Abstract
The present article relates two fundamental aspects of intuitive cultural conceptions of the passage of time - namely, cyclical and continuous - to the clinical psychopathology of post-traumatic stress in Brazil. People with predominantly cyclical cultural perceptions of time tend to see life and death as part of an eternal movement. For them, the severity and persistence of mental trauma are not directly related to the magnitude of a given catastrophe or traumatic experience. Rather, they are associated with characteristics of the mind and the roles they represent in the mind. Modern culture tends to produce individuals prepared for a highly complex world where nearly everyone is subject to constant pressure and a frantic pace of life. Almost all events must be anticipated, planned or controlled, and obsessive traits tend to be quite welcome in such a society. But when unpredictable catastrophic moments come up, when nothing can be done, such methodical persons may show frailty and great frustration. Traditional communities seem able to bear extremely high levels of aggression or suffering - in traumatic and catastrophic situations - without showing proportional signs of mental stress. Whereas in upper social layers of modern communities acts of violence, such as muggings or rape, can have serious and long-lasting consequences on the victims, in everyday public hospital practice we come across victims of such seemingly traumatic events who do not show any of the usual devastating effects on their mental life. Periodic dissociative rituals may have a role in the resilience of these patients.

Keywords
Post-traumatic stress, psychopatology and culture, temporality and medicine, dissociation