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Editorial

This is the final issue of the International Journal of Psychoanalysis and Education.

It is not the end of a path, but a metamorphosis into another journal which will be named "Subject, Action & Society" (SAS in acronym form) and subtitled: "Psychoanalytical Studies and Practices", it will come out at the end of June 2021 with a first programmatic issue, it will be enriched by a Scientific Committee and an international Board made up of renowned academics and clinicians.

From the central role of Educational Psychology in dialogue with the other Human Sciences, as an activity for the prevention and recovery of individual and collective psychosocial malaise, we further expand our point of view through the "PolisAnalisi", which is a new orientation in the landscape of Human Sciences and of Clinical Psychology in particular. This orientation is emerging as "a true re-foundation of Social Psychiatry" (quote by Pontalti Corrado). This approach provides further heuristic tools that can be used to analyze the psychodynamic factors underlying contemporary problems and to propose clinical psychological methodologies used to implement a care toward the social.

That is especially relevant today, when the spread of the virus known as "Covid-19" generated a massive emergency and caught many people by surprise, revealing the precariousness not only of health, but also of many other areas of our life, such as relationships, economy, politics, and the environment. COVID-19 can be considered as an unknown, unpredictable, and invisible enemy. Due to its indefinite nature, individuals and societies have put in place special defense mechanisms to defend themselves from an intolerable state of uncertainty and anguish. From a broader point of view, the arrival of Covid-19 consists in a breach in the human illusion of omnipotence. It has put humanity in front of its limit and weakness. This unpleasant contact opens the way to an uncertain future. Change seems inevitable, but the nature of it is still unknown. Whether it will be a regressive or

evolutionary transformation will depend only on us, as individuals, societies, and species. It will depend by how much human beings will focus on emotional education, on planning their existences: in few words, it depends on sustainable educational planning for the prospects of change.

The climatic and economic crisis, xenophobia, extremism, terrorism, the devaluation of institutions, all have common psychological causes. We live in a social body suffering from a depression that is disguised as an acceleration. Impotence, shame, and social anguish generate resentment and paranoia: to simplify conflicts, we project them into distant opponents, enemyizing the other. The true opposite of love is the power fueled by fear.

We analyze the psychological roots of "civil pathologies". On one hand, every political situation is the expression of a parallel psychic experience present in millions of individuals; on the other hand, each personality is the result of history's and social configuration's outcome. The life of the polis (the city) is a set of psychic facts, which, to date, force the individual into the "friend-enemy" scheme, in a desperate search for a stable meaning.

As a cure, we propose methodologies to expand our resources of meaning, to develop multidimensional visions, and to re-educate to the limits, to see the Other as an enrichment and not as an obstacle. PolisAnalisi is a clinical practice aiming at designing new rules of coexistence in a "win-win" perspective, so to allow a secular forgiveness, beyond revenge. In that sense the polis can become the space in which, as conscious citizens, we share gifts and not walls, living in cooperation, reciprocity, and trust.

The killing of the stranger (inside and therefore outside of us) is psychopathology; the cure is listening to the foreigner's stories, to meet our "Shadow" and discover that "the I is the Other". Therefore, let us begin the reading by asking ourselves: what question do we ask the Other with our history and what question does the Other ask us with his?

“What the caterpillar calls the end, the rest of the world calls a butterfly” (Lao Tse).

Therefore, thanking all those who have contributed to the success of these ten years

of IJPE, we are ready to take off for a new adventure, which we will keep carrying out with the same spirit of service that has distinguished us so far.

Speech, Event, Desire: Psycho-Pedagogical Perspectives about the Symptom

Chiara Agagiù

Abstract

The symptom, which plays a crucial role in the psychological sciences, in this study will be primarily approached from its ontological status: regarding the human being as a lingual being, the symptom will be seen as speech emerging from the unconscious or a device to be analyzed in its own language, made of rhetorical figures that suspend the arbitrary correlation between signifier and meaning. For the purposes of this study, it is crucial to sustain an ethical-pedagogical view: the symptom, dealing with the truth of the self, will be considered the base for a discourse centered on the subject. In this way, the reach of Care will be expanded, while a stance for the pedagogical action will be defined based on the transference dynamics activated in self-formation. In the analysis of subjectivation, intended as the process by which one becomes a subject, language reveals itself as a central point (even if it is not the only dimension involved), because it does not concern a mere question of transmission of information. In fact, the transference dynamics are founded on psychoanalytical issues dealing with desire, the keystone for interpreting a theoretical research guided by a Lacanian perspective in the psycho-pedagogical field.

Key words: *symptom; subjectivation; unconscious; language; self-formation; psycho-pedagogy; Lacanian psychoanalysis*

The Symptom as Language: A Discourse That Fits the Subject

In both clinical lexicon and common language, the word ‘symptom’ [from gr. σύμπτωμα ‘happening, accident’] indicates a condition of disease, representing the existence of something distancing the subject from its ‘normal’ status. In semeiotics—the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation in medical science—the symptom differs from the sign in that the latter always represents *something*. In contrast, the symptom epitomizes singular and characteristic figures emanating from the subject. Borrowing the term from clinical lexicon, in the present article the intention is to examine the symptom as a pedagogical *dispositif* (‘device’)¹, and the opening of this semantic field is driven from a clinical pedagogy² that places the subject’s speech at its core.

Assuming that human beings are *lingual beings* – quoting Lacan, *parlêtre* – the subject will be considered here as a *narrating identity*. In Jacques Lacan’s *The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis* (Lacan, 1966) – a work largely influenced by Saussure’s structuralism – language is defined as a *big Other* and, entering the Symbolic Register, represents the initial step the subject makes (first, unconsciously) toward accessing the state of culture. Language, however, which is the same for everyone, is a fundamental issue, though not unique, regulating self-formation. Therefore, it is the particular way by which a human being produces subjectivity and

creates a linguistic code that generates the unrepeatability of the subject as well as its constitutive paradox³.

“Ça parle!” Lacan would say. Even the unconscious is structured as a language and so it speaks, but its language is a discourse created by rhetorical figures. Its formations could be considered heralds of unheard tales, at times cryptic, where the link between signifier and meaning is suspended. To allow the unconscious to speak means to leave room for the disruptive *parrhesia* of the symptom, even if it presents itself with an obscure and diffused appearance.

Lacanian psychoanalysis changes the symptom from its disease status to a new one; the symptom becomes a text, a novel, a book in which the emotional story of our lives is condensed (the “unthought known”). In this text, metaphorically, and following Freud’s lesson, there are some unreadable paragraphs, or pages written in a language we are unable to translate because it is not ours, it is not our conscious language. The subject does not understand the language by which the book of his psychic life is written so such passages develop into utterances, precisely symptoms, which, far from being amended, ask for a transcription, a decoding (Pesare, 2017, p. 108).

Carrying an epiphanic truth related to the unconscious, the symptom forges a dialogue between the psychoanalytical field and a psycho-pedagogical ‘narratology’ (cfr. Demetrio, 2017).

If we consider the discourse of the subject as the concrete manifestation of a narrating identity – a singular and unrepeatable sort of

¹ Here the term ‘device’ (*dispositif*) refers to the Deleuzian theory of *subjectivation* which follows the Foucauldian lesson of a production of subjectivity into a device. (Deleuze, 1989; 2020)

² Scientific literature covering the multidisciplinary dialogue between the philosophy of education and the psychoanalytical field is referenced here following the approach to clinical pedagogy initiated by Riccardo Massa—work which has been continued through the years by his school. (Massa, 1992; Orsenigo & Ulivieri Stiozzi, 2018; Riva, 2000; 2004). Regarding pedagogical epistemology, the critical analysis carried by the *Umbildung* theory provides an educational perspective, placing attention on transformation during

the self-formation (cfr. Gennari, 2001; Sola, 2003; Semeraro, 2007).

³ Although in his first ‘structuralist’ phase (1950s) it appears that Lacan was giving more importance to the register of the Symbolic and all that concerns language, in the development of his theory, a mutual dependence on the three registers was reached, represented by the topological figure of the Borromean knot. Even the question of the symptom is involved in the development of his theory since, from a first symbolic perspective, it developed into reconsideration of its ontological status, attributing to it a certain amount of the Real (*symptom*) (De Luca Picione, 2020).

sense-construction – then it is necessary to have a hermeneutic approach to extend the reach of Care from its clinical setting to the transference that moves all subjectivation processes.

For the French psychoanalyst, “the self is structured as a symptom [...]” Assuming that the self, like the unconscious, has a linguistic structure, the language of the self is already spoken for, it is the language of an otherness that has entered us...the otherness becomes recognizable by virtue of the unconscious’ solicitations and provocations. (Fabbri, 2020, p.111).

As Maurizio Fabbri underlines, the first encounter with the otherness of the language is the assumption of an arbitrary linguistic structure, a code to be adopted in order to communicate with others. This self/other relationship is fundamental for a lingual being and it is the place for subjectivation. All these processes are characterized by a transformative motion. To ensure the subject is not a victim of its own symptom a non-normalizing perspective is required, one which would not put the subject in this shape but be inclined to look at all transference dynamics driving self-transformation.

