened and wide kind of place, a bright day. Later, when the sun goes down, the night comes, and there are no electric lights nearby. And suddenly we can see the sky completely filled with stars. When thinking about dreams, I like to bring this image, because all those stars were already there, but we could not see them, it was a sunny day... The daylight outshines the light of those stars. It is something like that, what happens with dreams. Our consciousness is like this bright, sunny day, filled with light. We are always with those lights on, which does not allow us to see the light of the stars that are right there. But when we go to sleep, we turn off those lights of awareness and enter another state – we dive into the unconscious mind. And out uncouncious mind is this great mistery, which gives us this gift every single night – our dreams.”

Woman 2 (Carol Coelho):

“During the night I always feel very cold. My feet get very cold... and I dreamt I was going to buy a blanket. When I arrived at the store, there were police officers there. But I didn’t find that strange, clearly I had the feeling that it was the middle of the covid pandemics and I should not be on the street, that I had to buy my blanket and run away from there. When I entered the store, I found my grandma’s sister [laughs], Auntie Ivone. She came to me and she hugged me, kissed me all over my face, squeezed my cheeks, and said “Carol, I missed you so much, you look so beautiful!”, and she would not stop kissing me... and that made me so embarassed, I kept thinking “My God, she doesn’t know about social distancing! She doesn’t know we shouldn’t be kissing people, hugging people... how am I gonna tell her?” And she wouldn’t stop kissing me all over, and I just wanted to run away from there, I didn’t know what to do and felt completely helpless...”

Woman 3 (Ana):

“I had an interesting dream about two weeks ago. I was very concerned that the City Hall’s projects would be cancelled and I woulnd’t have any source of income, and I was already planning some kind of Plan B for my life. That was a sunday. I would wait just one more week to see if the City Hall would call me about the projects, and I was waiting on that. And then, on sunday, I told my son about this plan B. Right on monday, I had this very interesting dream. I dreamt I was at the City Hall, going to check if they would call me or not. I was at the patio, and I saw this room, and there was someone eles sitting on my chair, working. I was a bit hurt, knowing that someone replaced

me... I felt that, but didn't say anything. I took another look at the person and it was Beth, from Beira do Riacho [*a restaurant in the neighborhood*]. I left there a bit sad, but also accepting the situation. On Monday 8 am, I got a call from the City Hall asking me to go there and sign the contract, I would go back to the project. So, I thought that was a very interesting dream, almost an omen..."

Woman 4 (Luisa Luna):

"The sea has been very present in my dreams... so, so much. All kinds of dreams – the last one was so scary, there was a giant squid that wanted to steal Davi [her baby], but I don't remember details... the dream I would like to tell is about a house. I have dreamt about this house before, it is always changing bit by bit. Before, when I dreamt about it, I could not live in this house, it belonged to somebody else, or was rented, a bit to do with our dramas in this neighborhood [laughs]. But, as it was almost becoming my house, I was going to live in it. But this last time, to get to the house, you had to take a boat, and navigate in this beautiful and enormous sea. The house was also huge, beautiful.

But, when I got there, my intention was not to occupy the whole house – I was just going to occupy one bedroom. A small, tiny bedroom by the living room on the first floor. And I remember thinking to myself "Nah, this is good, I can live just here, here I can do everything I need, have my little kitchen, my bedroom, my home... this is good, I don't need all that space...". But then, I suddenly realized that the walls in this bedroom were made of glass, and so it seemed like I was by myself... but these walls did not face the sea. They faced a huge street market [laughs], where there was loads and loads of people passing by and seeing me through the walls... and I thought "Wow, but what is the meaning of all this??"... And in the dream, the solution was simply to put some curtains up..."

Woman 5 (Fernanda):

"I dreamt that I was here, in the neighbourhood, and there were some kids going around without much supervision and they were close to accessing some weapons, some dangerous things, and those kids ended up running away. And I went after them, and when I was on my way I ran into this woman who had a magic mirror, something like that. When I looked at my reflexion, I saw myself extremely different from what I appeared to be. I had morbid obesity, and I had a huge lump on my neck, which was a tumor. And I remember I asked to speak to this woman, who was some kind of a doctor, and I said: 'Do whatever you need, please take this out'. And she said: 'this is not quite how this works'."

Woman 6 (Gabi Delias):

"I'm going to tell about a flashback I had this week about an experience – it was a dream, but I call it an experience, because it was so intense. It happened when I was in the ICU, a very difficult time in my life. It lasted a week, everyday the same dream: a research kind of environment, an older woman who looked like Mariana Muniz [*brazilian actress*] and the other researchers were younger, and they all did experiments with women, and they did a fertilization work: they would cross-over genes of female women with Jatobá trees [*a species of beautiful and large brazilian trees*]. It was so crazy. And I was submitted to this experiment. In the dream, I was in this research place, lying in bed, completely still, and they would take blood samples and inject things on me a lot of times throughout the day. And this place was by a lake, and it was Axel's house [*Axel is a member of our community in the neighborhood*]! Crazy, right? And I would ask – 'what are you doing to me?' Because I'm not a young woman anymore, I am almost 50 years old! And they would tell me

that I was a powerful matriarc, a great genitor, and that they were investing in me... And that was the crazy experiment of those people, who were beings filled with light, and they were creating a being that was half human being and half Jatobá tree.... And that was the dream.”

Woman 7 (Adelita):

“I dreamt about a female buffalo. I was walking down the street with Amora, my daughter. It was an empty street, made out of rocks. It was very early morning, and the fear was in the air: somehow, all these things we are going through were present in this dream. And so a gate to a house opened up, and a mighty female buffalo came out of there. She sat in the middle of street, much like a queen, as if nothing else was happening. Then, a woman dressed in red came out of the house, long hair, and went towards the female buffalo. And the buffalo would keep pulling the ears of the woman, as if it was telling her secrets. I realized the female buffalo and the woman were sisters. And on the other side of the street, me and Amora would just watch the scene, and we couldn’t believe it! Afterwards, we left.”

Woman 8 (Jade):

“We were in the back of the first house we lived in this neighborhood. In this case, the upstairs neighbor. I went to the back, and I remember seeing a dog and thinking “hm, I don’t know this dog”. When I was coming back, I was walking and the floor was all muddy. And then I looked at the gate and there started to pop up lots and lots of dogs, and I was like “fuck, I’m done, I’m going to die”. I was already thanking life and saying goodbye, and one of the dogs was already coming towards me. He bit my leg and I was like “Hey, cutsie, get out of here”... and then the others came as well, and that was my fear. When they came, the one that was biting me put me up on his back and then started rolling over the backs of each dog. They were forming a spiral shape, and while they did that, they would roll me over each of their backs, and the first dog that I was on was the center of the spiral.... And I would roll over each of their backs, and it was so soft and tender... [laughs] and when the spiral was over – it was a looot of dogs – I was home!”

Narrator - Marcela

“Welcome to our dreams. In this podcast we have two special guests. They are both psychologists, and are here to tell us a bit about the dreams within their lines of study. Sylvia Baptista is a Jungian psychotherapist, and she is also the mother of Paula and Luísa – the one on the Nodes that Bond team. And Juliane do Prado is a psychotherapist that works for the public health system here in our town, Monteiro Lobato, where she follows the line of Psychoanalysis-oriented brief psychotherapy.”

Juliane do Prado (Psychoanalysis-oriented brief psychotherapist)

“Freud says that dreams are made of uncounsicous desires, meaningful memories of the daily life, memories of the past, feelings that we might have during the night... but, the most interesting part for him, is to use this material, which is like a patchwork quilt, to understand what was repressed. The job of the psychotherapy would be to broaden our consicnousness so that people can make more assertive choices, or else we keep repeating uncounsicous dinamycs.”