The Symptom as an Event: Transformation in Self-formation

Looking back on the etymology of the word ‘symptom’ with ‘happening’ as its main characteristic and assuming the subject establishes itself as a symptom, each step of the subjectivation process has to be considered as guided internally by transformation:

The substantive σύμπτωμα...leads us to a semantic area connected to Heideggerean *Ereignis* – the existence intended as an ‘event’ – so that human subjectivity just *happens*...it is a continuous and lifelong project. Hence, the pedagogical subject is – metonymically – the

expression of its own symptom, presenting itself as a self-creation with its educational background containing its essence in continuous interpretation like a hermeneutic duty (Pesare, 2017, p. 12).

The subjectivation is far from the Aristotelian entelechy; it is not seen as a destiny that is already written, while the self-realization is not the final form of some potential identity draft, radically inscribed somewhere within the subject. Instead, it is intended as an *Umbildung* process made of what happens occasionally. (Sola, 2003) Assuming this, the ‘happening’ dimension of the symptom is related to the *truth* of the subject. In this way, following Michel Foucault’s thinking, the symptom can be considered a device, a *technology of the self*. In his studies on culture⁴, the French philosopher analyzed both the relationship between self-care and pedagogy, and the one between self-care and self-knowledge. The *technologies of the self*, according to Foucault, allow subjects – by themselves or with the help of others – to complete a certain number of operations on their bodies or souls enabling them to realize a concrete transformation with the aim of reaching a certain amount of “happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.” (Foucault, 1988, p.18)

According to Foucault, “there is no instilling of truth without an essential position of alterity: truth is never the same; there can only be truth in the form of another world, another life.” (Foucault, 2009, p. 311) The relationship between the subject and its truth postulates an alliance with its own symptom. The attention to language and speech also expects to find a *Subject supposed to know* for the establishment of a transference based on *desire*:

Therefore, for each subject exists ‘someone,’ Lacan says, that offers him the possibility to turn his symptom into a sense, provided that this someone is invested in a transference i.e. under the condition that he is ascribed the amount of

⁴ “My objective for more than twenty-five years has been to sketch out a history of the different ways humans develop knowledge about themselves in our

culture: economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine, and penology.” (Foucault, 1988, pp.17-18).

knowledge necessary for the subject to create the sense he is not able to decipher. Lacan defines this 'someone' as the *Subject supposed to know*, in other words, a subject that has some knowledge about the unconscious desire of the other (Pesare, 2017, p. 108).

Following both the Foucauldian image of the master and the Lacanian *Subject supposed to know* it is possible to enter a wider understanding of Care connected to the pedagogical transference realized in the relationship with otherness.

From Symptom to Sense: Desire, Ethics, Care

In pedagogy, Care assumes the Foucauldian master's position given he is the one who cares about the other caring for himself. Luigina Mortari underlines that to know oneself and to help the other know himself better is the main purpose of teaching, implying the ethical dimension of this mutual sharing where, in the application of language, it:

[...] is shaped in relation to reality and is not merely expressive. Therefore, it is crucial to assume an ethical responsibility of the word. We cannot ignore a word ethic in writing that contributes to self-care [...] (Mortari, 2020, p. 45).

Thus, it is in the act of caring that one finds the connection between clinic and pedagogy; the care is not to normalize, and the educational act is not to give a shape to the subject, but rather connected to the truth and the will of the subject. Better yet, the care is the interpreter of the individual's unconscious desire, with transference giving sense to the untranslatable symptom of the subject. It is in this way that the eroticism of teaching is implied: knowing how to make oneself the interpreter of the deficiency which is the desire to know.

The relationship is – even if in a dialogue – asymmetrical because the position of the master (as a *Subject supposed to know*) has the *àgalma* (*the object of desire*) which

becomes the vector for the transmission of knowledge:

[...] by the triggering of those communicative dynamics Lacan defines as *full word*, detaching the subject in the process of self-formation from a homologating dimension, thus presenting him with the possibility of accessing his most congenial vision of the world (Pesare, 2017, p.113).

The *full word* represents the opposite of the *empty word*, of the ritual derived from a (linguistic) ideological superstructure of reality. Here it is worthwhile referencing Slavoj Žižek's approach to symptom in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989):

Precisely because of such a notion of social 'excesses', Lacan pointed out that it was Marx who invented the symptom: Marx's great achievement was to demonstrate how all phenomena which appear to everyday bourgeois consciousness as simple deviations, contingent deformations and degenerations of the 'normal' functioning of society (economic crises, wars, and so on), and as such abolishable through amelioration of the system, are necessary products of the system itself- the points at which the 'truth', the immanent antagonistic character of the system, erupts. To 'identify with a symptom' means to recognize in the 'excesses', in the disruptions of the 'normal' way of things, the key offering us access to its true functioning. This is similar to Freud's view that the keys to the functioning of the human mind were dreams, slips of the tongue, and similar 'abnormal' phenomena (Žižek, 1989, p. 144).

In those same years, the Slovene philosopher uses the metaphor of the symptom not just to characterize the punk subculture and artistic avant-gardes in the period preceding Slovenia's independence, but also to strengthen the structure of his critique of ideology. He quotes (not by chance) the epigraph of the *Interpretation of Dreams*, "Flectere si nequeo Superos Acheronta movebo," (Aeneis, VII, 312), translating the second term of the chiasmus as "moving the Underground." (Žižek, 2005, p. XIII). The Virgilian hexameter becomes here the emblem of the critique to ideology: it decomposes and reinterprets the Latin line,

the Virgilian *Superos* (Gods, the Law), in a laic context corresponding to ideology, thus, in the dominant discourse. The murky infernal muds that in *Traumdeutung* represent the free will of the unconscious and the repression that resurfaces in the oneiric dimension, are defined here as the *Underground*: a terrain for desire's revenge.

And the subjectivation? Simply said: the first narration – the speech of a reformed thought driven by empathy – is able to free the subject from all trauma, inferences, and repressions that reduce the self into a symptom. The other, against a narration of the crisis, risks exposing it to violent and humiliating processes, reminding it of rituals in the past... Rituals without values risk putting themselves in an extra-linguistic and extra-cultural area in which Lacan places *jouissance*, but *jouissance* tends toward homeostasis not transformation or evolution! (Fabbri, 2020, p. 118).

'Enjoyment' is the translation of *jouissance* which in Lacanian theory is *beyond the pleasure principle*. It disregards the *desire* that, in contrast to the homeostasis produced by enjoyment, propels the *Selbstbildung* (self-formation) process.

Desire is the word that binds Care to Ethics—an ethics which differs from moral judgment and which does not overlap with the *Highest Good* (defined by Lacan as a bourgeois dream). Nevertheless, it resembles an “ethical-pedagogical dimension where the subject assumes desire as his most cherished possession, as the most original truth about his life” (Pesare, 2017, p. 122).

“Have you acted in accordance with your desire?”⁵ Lacan asks. The symptom, therefore, can be considered a device capable of telling something else, something more, something that comes close to the subject's truth. The symptom is a shaky, restless, heterogeneous cornerstone of a subject who is inevitably crossed out, who – paraphrasing Lacan and with respect to Descartes – thinks of where he is not and *is* where he does not

think. For this reason, the ethical stance is a meeting of words where the subject exists through the unconscious which springs up the moment the subject uses language, where it encounters *the otherness*, and the urgency of his own truth is always the first question. Embracing this perspective, the subject is gifted the symptom, “not to abandon him with his suffering, but to decode the message in the bottle of his irreducible peculiarity.” (Pesare, 2017, p.128)

For this reason, encounters like these are based on transference, where the signifiers' analysis is seen as a symbolization process in which to reinterpret the past with new meanings. It is from the future of the interpretation that the understanding of the past arrives (*après-coup*), and transference is a necessary illusion by which some truth is produced; this is the meaning of a symptom. Something that resists symbolization exists and here the question is drafted. As previously stated, in the first phase of his theory, Lacan was mostly influenced by Structuralism, but he dedicated more attention to the register of the Real as his thinking developed (Lacan, 1976, 2005). It is worthwhile to remember, when discussing ontology, that Lacan emphasizes that the symptom is a signifier carrying a certain amount of *jouis-sence*. The *symptom* (spelled with an 'h' and 'e') guarantees the existence of our essence in the world:

In other words, symptom is the way we - the subjects - 'avoid madness', the way we 'choose something (the symptom-formation) instead of nothing (radical psychotic autism, the destruction of the symbolic universe)' through the binding of our enjoyment to a certain signifying (Žižek, 1989, p. 81).

Thus, in terms of self-formation, recognition of a symptom is considered a gift. By identifying with a symptom, the subject gains personal perspective about his particular position in the Real of the world. Therefore,

⁵ “Avez-vous agi conformément au désir qui vous habite?”, original French quote. Seminar VII is

dedicated to ethics in the psychoanalytical field (Lacan, 1986).

the act of caring should move in this
courageous direction.

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Understanding relations: contexts and meanings of psychological work in Residential Child Care Institutions.

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Abstract

This article aims at taking a look at the psychologist's role in juvenile community centres. There are different kinds of Residential Child Care Centres and one constant - as to them - is represented by the psychologist, an important and significant figure in all of the centres aiming at taking in minors, at understanding their needs and at identifying and spotting their skills. Every day, each meeting is given up to the laborious construction of a sense of sharing, that shouldn't neglect or overlook and demean the minor, that shouldn't make even the peculiar importance of the community centre, that shouldn't standardize all the good practices that make diversity a richness.

This is the programmatic aim of each juvenile reception center, but, in everyday's routines, we have to take account of situations like "chaos", "suffering", "exhaustion", "bother", "aggressiveness", equally experienced by all the ones who are involved in the centre's life.

These conflicts, in a group context, have to be identified, to be made clear, to be provided of significance. As stated by Jaques (1989), only through the engagement of all the members in an analysis of the implicit rules that are related to the work structure/organization, it's possible to activate a development process (*working through*) of the worries and anxiety tinged with the functions and the objectives of the belonging social institution. *Burnout*, related to an individual or a work group, represents in this case a symptom that can't be attributable to any individual or group psychopathology, but it's a valuable and unequivocal sign of the fact that the centre is "ill" (Giunta et al., 2010).

Keywords: *Neglect, Disfunctional Behaviour, Make Sense, Multilevel Work*

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Residential Child Care Institution work with and for the minor

“To identify” and “to make sense” are prerogative actions of each of the professional figures involved in a community centre’s life, but, at the end, they are the psychologists’ main task (Salvatore, Venuleo, 2008; De Luca Picione, Valsiner, 2017), as to their education and status, as they live, though in part, the community centre life, but they are also the main task of anyone who can “distance himself/herself” in order to be able to “observe”; this is, anyway, an observation that is never external and impartial or objective. A psychologist is part of the observed system, he/she influences it just through his/her presence and can’t be aware of all the effects caused by his/her presence (Von Foerster, 1987).

In and with the constant awareness of the fact that “any event in a group involves somehow all the participators and alters the perceptive vision or field, by setting off other complex changes” (Di Maria, Lo Verso, 1995), the team time becomes, too, a “mental place” where it is especially thinkable for all the participators that they experience the residential centre in all of its multiple levels and standards, included therefore the institutional and political ones (Giunta et al., 2010).

The search for the meaning of what happens and comes about begins with the attempt by the psychologist to have clear what are the levels involved: from the ones defined and determined by Bronfenbrenner (microsystem, mesosystem, esosystem and macrosystem) (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), pursuing then with the intraindividual levels, like for example, the “Self” levels proposed by Berne (Adult Self, Parent Self, Child Self) (Berne, 2000) or, more, making a reference to other systemic value levels, like the ones proposed in the Coordinated Management of the Meanings Theory (Cronen, Johnson e Lannamann, 1983); according to it the construction of meanings occurs within a ranking of significant contexts (content, linguistic act/action, episode/event, relation between

communicating subjects, inner biography, cultural patterns), where the highest level confers importance to the lowest one, but in a biunivocal function that, at any time, allows to something that isn’t important, to a detail, to an apparently insignificant action, to revolutionize a hierarchy (Salvatore, Valsiner, 2014; Valsiner, 2005).

This “complexity”, in which each mind is “immersed”, is often “managed “by each person through the “automatic/ involuntary method “(Le Doux, 1995): many of the choices of a human being take place unconsciously. Without this healthy carelessness we would get lost in many considerations about the way we should proceed, without preconceptions we would stop, each time, and consider the events as if they were new and this, in our speed daily routine, isn’t useful.

However, we know what can happen with the “automatism”: an automatic pilot leads us to destination allowing to close our eyes, we can’t even look at the way. But how many things get lost by not looking at the way? What happens if we lose experience as to the use of gearshift and pedals? What accidents can happen if the automatic pilot is programmed for the usual way, while this one- because of something- has changed?

So, it could be interesting to try to investigate some implicits, and talk about the moments when in a community center this investigation activity is more intense and becomes a priority.

The social worker, the community centre supervisor, the tutors, the psychologist participate in the team meetings in the centre; the psychologist tries to simplify what is defined as “ a meeting between implicits “, allowing, for example, to explain the challenging and aggressive behaviour of a child(with his/her need to strain the resistance of the adult who is taking care of him/her, to act out possible imitative behaviours of the affection figures, to react to his/her inadequacy and inferiority feeling by taking on a strong position), as to the workers ‘ reactions (by highlighting the emotional experience, the intolerable and denied

thoughts, all of those previous experiences that lead and/or could lead, automatically, an adult response.

The reception of a minor and the support to his/her development goes through an important moment: the one of the “work” with the minors’ families. It is necessary to point out that from the perspective of the “institutional mandate”, it isn’t the centre staff that take responsibility for the family of the minors living in the reception centre. But it’s evident that the constant contact with this group of adults, real and concrete when they come and visit the minors (if there isn’t any interdiction by the competent court) represents an occasion to meet all the range of habits, needs, expectations and experiences of these families, it’s fundamental the dialogue with them.

“Building” a good relation with the family of the minor is very important for a positive outcome of a planning activity; however, it’s obvious that it’s difficult to reach a good mutual understanding with adults who have plenty of reasons to show themselves unwilling. These relations, very often, begin and develop on the basis of a natural, double register that, in these contexts, reaches the paroxysm and is bursting: as stated by Erving Goffman in his dramaturgy pattern of social interaction (1959), each of us when dealing with others, “lets settle in in the own living room” that is in the entertainment room, so that we can show our best aspect (Moore, Jasper, Gillespie, 2011). In the same way, in the best case scenario, the minors’ families deal with the centre workers (or only with some of them), “by wearing their Sunday best”. Sometimes, this doesn’t even happen, but we won’t dwell on these situations in this article.

So, the meeting with the minors’ families in the centre begins and develops on the basis of this game, easy to be understood, but not so easy and simple to be managed. Once more, in fact, the psychologist has to regard many levels: the relation family- psychologist, the relation family- educators, the relation family- minors. But remarks have to be done as to all of the triads that can be composed

alternately in a daily setting: psychologist-educationalist(trainer)- family, family-minor- psychologist, educationalist-minor-family, etc. Each configuration represents a context of actions that, inevitably, produces meanings and, consequently, messages for each other diad or triad; concretely, a “confrontation” between the minors’ parents and the psychologist related to, for example, an event that involved an educationalist in which effectively (and with the awareness of the “living room game” of Goffman) it’s tried to treat a meaning for the event, should take account of the manipulative sizes of each participant in the interaction(firstly, psychologist and family) and of the effects on the one who is present at the interaction or becomes aware of it(educationalists and minors).

The attention paid to these procedures represents only the management of the “pragmatic effects” of communication. The other level, crucial and closer to the meaning of an implicit that we want to speak about here is linked to, once again, the remark about meanings.

As to Goffman, attention should be given to the other rooms (with their mess, filth, organization, richness/wealth) and to anything that every person has chosen to show in his/her living room, too; it’s always a room that needs to be furnished, that should be clean and that, therefore, gives information about what anyone thinks or means to be the “entertainment room”.

The position of a psychologist could be the one of accepting a collaboration attempt or a collaboration simulation as the capacity to put the habits in the centre above his/her own demands. If we take into account that the culture of many families is different from the centre rules, even only the attempt of simulating an adjustment involves something that is very important and, in our opinion, this attempt is very respectable. But it isn’t sure that the other “partners” “get the reception by the psychologist as an evidence of respect, on the contrary, it happens that, in this attempt, families think that they can manage the relationship. This is a crucial point: it

represents the moment when the psychologist is allowed to peek in other rooms. So inappropriate requests come, less friendly tones come to light, the actions in the center and/ or the behaviour of the own children are criticized more and more frankly. Every criticism or disapproval, every menace, every “received insult”, tells us in a significant way the world of a family and the relation with the authority: in the best case scenario a complaint can be an event that allows to access memories, similar events belonging to the past, in which the family members faced critical phases, were in difficulties, felt emotions. Always in the best case scenario a patient listening, respect and appreciation for every effort to support the centre rules allow to create a bond of confidence that, sometimes, gives the psychologist the opportunity to “intercept” all the stories about the parenting of these families: “the child I was, the models I carried out, what kind of parent I became, how I played this role together with my partner...”. It’s essential not to misunderstand it. It isn’t described the attempt to build a psychotherapeutic way: it’s about- always- several “bursts/ flashes”, short moments (visiting hours when the psychologist is present at the end of these hours or a phone call between psychologist and family that takes place on request by an operator). So, the community centre tries to “open” spaces, but hardly builds a frequency, a rate, that are necessary to structure a fully entitled responsibility. As it was said before, it’s about taking advantage of these moments, when the effort or difficulty consists of enlarging what is useful, by trying to let apart resentment, criticisms and manipulations or conditionings. All of these exist, annoy, irritate, but they can become a “bottom noise”. The “Moiré” effect allows to affirm that, as an “encounter “between two sounds with a different frequency will produce a “beat”, a “third sound”, in the same way in a meeting between us and our conversation partner there will be resonance and there will be a “beat”: it means that we get the opportunity to create a “new frequency”, a cycle, in which the shifts (the mutual

heaviness) represent a setting, while the resonance is what we want to let appear. They are, as stated before, moments, intense moments in which, sometimes, it’s possible to say even only a word that could have some effects on reports full of denial, minimizing, extreme rejection as to the possible abuse and damage caused to the own children. What we write could even sound pretentious, as it suggests the idea that a moment can produce a change that is often difficult to be achieved during long periods by the Services responsible for working with families, so it’s always useful to specify.