Sylvia Baptista (Jungian psychotherapist)

“We understand dreams as something very enigmatic. They are filled with symbols – the word “symbol” means something that unites different meanings, it is opposed to the word “diábolo” which has to do with separation. So, the symbols bring in this idea of uniting two meanings, and Jung used to say that they are the best way to describe something that you can’t quite explain. So,

the symbol is infinite – it always has another face of what it represents to show us. And so, dreams are filled with symbols, and we are constantly trying to understand, to give it some kind of a shape. And the one that does that is our minds, which separates things. I actually have here a quote from Jung: “The dream is the small and hidden door in the most intimate place of the psyche. All awareness of the self is isolated, knows isolated things, as it separates, understands and only sees that which can be referred to this self. The awareness of the self consists on limitations, even if it reaches the most far away constelations. All that is counciousness, separates. But in dreams, we enter the most deep, general, truthful and eternal of a person, who is still in the dusk of the night, only beginning, when they were the whole, and the whole was them. When the self would identify with the simplest nature. That is why it doen’t come as a surprise that in all ancient cultures, the most impressive dreams were considered a message from the Gods.”

Woman 9 (Ana Paula):

“I hardly ever have dreams, it’s rare for me. But, curiously, last week, for two nights, I had really bad dreams. On the first night I dreamt I was in the balcony of an apartment, lying on the hammock, and I saw someone falling off the building right in front of mine. It was a suicide. On the second night, I don’t remember much, I just remember my wrists opening up, and a lot of blood pouring out of them... and then I woke up.

And this made me think that we live in a privileged town, a lot of farms, opened spaces, houses... but in big cities, where people live in buildings, a lot of people live by themselves - how are these people doing in this moment of isolation? I know that technology helps, you can binge watch series... but that’s not everything, right?”

Juliane do Prado

“When we talk about subjectivity, what do we mean by that? It is all those things that I am made of as a person. All the things that go on within me. All my features, sensory capacities, emotional, affective, imaginary and rational capacities. They are all built in exchanges, we call it dialectics, as it is a two way street between myself and my surroundings – society, culture, politics... and this two way exchanges are mediated by communication. The dialectics is mediated by communication. And here we can discuss the technologis of information exchanges and dialectics. We might remember of the Greek myth of Prometheus, God of Fire. He got into a fight with Zeus, because of Zeus’ omnipotence, and he left the Fire as a human’s responsibility. So that he could guarantee the knowledge to humanity – the power over matter and the technical knowledge. And this relationship between technology and the study of the techniques, is really connected to the development of humanity.

The “power” over natural resources, the wars, energy production, industrial revolution, capitalism... with all this impact of technological development, a certain strangeness comes up – in work relationships, in the means of production, in social relationships... and of men and women with themselves. Today, I see in my clinic a significant increase in depression, anxiety syndromes, panic syndrome, increase in suicides... So it all has a great impact in people’s mental health, and there is also the alienation people are in... and we can’t tell the impact of all this for the next generations, who are already born with a cellphone in their hands, and have so much ease to use those tools for communication and have those connections as a means of identity construction for themselves. And we shouldn’t really reflect on that with moral judgments like “is this good, is this bad...?” It is an odd and uncertain situation, which we will try to manage just like other processes of crisis and transformation. We will be at least a bit able to manage that, find resources and tools to deal with the matters that come up from all this. But what I find interesting is for us to have the leading role in all this, in society, culture, politics.... And reflect on where we are, and which society do we want to

have, what kind of health do we want to have, understand the importance of the connection between people and the connection with ourselves, with what is sacred. I don't believe we can replace the human connection with the digital connection."

Narrator – Marcela

"Night breaks, the light comes up within my unconsciousness. Tonight, the dreams are the big stars. May the symbols come and tell me stories. I wake up and I'm connected. My machine that still dreams in algorithms and whispers through my gaze the forged nature of the deep self. Who is playing God behind the algorithms and competing with me, side by side, for the domains of my unconsciousness? Tânia, tell us a bit about the artificial intelligence behind our favorite contents?"