The position of the ones who work in a community center in relation to the families of the minors living in the centre is a position of major tertiary. Even if there’s a judgement by the operators, the principal objective isn’t the one to give evidence of the importance of the adults’ parenting: the family perceives this difference in proportion to the relationship with other colleagues working for other Services and that allows people to be less on the defensive. Sometimes the “space” of confrontation with the people working in the centre and, above all, with the psychologists, is felt by families as a border area, it’s something half-way between a stage, where they can play the role of the good parent or the one of the upset parent or, moreover, the one of the persecuted parent, and a confessional, where he/she can tell what he/she is afraid of, where he/she can complain about what is wrong, in his/her opinion, in the centre, where he /she can even get angry or rant.

Here appears the well-known “opportunity window”, the glimmer, the moment in which the parent is enlightened by twilight: it isn’t the daylight anymore, but it hasn’t come the night yet.

The Mask of the actor is on his face, but it isn’t fully tight or relevant, so it’s possible to catch sight of his mouth and of his clenched teeth: it’s the moment in which it’s possible to make use of the Moiré effect. All the emotions and thoughts that are available to an adult, together with the “things” that a psychologist puts (always as to emotions and thoughts) allow to let appear a third thought, a third

emotion. It rarely happens that denied thoughts and emotions, too painful, too unpleasant appear and can be at disposal of consciousness. The time necessary in order to think over the appeared emotion, the new idea (“maybe I was wrong”) is limited; the closure is sudden, the Freudian game of repression is quick. Then the task consists in marking the moment, that is in agreeing that a doubt existed, even for a moment. This sign is what we try to offer to the Services colleagues who deal with evaluating and reconstructing the competences of a family, that, always in the best case scenario, is engaged in a reconstruction project as to balances and virtues, essential in order to allow the return of their children. In a certain way, moreover, the family, when they “meet” the centre, could be intended as a particular group that aims to operate, when the moments and circumstances vary, according to the basic assumptions hypothesized by Bion (1961, 1971). So, a psychologist, when he/she puts his/her marks and when he/she provides his/her references, will act with awareness of the fact that if a family system sees the centre as a hostile and opposing element, then the assumption attack-escape will be the consequence (Guénoun, Attigui, 2020); He/she could, that is, hope that a new situation will lead to the satisfaction of his/her needs (Messianic hope) or follow the unconscious conviction according to the fact that someone could arrange for the satisfaction of his/her needs and wishes according to the basic assumption of dependency.

Clinical exemplifying: the moment in which the treatment takes shape

This is the story of Sara (a nine years old girl), Giacomo (a seven years old boy), Matteo (a five years old boy) and Giuseppe (a eighteen months old little boy), all minors received in the centre because their mother, just separated and involved in a new relationship, couldn't take care of her children and commended them to her own mother, who, then- as she was in difficulties as to the care of her

grandchildren- asked for the social work's help and accepted the introduction of the children to the community centre. Telling this story is very important because the introduction of these children to the centre soon set in motion such a lot of critical situations that lead the involved professionals to very different positions and points of view. It didn't seem like being in front of minors who had known and suffered a total emotional lack or abandonment/neglect, it didn't seem like being in front of a high and extreme sanitary decay, nor at least in front of a socioeconomic deprivation. These children showed- outwardly- evident signs of a lack of rules and regulation; moreover, psychomotor flutter and aggressiveness were omnipresent in their conduct. The dominant feature of these children was a game activity characterized by a constant and over the top agitation. This family unit was already known to the social work services and the school they attended had given information about problems related to the personal hygiene of the children (sometimes, they presented a certain rankness and smelliness), but especially related to bruises on their body (it wasn't ever possible to “identify” the origin of those bruises). Actually, writings show a connection between hyperactivity, aggressiveness, extreme reactions and several forms of mistreatment or abuse (Patros, Alderson, Kasper, Tarle, Lea, Hudec, 2016; Johnston, Mash, 2001), but it's difficult to link up a sign or several signs and an objective and defined situation of mistreatment. In the centre the operators interacted with children whose management was extremely difficult and who, above all, had difficulty as to the sharing of the same spaces. Especially the eldest of these brothers and sisters, as pointed before, showed aggressiveness, in its great disfunctionality, when they played games. The opportunity to let- or don't let- the children live together in the same centre became a matter that was discussed by the centre team, by the centre professionals and the involved services. Sometimes the interventions originate with regard to the available resources, so the fact of counting, in

this specific case, on a structure composed of three different flats, but next to each other, lead to consider the possibility to separate these children: this represented the first difficult moment, as the proximity of the spaces didn't preserve, in someone's opinion, from the separation trauma. But the intervention moved towards the placement in different flats: Sara, Matteo and Giuseppe stayed together, even if in different rooms, in the centre with the youngest of their brothers (especially in view of the age of Matteo and Giuseppe, who were together in the same room), while Giacomo was placed in the flat next door, together with his peers. This decision, with regards to implicits, was possible only after team debates in which were involved the psychologists working in the centre, the social worker, the manager and the educators who communicated their opinion in reference to the principle that expresses that "brothers and sisters couldn't be separated", but, too, and especially working on their own resonances, on their being brothers and sisters, on their being parents of little brothers and sisters and, moreover, concentrating on the dynamics existing "inside" the specific target group (this happened on a level with the inner team, as the debate, according to the procedure, happened with the colleagues of the Town Social Services, of the Family Clinic and of the Pediatric Neuropsychiatry). It was important to work on "prejudices", on "implicits", because we could understand that it's our personal experience that often leads our actions, the "ethical" principle, the "common sense", that, even if they are often fundamental, in definite situations, can lead to not enough gauged actions.

In the immediate situation, the effects of that choice were meaningful as to the separation; this clearly happened in fact only during some moments of the day, for example, at breakfast time, when the children went to bed or learned, but they were then often involved in default common activities inside the centre (workshop and leisure/recreational activities, for example). The fact that they could experience important moments of the

everyday reality without their brothers or sisters, let Sara and Giacomo (especially) seize the opportunity to experience the relation to each other in a different way: anyhow, the stage was different. They weren't at school, they weren't at home. The contact with other children and the experience of playing games and sharing with other children in a community centre allowed them to acquire basic limits, that represented something new, a great difference compared with the previous situation, characterized by the absence of bulkheads: the control size seemed to be completely absent. When the game situation during the first month of their introduction in the centre was observed, it was possible to spot, as above-mentioned, a total absence of the idea of limit: any game became soon an occasion to run, push, shout, but not in a conflict situation, rather in a mood of uncontrollable cheerfulness, of almost hysteric laughter, broken only by someone's crying that hurt himself/herself. Behaviour and emotions' regulation was actually absent. So, during the following months, the work with these brothers and sisters consisted in alternating "loneliness" experiences (shared with other children living in the centre) and game experiences with their brothers; this game was, however, structured and shared with the educators, so that the children could acquire rules and limits. In fact, the regulation capacity and ability that they earned in peer situations, but not with their brothers, was scarcely "exported" to the game situation in which the brothers were involved and where the usual ways, without the presence of an adult, immediately overcame any kind of new learning.

This happened in concert with the work carried on by the team in relation to all of the other contexts which the children belonged to, above all the context of their family. Their parents became soon the root of the professionals' (working in the centre) daily work.

Their mother, after a short living together time with her new partner, for her children own good decided to live again with her husband. The couple's pressing on the centre

and firstly on the Social Work became something tiresome. These two adults' manners, in fact, gave the opportunity to understand the mode, expressed during the game, of the brothers: there wasn't the concept of limit. The inclination to "go over the edge" was expressed through different conduits: the way of expressing these ones, the way of managing the relationships with the others, the physical appearance. The manner marked more the mother than the father but, together, the couple shared the same operation, and proposed to their conversation partners a change of roles, the father often showed a demure behaviour and was inclined to stay in the background, but was able to "perform" like his wife, who was "overflowing".

The case description, necessarily, won't be exhaustive and will focus only on some parts that are considered important in order to describe the work done with these parents.

The intervention on the couple, acted out by more Services, among them the centre psychologists, was necessary just for the constant attempts by the parents to turn upside down any rules, any limit of meeting set by the centre where their children lived. And not only this, because every visit became an occasion to break, once more, any behavioral order that had been given before: for example, from the presents for their children (food, in an exaggerated amount and quantity and that weren't "appropriate" as to a balanced diet: the children were all overweight, like their parents) to the messages written to them (all of these messages were related to an immediate and unreal release, to - in the same way- an unreal description of the beautiful things the children would find at home and of the changes that had made their bedroom so lovely). It's important and necessary to specify that the work wasn't done during a short period of time and that the children lived in the centre for over two years. The first step of the intervention with the parents consisted in defining- strictly- the limits: regard and respect of visiting hours, necessity of following instructions as to specific conducts, importance of no meeting the children in

certain places, total prohibition of going to the school attended by the children (this was a very problematic context, as the parents saw it as a hostile and adverse place). This action related to the defining of limits was a great challenge because, especially during the first months, the attacks by this couple of parents were many and violent. The mediation work done together with the educators of the centre was remarkable, because the educators were the ones who suffered the most of the pressing consequences: their action was always and constantly disqualified (for example, during the visits, they let remark the minimal smear in the clothes rather than scratches or bruises). The burden of this situation (for the operators) consisted especially in the assault against the operators rather than in the way the parents accused them (in specific moments of the relation with the operators): the professional was denigrated, made feel guilty, constantly assailed during the visits and, too, when he/she was seen outside of the centre, rather than in places where he/she was met. Once again, there wasn't any "limit". In the meanwhile, the professionals worked in order to make the parents aware of the necessity of going to the family clinic (this was another place experienced in an anxious way, as evaluation and judging place). The relation to the Services was important for the centre professionals and also for the parents. It was clear this time for the centre, more than in any other moment, that the constant contact with the Services and the construction of a coherent and shared relation proposal to give to the pair would have been fundamental. As to the parents, in fact, the Town Social Service, represented by a social worker in particular, was seen as a comfortable place, therefore subject to an immoderate and symbiotic relation proposal, that saw especially the mother in search of kindness, sympathy and help, but also as a source of problems (the introduction to the centre was proposed by the social worker), so that there was a cautious size, combined with denigrating and sometimes intimidating manners.

On the contrary, the proposal of going to a family clinic, posed as a service that allowed to get help as they were a pair who had experienced difficult times (among them a separation), was totally rejected because they feared the appraisal and the husband didn't accept the idea of facing the infidelity and abandonment of his spouse. It isn't necessary to put in a word to explain that these manners, in general going overboard and fluctuating, together with all of the critical phases and the experiences related to the pair relationship, fell upon their children, "activating" them, overexciting them, troubling and worrying them.

That tertiary position, that could be ascribed to the centre, allowed to the professionals to get close-gradually- the two adults: the coherence of the relation proposal and the constant willingness towards the "confrontation", despite the steady censure of many procedures that were considered disfunctional, allowed the pair to acknowledge the centre, especially the psychologists (seen and experienced in a "more tertiary" position compared with the educators, seen as "competitors", as an available "comparison" for their children) as conversation partners who try to open up to. The visits, in fact, began to become that small stage where, especially the children's mother, tried to stage the role of the good mother, able to accept advices, concentrating hard on involving her husband in activities to be shared with their children. During these visits, mainly at the beginning, the parents showed a disfunctional behaviour, not only as to the contents (inappropriate messages and texts, "exaggerated" presents), but as to the manners, too: the father sat in a corner of the room, the mother on the other side. There wasn't any interaction between the two adults. What stared in the face was their distance: during the visits, each of them concentrated on some of their children singly (even if it was possible to spot stable "diads/duos": mother/Sara, father/ Giacomo), so that the visits or meetings became a "procession" of the children from one side to the other of the room (the spouse always chose to sit far the one

from the other). Scenes in which the parents drew to them all their children together, carrying on any kind of conversation or just sharing a moment of affection, were absent.

These manners, in certain situations, became a moment of debate with the parents, who were given instructions, during a visit, to "engage" their children in a different way. For example, it was suggested not to attack Matteo, when the "management" of her son was too difficult. She, actually, had to manage Matteo and Giuseppe, the youngest of her children, at the same time and the eldest daughter, who always sat next to her and was involved in a constant chit-chat with her mother, a real monologue, as the mother wasn't able to give her leeway because of the fact that she was quite wrapped up with her littlest children. It was suggested to the mother not to get angry with Matteo, but especially to get involved her husband, always standing by on the other side of the room, in silence, his second-born child next to him. The acceptance of the suggestion allowed us, first of all, to verify how the mother tried to involve her husband and so, to verify the interaction of the pair and the coordinated management of their children. In the meanwhile, every attempt became a concrete opportunity to act, in order to get a further feedback, able to gauge opportunely, at the right time, the couple interaction, at least during the visits.

The possibility to create a trust relationship, based on the fact that the pair had perceived the real, concrete intention to help by the centre professionals, allowed to try to see a gleam as to other critical situations: the carelessness experienced by the children before their settling in at the centre, the bruises noticed by their teachers, the problems of the spouse. There was an attempt to talk about these themes, to reflect in order to, then, go into the problem in more depth in the family clinic. It would be nice to tell about a positive and coherent progression, but unfortunately it wasn't the case. As it often happens, the couple relationship had its ups and downs and it showed all the typical daily life things: mourning, problems at work,

critical situations experienced by the children, tiredness showed by the operators and so on. The greatest conquest was the fact that the parents at the end came out with the availability to cooperate and to bring themselves into question. This wasn't enough to change the pair working, but it allowed to make them more "permeable" as to an external intervention and action and to understand, anyway, how inappropriate some manners were (for example, the one to go to school an hour before school finished, staying in front of the main entrance and being at loggerheads- at the end- with the school staff). Finally, the children could go back home, also thanks to the start of a House Education Service: it was clear to the operators that it was important to carry on working on the concept of border and respect of the limits (De Luca Picione, 2017).

Conclusion

The mandate of any structure that hosts a minor is, consists in "working in order to make itself unnecessary". The centre should be a passage place, a moment in the minors' and family life, a temporary support in a life path that must always aim for autonomy. It doesn't mean this is always easy or possible. The possibility to accomplish this important mission has to do with the inevitable engagement of the operators and, in particular, of the psychologist with his/her work on more fronts and at different levels: the psychologist has to meet with families, operators, minors, services, keeping and creating thinking and maneuver "spaces" to make the change first thinkable and then real. The families of origin are often multi-problematic but they always represent an essential element as to working with minors, when the children go back home and when different measures -as to the protection of the minor- are adopted. Working with the family of origin means allowing to the minor to enrich his/ her own emotional and relation experience, by acknowledging disvalue and dysfunctionality

elements, too; it means, anyway, to create a history made of continuity in our guests' life. Doing this it's at least necessary to give up a univocal view and to question our professional function and us as to our prejudices and the involved levels. Our task consists in receiving and proposing the complexity that is intrinsic to every relationship. Only acting this way we can show by our actions, better than with our words, that change is possible and that we can anyway try to look for an integration with functional and positive elements of the own family history.

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Community Clinical Psychology and its inclusion in the integrated scientific paradigms in the field of prevention at the community level

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Abstract

Clinical Psychology in the Community has been and is the springboard for research and understanding of human behaviors of mental distress in conjunction with the environment. Drug abuse has matured the need to establish prevention structures in the community in various countries. The experience of the Psychosocial Health Prevention project, as a philosophy and practice in Greece through an institutional framework can be a trigger for scientific dialogue and awareness raising of local authorities in other countries as well, as people today are suffering from the psychological consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic of health.

Key words: *Clinical Psychology in the Community, Prevention, Institutional framework*

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Introduction

The protection of public health and intervention in mental illness has always been the goal and the challenge of established mental health structures. In this context, the Community constitutes the joint field of action of community clinical psychology and health psychology.

The commitment of these two applied scientific fields is structured through the following sectors: raising public awareness on mental health problems with the aim of preventing disorders, identifying groups at risk, diagnosing and treating interventions. Consequently, the role of mental health professionals, who working in an institutional setting is multidimensional, not only because it covers the full range of activities of social clinical work, but also because it needs to “listen” to the needs of the community. These needs change when the community functions as an open system that is in constant interaction with its wider social context.

Community Clinical Psychology is a development and combines two branches of psychology. It is based on the principles of community psychology and clinical psychology. Its principles seem to resemble those of the clinic as an independent discipline. Indeed, similarities are observed in that, as mentioned, this approach is based on the principles of the two containers. But there are significant differences, which make the distinction between the two branches more obvious. Clinical psychology focuses on the individual, while clinical community psychology focuses on the relationship between the individual and the community. Therefore, it is not proposed to study the individual or social structures separately, on the contrary, study the interaction and the circular relationship between these two levels (Francescato, Tomai, Ghirelli, 2002).

With the most recent contributions, by authors (Gelli, Mannarini, 2014), much value is given to the role of conscious and unconscious emotions, considered as determinants of individual and social life. The psychodynamic vision brings out the possibility of greater

understanding in the process of affective symbolization (Carli, Paniccia, Giovagnoli, Carbone, & Bucci, 2015).