Our tutor, Tânia

"The other day I asked to borrow my friend's phone to listen to a song. He denied [laughs] and said 'No, Tânia, you will ruin my algorithms!'. - Ruin what?! Your algorithms? What is that? Well, basically, algorithm, in computer science, is a recipe to execute something. This something could be resolving a math problem, or showing on the screen the picture of a cat, or to show the best recommendation for a video. Algorithms work like a recipe for baking a bread. There are the ingredients, the instructions, the time needed for baking... and if it all works, you have a bread by the end of it. Youtube's algorithm, for instance.

Say you just watched a video by Perota Chingo [*an argentinian band*], what will be the next video the website will show you? Will it be Cazusa, Elba Ramalho, Chitãozinho e Xororó [*a broad range of brazilian artists*]? If you are only listening to songs by latin american women, it is very unlikely to come up a video by a north american man. Youtube ends up following a sequence of similarity among the videos, to encourage you to stay longer and longer and longer in their platform. The platform's interest is that you don't leave it. There is a whole marketing area called "attention marketing", in which the platforms develop algorithms to get and keep our attention. In the case of youtube, that would mean playing an endless cycle of videos most similar to each another, always towards a more extreme side of the theme of the videos.

If you start watching videos about politics, on conservative politics, for instance, the platform will show you more and more extreme videos on conservative youtube channels. Human beings have a tendency to go deeper and deeper into issues, and the algorithms are filled with psychology knowledge within them, it is not simply math, numbers... there are human behaviour analysis. Why does Netflix always goes straight to the next episode, instead of asking if you actually want to see the next episode? It is simply consuming you in the attention marketing logic, getting you to stay in that platform, consuming their contents, without leaving the infinite looping. When we talk about music – a lot of people like Spotify. Spotify has, in a way, good recommendations for you because it captures the type of sound waves of the music you listen to, and the next recommendation won't necessarily be from the same band or gender. The platform manages to find songs that has a sound, a rhythm, a beat, something that relates to the song before... and you stay there, in an infinite looping of similar songs. And what is the issue when we receive a lot of content that is similar to one another, and having some kind of tendency towards something? You basically stay trapped inside a bubble. It's like being inside a catholic church and wanting to listen about atheism. You will only listen to one version, have access to one kind of content, and will not be able to compare the different types of content – they will not appear to you.

The algorithms create bubbles and bubbles that narrow down more and more information that circulates and appears to you. Furthermore, the fact that the algorithm is made to addict us and keep us connected shows us

the algorithm could also be doing something for someone's interest on something. If the owner of the platform has some kind of a political view, and they want a specific content to spread among specific users... Lets say – me, Tânia, I have a profile as an online user. I have my taste in music, my political views... sometimes even my way to dress and style they could trace. Which is all different from Lu, for instance, who has a different profile. Each one of us listens to things differently, we have different views and arguments. And sometimes something fits better my profile than hers. So, if for some reason I am reading some news on a website, and this website is able to see what kind of profile I have, the recommendation for the next news I might read could be much more assertive, and I will keep on navigating through that website, and if the website can study a bit deeper my profile, and they have a political view they want to spread, not only could that website indicate me content that is connected to my ideology, but also connected with the message the website wants to spread. Who creates those algorithms and why are they made to be this way?

At the end of the day, it is all related to power and money. Power brings money, money brings power... it doesn't matter what comes first, what matters is that your attention is in that game, and it is being consumed. And it is being consumed in such high levels that we stay online, on average, about 8 hours a day in Brazil. And this constant attention alters the way you organism desires and searches for information. And those algorithms will work on that: which content will you receive, and in what moment will you receive it? And what will this content tell you? And it is up to us: do we really want to receive this amount of content simply being handed out to us so easily? Back at home my family says 'If the alms are too high, the saints get suspicious.' If you only watch on TV all the time the news that São Paulo has robbery, robbery, robbery, and you don't live in São Paulo, but next week you have to go there... what will you be afraid of? Running into a shark or being robbed? [laughs]

So there you go... the media usually is able to create the narratives. The difference between the television media and the internet media is that the television media has a reduced profile on the users. They might go as far as knowing the house of the cities that are on in specific hours... they don't know who is in front of the TV. Not like the computer or the cellphone. They know whose phone this is. They have a much more refined profile on who is looking at that screen and what message they want to give them. So, are we able to get rid of those algorithms that create those bubbles around us? Of course we can. There is a tool just like Google Chrome, for instance, called Thor. Thor does not save the information of the searches made during navigation... this way, each consult that you make on the internet, is like a whole new person is searching. There are some books and documentaries on this theme, about how we are existing inside those bubbles, and how this interferes on our lives, our daily lives.