Affective symbolization, although not accessible to the conscience, can be traced and decoded in the stories of the inhabitants, in the behaviors, in the values that coexist, in the way in which they relate. It consists of the way in which local culture can be recognized and understood. (Carli & Paniccia, 2005; Carli & Giovagnoli, 2011). With the most recent contributions, by authors (Gelli, Mannarini, 2014), much value is given to the role of conscious and unconscious emotions, considered as determinants of individual and social life. (Langher, Marchini, Brandimarte, Giacchetta, Caputo, 2019; Langher, Caputo, Brandimarte, Giacchetta, Grippo, Nannini, 2019).

Clinical Psychology is a sector of psychology, in which the subjects are the explanation, understanding, interpretation and reorganization of malfunctioning or pathological, individual and interpersonal mental processes, together with their behavioral and psychobiological correlates.

The clinical term deriving from the Greek word *clinis* = bed, refers to the orientation of Clinical Psychology for the treatment of mental health but does not end there.

Clinical psychology combines science, theory and practice both in order to understand, predict and alleviate disability and discomfort and in order to promote human adaptation and personal development. It focuses on the intellectual, emotional, biological, psychological, social, and behavioral aspects of human functioning throughout the life span, in various cultures and at all social and economical levels (American Psychological Association in Division 12 Clinical Psychology).

The sector is interested in scientific and educational training in sectors with scientific disciplinary skills that consider self-representations, intrapsychic processes and interpersonal relationships (family and group) also from a psychodynamic point of view (the relational mind, the primacy of emotionality, the irruption of unconscious mechanisms). It

also focuses on the acquisition of skills related to the application of this knowledge, in the analysis and treatment of mental illness and psychopathology.

The sector also includes research on study methods and intervention techniques which, in the various operational models (individual, relational, family and group), characterize the clinical applications of psychology in different areas (people, groups, systems) to solve problems.

According to APA:

“Clinical psychology is the psychological specialty that provides continuing and comprehensive mental and behavioral health care for individuals and families; consultation to agencies and communities; training, education and supervision; and research-based practice. It is a specialty in breadth - one that is broadly inclusive of severe psychopathology - and marked by comprehensiveness and integration of knowledge and skill from a broad array of disciplines within and outside of psychology proper. The scope of clinical psychology encounters all ages, multiple diversities and varied systems.

The individual in the context

The articulation between the individual and collective sphere in the context of community relations connotes the specific object of study of community psychology. It constitutes of an area of study, research and professional interventions that focuses on people and groups within the socio-cultural, economic, organizational and territorial contexts in which they live and with which they interact continuously.

Community psychology or psychology of community is not limited to the study of social relations, but also has the objective of transforming them through the development of processes of empowerment of the individual and the collectivity.

Recognizing the tradition of clinical psychology, it explicitly underlines the fact that many of the problems that people face do not derive only from intrapsychic dynamics,

but from the difficulties of the community and its systems of interaction and service to the citizen. Therefore, the need to consider jointly the personal and social dimensions of human experience is highlighted in the assumption that psychological processes are strictly interconnected with social ones. (Francescato, Tomai, Ghirelli, 2017)

Clinical community psychology overcomes the individualistic and intrapsychic view that has long been prevailed in the psychological sciences and seeks full meaning explanations and forms of intervention in the relationship between social and individual.

Therefore, it is not proposed to study the individual or social structures separately, but rather to study the interaction and the circular relationship between these two levels (Francescato D., Tomai M., Ghirelli G., 2017).

Community clinical psychology studies divisions in society and seeks to overcome the phenomena of maladaptation and malfunction. It focuses not only on the individual, but on the individual within the system and social services. It focuses on the prosperity and development of the system so that it is more open to the general population. Its goal is for people to treat something with respect, which gradually leads to the mutual satisfaction of the individual and the system. Among the subjects, all available resources are identified, which operate safely and provide security to the individual.

The scientific and educational approach in this field of Community Psychology is oriented towards the formation of a culture of confrontation and dialogue between different theoretical models, with the aim of listening to mental illnesses, understanding mental discomfort and the clinical and interpersonal meaning between the individual and the social web and provides specialized skills for intervention at multiple levels (individual, social and organizational) in professional areas of interest.

The training specifically aims at acquiring skills for a careful psychosocial analysis of needs (individual and collective), the ability to read processes in the interface between

individual and socio-contextual aspects and the ability to design interventions aimed at the development of individual and socio-organizational.

The practical principles of its implementation include:

- Accompanying social groups and individuals in search of well-being
- Accompanying social groups and individuals in search of well-being
- Support for community structures to encourage participation
- Individual, social, community empowerment
- The defense of human and cultural diversity
- Contribute to transformation and social change.
- Combating discrimination against individuals and / or groups

Among the subjects of Community Clinical Psychology are identified all available resources, which operate safely and provide security to the individual and promote his well-being and health as primary things that guarantee access to active participation in community life. The guidelines and objectives of Community Clinical Psychology are:

- A holistic view of health as a follow-up that also refers to psychological balance (WHO The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion).
- The promotion of psychosocial health which is any organized activity and which aims to create the appropriate conditions for the achievement and protection of health, prosperity and quality of life.
- The content of "health promotion" is broad, as it includes efforts to change behavior (when associated with risk factors), efforts to reinforce "healthy" habits, and to promote policies or actions in the community in general, or at the emotional social level. (Menegheri M., 2005) Not only is he interested in the

absence of illness, but he wants to create high levels of mental well-being. Focus on prevention at Community level.

- Identification of protective factors (family, school, community).
- Active attitude: Do not wait for the annoyance to appear.
- Needs identification: Through epidemiological studies.

In order to guarantee a good quality of the service and the system, community clinical psychology pays great attention to research. In particular, the emphasis is placed on all the phases that affect the correct functioning of the system. (Tsamparli, A., Kounenou, K. 2013) The phases can be distinguished: in the pre-planning, planning and evaluation phase. Pre-planning relies heavily on research, review of available resources and consideration of previous experience. Planning is based on good organization so that services are flexible, easily accessible, at the service of all and avoiding incidents of marginalization and divergence. Finally, the objectives are reviewed in the evaluation phase, if alternatives have been achieved and proposed.

Community Clinical Psychology is closely related to the objectives of Prevention practice with an emphasis on primary prevention. In particular, he does not passively anticipate the onset of the disease, but tries to prevent it.

The Psychosocial Health Prevention project, as a philosophy and practice in Greece through an institutional framework

The concept of prevention has evolved significantly in recent decades, today we speak of psychosocial health promotion or public health (Clark, 1967) states that prevention is about preventing a pathological condition by taking all necessary measures to limit the likelihood of disease (Bower, 1969) views prevention as any type of psychological and social intervention that promotes or improves emotional functioning or reduces

the incidence and prevalence of disease in the general population. (Goldstone, 1977) states that prevention is a set of activities aimed specifically at identifying vulnerable groups at high risk and for which measures can be taken to avoid disturbances.

We can say briefly that Prevention as a descriptive definition refers to all actions intended to identify, limit and eliminate all the causes that contribute to the appearance of a phenomenon (risk reduction). Furthermore, it has been shown that when the community is aware of psychosocial problems, it engages in the use of institutions and services, in strengthening collaborative networks, in providing creative expression and awareness-raising opportunities for its members and in collective participation in the improvement of conditions of life. This promotes networking and social cohesion, factors that act as protectors for members of a community and help address current challenges.

A great phenomenon that appealed to the Prevention sector with the main implication of the science of Clinical and Community Psychology at the European level was initially the phenomenon of drug addiction. The study of the problem of drug addiction at the national level and the need to provide valid information were the starting points for promoting the Prevention and Promotion of Psychosocial Health at the national level. Universities, local governments, University Research Centers, were the forerunners of a long path in the research and implementation of prevention at the community level with the support of various scientists and local organizations.

We are in the eighties where anthropocentrism presented itself as a main feature of Europe and as a value in scientific orientations.. The science of Psychology becomes a valuable partner through the scientists in the sector with a focus on Clinical and Dynamic Psychology. The anthropocentrism that characterized the 80s

and 90s brought about many changes in mental health issues by promoting the creation and development of structures throughout Europe. In Greece, the *Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health* (1981) was established under the guidance and responsibility of Psychoanalyst and Psychiatrist Alekos Sakelaropoulos. Later followed were created the Mental Health Centers, the Medical Pedagogical Centers under the supervision of the hospital structures. In the community, the first Counseling Station (Center of Psychosocial Care)¹ was created in the municipality of Chaidari by the psychologists and social workers and with the support of the municipality, of Panteion University and support of others renowned scientists, where they formed a flexible team providing counseling, psychological support, career guidance etc.

In the mid-1980s, the Psychiatric Clinic of the University of Athens implemented the first pilot prevention programs in various schools and in the surrounding community, based on related programs implemented in other European countries. These programs are inspired by a broader approach to drug prevention:

- They do not focus only on its use and risks.
- They do not aim at immediate results.
- Focus mainly on the causes of the problem, trying to promote the general psychosocial health of young people (increase self-esteem, reduce feelings of loneliness, develop communication skills, resist negative influences, ability to make responsible decisions through an educational process based on modern active learning methods.

This approach was based on the first systematic effort, for the implementation of prevention programs in the country, by the Organization against Drugs (OKANA) in 1995, with the planning of a program for the

¹ 1

<https://www.haidari.gr/community/simvouleutikos-stathmos/>

development of Drug Prevention Centers (CP) throughout Greece.

Based on its founding law, OKANA is in charge of international and European cooperation, as a national coordinating body, with the aim of harmonizing national policy with international and European standards.

The participation of the Organization in the working groups outside Greece is a key point in its policy and contributes to the coordination of a unified philosophy and a strategy compatible with modern needs.

At European and international level, OKANA participates in committees, groups, actions, programs of:

- European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)
- Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe
- United Nations (UN)
- EU Council Horizontal Drugs Group (Horizontal Working Party on Drugs or Horizontal Drugs Group / HDG)
- World Health Organization (WHO)

Today there are 75 Prevention Centers covering 50 prefectures nationwide. The Prevention Centers started operating, in cooperation with OKANA, and the local administration, recognizing the important contribution of the local communities in the prevention. Prevention centers are funded equally by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Interior. The responsibility for scientific supervision originally belonged to the Institute of Mental Health of the University of Research (ΕΠΙΨΥ) of the University of Atène. Over time, the systematic scientific supervision and evaluation of primary prevention programs and actions implemented in K. moved to the Application Prevention Department of OKANA. By law 3966, Official Gazette A, vol. 118 / 24-5-2012, article 58, the prevention centers acquire a functional legislative institutional framework and are renamed “Centers for the prevention of

addictions and the promotion of psychosocial health”

The limitation of drug addiction has been the primary concern of the Organization Against Drugs (OKANA)² since the early years of its foundation. To this end, OKANA works closely, beyond the CP with the Ministry of Health and the National Center for Documentation and Information on Drugs and Drug Addiction (EKTEPN)³.

There have also been agreements between the Greek Ministry of Education and Civil Protection. EKTEPN is the National Center for Documentation and Information on Drugs, operates within the European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA - European Center). It is one of the National Centers operating in the 27 Member States of the European Union, Norway, the European Commission and the candidate countries.

The creation and operation of the National Center of the European Center in Greece was assigned by the Ministry of Health to the Research University Institute of Mental Health (ΕΠΙΨΥ), while EKTEPN was declared as the National Center responsible for the collection and processing of all data in relation to all parameters of the problem of drug use and drug addiction in Greece. (EKTEPN).

EKTEPN presents systematically collects data annually in the annual national reports, which are sent to the European Drug Center (EMCDDA) and in the annual reports on the drug addiction situation in Greece, which are published for health professionals, researchers and their responsible policy makers.

The main pioneering action of OKANA as shown above was the creation of Prevention Centers, later named Centers for Addiction Prevention and Promotion of Psychosocial Health at the national level, in an effort to raise awareness of local communities and inform them about psychosocial health issues. With the creation

² <https://www.okana.gr/2012-04-03-07-49-40>

³ <https://www.ektepn.gr/en/node/275>

of Prevention Centers, the science of Psychology found a very large ground to act and contribute to all the primary, secondary and tertiary prevention efforts (Caplan G. 1964) targeting the various communities.

Identity and legal framework of the Prevention Centers

Prevention Centers are part of a broader prevention policy, which includes the establishment of Prevention Centers in all regions of the country.

The Prevention Centers are in the form of non-profit companies (companies), which have been proposed by local self-government organizations (OTA) or participate in them, with the sole purpose of cooperating with OKANA, and are governed by the provisions of the Civil Code.

They operate in municipalities and operate under the scientific supervision and co-financing of OKANA through the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Administrative Reform of Greece. The above mentioned non-profit companies, Prevention Centers, may include social, local non-profit organizations whose objectives are related to the prevention of substance abuse and addiction in general as well as the promotion of psychosocial health. The main goal of the programs developed by the Prevention Centers is to prevent various forms of addiction and to promote the mental health of the family, the school and the environment in which children and adolescents develop, to finally contribute to the empowerment of the community.

Through institutional partnerships with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of National Defense and with funding from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior, Prevention Centers offer “low cost” innovative services that are thus recognized throughout Europe and provide specific references in its annual reports. European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and members of the local communities in which they operate.

Human resources

The staff of the Prevention Centers consists of the administration and a team of scientists who, in addition to their university training, have specialized in prevention issues and other issues related to Clinical Psychology, special materials training, substance abuse training and other issues. psychosocial health, also related to the needs of local communities. This group works locally with the Board of Directors of which they are members are representatives of local bodies and approves the plan of activities and follows the needs of the Centre. It makes financial decisions in the general framework defined as funds by OKANA and solves the needs for human resources.

Objectives and activities of the Prevention Centers

The Prevention Centres consist of a decentralized network of forefront services, which aim at empowering local populations in order to prevent any kinds of addictions (including the addiction to legal substances such as tobacco and alcohol and new addictive behaviours like using the Internet and gambling). Whilst in the early years focusing was mainly on the drugs and especially in heroine, in the course of time the Prevention Centers redefined their orientation and practice. This change was not arbitrary but an interactive relationship between the scientific community, the prevention professionals and the reshaped local communities in a world that changes its sociocultural and socioeconomic dimensions. The heroin generation was “growing old” and its place in addiction took other shapes, in a postmodern society which was struggling to assimilate new life data, new ideas and new social needs, but without preserving the space needed for the soul to recognise and process feeling and social representations. The prolonged and constantly deteriorating economic recession of Greece after 2010 leads with relative confidence to important and generalised consequences in mental

health. (Economou, Haritsis, Peppou, Dietis, Souliotis 2018) of the Greek population and the imaginary institution of society (Kastoriadis G.1978) New addictions related to gambling and the addiction to the Internet have taken a remarkable place in the behaviour of adults and adolescents. The basic principle on which the philosophy of the prevention and primary prevention Centers is based, is that: Addiction is not the issue, it is the symptom.*

This case has been investigated by a series of repetitive interdisciplinary studies conducted by the Research Institute of Mental Health (EPIPSY). The first study was conducted in 2008 through telephone interviews with a sample of the national population and was repeated using the same methodology in 2009, 2011 and 2013, focusing on the prevalence of major depression, generalized anxiety disorder and suicide, as well as suicide. those with economic indicators.

The results of four consecutive EPIPSY studies showed a gradual but steady increase in the monthly prevalence of major depression since the onset of the financial crisis. Specifically, the prevalence rate of major depression in the Greek population in 2008, when the crisis had not yet been felt, was 3.3%. This rate more than doubled in a single year, reaching 6.8%. in 2009, the prevalence of major depression increased by 8.2% in 2011 and by 12.3% in 2013.

Every year, the Prevention Centers must prepare their action plan and their financial budget approved by the OKANA Agency. There are group meetings to plan activities and discuss requests. And here, according to its dynamics and the special skills of the working people, each Center can enrich the meetings by introducing interesting topics and information. Each Center has its own particular characteristics and dynamics that influence its choices and its specific orientations. In addition, each Center has its Scientific Director and a Board of Directors which has representatives of the local authorities as members. Municipality, Prefecture, Church, Medical Association, etc.

The programs developed by the Prevention Centers concern:

- Parents
- Students, teenagers
- In the military sector
- Sports, cultural clubs
- Professionals who are in direct contact with the problem (teachers, coaches, police officers, health workers, priests, military, etc.)
- Special population groups (repatriates, refugees, minority groups, prisoners, etc.)
 - The whole community.

Their objectives, depending on the target group and the duration of the intervention, are:

- Support and educate young people to adopt a positive attitude and develop skills, recognize and process emotions, and adopt attitudes and orientations that reduce the risk of addiction (gambling, Internet, etc.).
- Family counseling and support to support them in their parenting role and improve communication in the family unit.
- Awareness of teachers about prevention, improving their educational role and improving the teacher-student relationship.
- Informing the interested parties about the existing treatment programs.
- Information, awareness and mobilization of the whole community.

There are activities for the dissemination of the philosophy and practice of prevention, through cultural events, conferences, seminars, interviews, etc. However, in addition to the school community raising awareness of local communities and social and occupational groups with "special weight" prevention centers have worked with police officers who have participated in prevention seminars, with soldiers who have attended similar seminars.

- They intervene in the media in order to contribute to their prevention and to

organize actions in the workplace with the aim of creating networks to support employees in promoting mental health.

- Responded to requests for help from addicts who, after a few sessions, referred to detox centers and relatives of the drug addicts they supported. All this makes the Prevention Centers at the forefront of the fight against drugs throughout Greece and the only organized organizations to promote mental health and psychosocial health, at least in the province. Especially in cities where CP is the only reference point for mental health requests.

An important activity is the meetings of the working group for the planning of the activity and the discussion of the requests. And here, according to its dynamics and the special skills of the working people, each Center can enrich the meetings by introducing interesting topics and information.

Clinical Psychology in interventions addressed to the Community of Prevention Centers

The contribution of Clinical Psychology to actions aimed at the proposed changes in the Community is remarkable despite the fact that it is part of a multidisciplinary framework that works. Consequently, the role of mental health professionals working in an institutionalized environment is multidimensional, not only because it covers the full range of social clinical work activities, but also because it must listen to the needs of the community. These needs change as the community functions as an open system that is in constant interaction with the wider social context. (Tsamparli, A., Kounenou, K. 2013) In order to achieve their goals, according to the requests, each Center offers counseling and psychological support at the level of an individual or family and couple. Interventions are soon aimed at understanding the recast of demand and guidance, if necessary, in specialized centers.