Among them there is one by Frank Castle [*an anonymous writer she saw online*] in which he talks about the economics of attention. If we are rowing on this boat or if we are being taken by the waves... there is also an interview with a Brazilian author called Pollyana Ferrari, who is a specialist on digital communication from PUC-SP [*a Brazilian university*]. She wrote a book called "How to leave the bubble" - and the book is about the dissemination of fake news in social networks and how it affects our beliefs. There is also a documentary called "The great hack", from Netflix. The documentary shows how people's Facebook profiles were used to the spreading of political campaigns – both in the UK and USA's Trump 2016 campaign. This documentary shows how they sent content to those who were indecisive. There is another document on the economics of attention and how it is connected to consumption productivity. How is the high amounts of time being connected affects our consumption habits. And there is another documentary called "Freenet", this one you can find in free spaces, such as Libreflix – an opened version of Netflix, it's a Brazilian project. On Libreflix, you can find the Freenet documentary, which discusses how much freedom we really have online, not only to access content, but also to express ourselves, and who governs the

internet, who is accessing all the information behind the screen, and how does that work...? *[voice fades into music]*

Woman 10 (Lia):

“These days all I have been dreaming about are crowds. Streets and avenues filled with people, people who I had forgotten about showing up, people I never really knew that much, people I’ve never met, they all show up [laughs]. But simply everyone mixed up, a lot of things happening all the time, so crazy. Just as it really is when you go to a concert or something, things get all mixed up, people going around, we speak loudly, we don’t quite understand what people are saying, someone arrives, someone passes by... and this is what my dreams look like lately.”

Woman 11 (Ana):

“I had a dream the other day. With this whole thing with not opening the Charity Bazaar *[which she organizes and runs twice a year with clothes and toys from everyone in the neighborhood]*, it would be around this time of year, and people keep asking me “Ana, how about the Bazaar, how about it?” - and I don’t know if we will have it this year. For some people I organize some things, people pass by asking for pants, or shirts for working outside, and then I go and search for them if something comes up. And so the other day I dreamt I was there, separating all these clothes, to loads of different people. And it was funny, Amelinha and Ney *[people from the neighborhood]* had asked me that same week to keep pants and shirts that came up for them. And in the dream, I was separating clothes for people to go to work. And I dreamt about it, because I was thinking about it – about not opening the bazaar this year, having people asking me, what I was going to do...”

Woman 12 (Angélica):

“Everyday I wake up saying that I dreamt about something. But few of those stay kept in my memory. I dream a lot about Pandavas *[our local school]*, because I was there for so long, a lot of my dreams happen there. But one dream I had recently was such a good one. I dreamt about a childhood friend with whom I don’t have much contact anymore, but she is still very dear to me. So, I dreamt of her, we were in a tree house, and I was trying to go down, and I got stuck on the stairs. And she started laughing so hard, and she would laugh, and I would laugh... and when I woke up I realized that the laughs were exactly, exactly the same as our childhoods, from when we laughed so much and played so much, you know? And it was such a good dream, I woke up so happy...”

Narrator - Marcela

“It so good to us, Angelica, to know about this laugh that lives within you, who, not by chance, takes care and understands our children *[Angelica is the local kindergarden teacher]*. Ana, thank you for taking care of these wonderful exchanges. We are patiently waiting for you Bazaar... outside. All the dreams descibed in this podcast are from women who live in Monteiro Lobato. We are very grateful to each one for sharing them. Nodes that Bond is a project of the Portal sem Porteiras Association that brings reflections about connectivity among women. Thank you for listening to our dreams.”