The analysis of requests by Mental Health professionals, and in particular by the Clinical

Psychologist or other experts in the field, enables the elaboration of different topics and the identification of programs that could be useful for the interested community groups and local institutions.

Clinical psychology, through its dialectical approach and clinical experience in the community, meets the challenge, to understand the history of modern man and his culture contained in the personal and dramatic history of drug addicts.

Drug addicts ruthlessly mocking the whole building of modern progress are, in the shadows, presences-absences (Matsa K., 2001). Self-exiled from themselves and from history, they represent the defeat, the failure of the social subject in terms of historical decline. Today, drugs, that is, all psychotropic substances that can be used for drug addiction, cover the fundamental deficits of the human soul. They take the place of an enigmatic absence: the absence of the Other, of impossible communication.

The Clinical Psychologist must not only face the weak balances in multidisciplinary professional groups, in order to create a dialogue based on his theoretical training, clinical experience and skills, but he is called to the meeting with the drug addict to create a logos/speech, on at the same time, there is the absence of substantive logos and expression of emotion. In an ironic way, we would say, the logos of the drug addict or any expression of him, is the psychotropic substance itself.

The orientation of psychologist is to feel, understand, accompany and analyze first of all his feelings and those of others. Understand the limitations that exist on both sides and be present in oneself and in others. In a second moment, he needs to add to this absence of real logos, the granular experience captured in this meeting, of a special substance addict, and to create with him "syllables" of emotions, traces of new memories, reflections, important silences. To give meaning where there is a lack of meaning by the addict.

Obviously the ultimate goal remains, to enhance the desire for treatment in people who need it and to direct them to specialized

treatment centers as KETHEA (is the largest network of detoxification and social reintegration services in Greece), the Community of "ITACA", "18 and ANO" of the Psychiatric Hospital of Athens, Mental Health Centers and educational centers and many others to meet the variety of requests. Staff, often due to the complexity of the requests and special needs of people seeking help from Prevention Centers, often seek and apply supervision and further training in psychosocial health issues.

Centers where there are professionals in the field of Clinical Psychology or Psychiatry or who specialize in psychotherapeutic approaches, can undertake more complex requests. The inhomogeneity in the working groups often gives considerable wealth, but also difficulties in converging different theoretical frameworks to promote the Centers objectives. A primary task of the Centers is to be able to create prevention nuclei for different groups in the community in order to be the supporters of philosophy and practice prevention and to support the work of the Center. The contribution of Community Clinical Psychology here in Primary Prevention enables the creation of a cognitive bridge where people meet, manage their intentions and minimize their fears about a science or scientific perceptions that in mental shapes seemed very dark or incomprehensible.

Leaving the classic professional context described by his office, the Clinical Psychologist exposes himself to the Community to face his narcissistic failures and prejudices about a community that may be quite different from the one he has experienced in his personal history.

In this new reality, where the collective imagination tries to appropriate or idealize, merge or renounce the figure of the specialist who "invades" his space, neighborhood, school, the Clinical Psychologist, needs to be "disarmed" from his beliefs and ready to understand this dynamic at the community level.

In schools there is a lot of continuous work at all levels. Teams of teachers, groups of students, teenagers. There are Centers where after many years of work in the Community they have created self-help groups.

The science of Clinical Psychology plays a key role especially in the crisis management in schools and support at the individual level but also at the level of the group of students or teachers according to the analysis of requests. Cooperation with Social Workers is particularly necessary at all levels of intervention in the Community.

There are Centers that prefer to organize interventions, aimed at classes of all levels, through weekly meetings. These meetings are dedicated to addressing issues related to emotion management, self-esteem, friendship, stress management, accepting differences in others, and so on.

Psychology here offers material or collaboration processes meetings and related needs with other professionals, Social Workers, Sociologists, anthropologists, etc.

The elaboration of the topics in the meetings in different groups of young people or parents, goes through theoretical presentations, biomarker exercises, play role etc. from the scientific staff of the Center that has already been trained by the Organization for the Control of Drugs OKANA or from the Research University Institute of Mental Health of Athens EPIPSY or from other Centers, Systemic Psychotherapy for example and others. After more than twenty years of operation, the Prevention Centers in Greece have established and continue to produce significant work for and with the Community. Prevention centers have a lot to offer the school community.

They have trained thousands of teachers trained by members of the Material Centers Applied in Primary and Secondary Education to improve children' skills and self- esteem, but have also set up teacher teams through which teachers themselves receive support for their work.

In the same environment, he created thousands of discussion groups for parents, young people, professionals throughout

Greece, giving time and space to different age groups creating the bases for the promotion of mental health at the Panhellenic level.

Clinical Psychology was and is the silent star in a theoretical and practical context, providing methodological data and theoretical background to specific actions and contributing to major prevention programs in the national environment of Greece while promoting collaboration with the sciences of Medicine and other humanities.

The construction of Prevention's Networking in community

Prevention centers, with their network of partnerships with the local community, universities and other mental health organizations, and research centers, host a wide range of requests.

Knowledge of social networks and the construction of a strong networking was one of the first goals for CP as the main project and interventions in the community depend on this networking. It was necessary from the first moment of the establishment of the Centers to spread and raise awareness of the community about the philosophy and practice of prevention in order to deal with drug addiction and other forms of addiction caused by psychological distress.

The analysis of primary and secondary social networks, which need to be read either focusing on groups of actors with the same position in the network structure, or adopting attention to a relational logic, (aspects such as the strength and type of links) Zanni B .2012) provides the first time of operation of the CPs through an empirical exploration in the community and through the activation of personal relationships.

The first step was the training of the employees in the prevention centers in subjects of Clinical Psychology, Prevention in primary secondary and tertiary level. Special emphasis is given to understanding the phenomenon of drug dependence and substance abuse in matters of violent, crisis management, etc.

Then a series of seminars and workshops were oriented to different groups each time. Directors of schools, teachers, police officers, journalists and people who have had a leadership position at Community level

Securing them advocates of prevention, in key positions, access to the community was made with greater pleasure by overcoming bureaucratic obstacles in the process of implementing programs.

The contribution of the Board of Directors of each Center was and continues to be the supporter of this construction of social networks and the Prevention partner, as it consists of members who are representatives of local authorities, associations, public institutions, teachers' associations and so on the political dimension has obviously influenced the "access" and "acceptance" of the CP as a promoter of psychosocial health in the Community. But over time and after many preventive actions in the communities, the Centers seem to be recognized in the majority of sectors that function as institutions that go beyond the political aspects and serve the well-being of the citizens.

The important link established between CP professionals and the various social networks is related to the ability to receive and provide psychological and social support at the level of interpersonal emotional education (Orford, 1992).

The Prevention Centers (CP) have gradually become the point of reference in the communities where they operate, based on mutual trust, where professionals from other workplaces but also individuals, families, couples come and return with various requests each year: Creating a team of teachers, training and awareness raising for example a staff of a bank, or counseling for children who are now teenagers, for drug addicts who want to make a new attempt at treatment, etc).

Since their inception, CPs have established a network with all Specialist Centers for the treatment or counseling of addicts before entering a therapeutic community or family

support that has always been associated with drug addiction and detoxification on a biopsychological level. (OKANA, 18 and ANO, KETHEA ITACA; University Psychiatric Clinic of the Psychiatric Hospital and many other counseling and treatment centers in the capital of Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras and other major cities).

The staff often causes complex requirements and specific needs of the people who seek help from the Prevention Centers, often ask for and apply their supervision and further training in psychosocial health issues. (Zafiridis, Lainas, Giuseppe, 2003). Here too, Clinical Psychology helps support case monitoring for those who need it, but it is not an action offered for free.

The methodological tools. Interdisciplinary team

The CP employs mental health professionals (physicians, psychologists, social workers), other social scientists, educators, and many other humanities specialties.

They are also equipped with important administrative staff. They develop interventions based on the philosophy of prevention and the promotion of health education. Almost all of the staff, including their scientific directors, have been trained by the Institute of Mental Health of the University of Athens (EPIPSY) or by the Organization Against Drugs (OKANA). Specialization that is always enriched with the most specific topics in the field of Clinical Psychology.

There are also people who collaborate and have worked in the past in therapeutic communities such as Ithaca et 18 and ANO. Prevention centers, far from the main urban centers, functioned as extensive social services. Interdiscipline is the main tool they use to meet the needs of local communities. Interdiscipline as a methodological element also covers the need for KP scientific staff, whose particularity of community work has prompted them to explore alternative ways of tackling more (quantitative and qualitative) problems of local communities.

Interdiscipline was not only the result of a choice of theoretical tools, but also meets the real needs of the Community system, in which the employees themselves participate.

Choosing an interdiscipline approach to addiction prevention helps prevention professionals holistically, as much as possible, address social and psychological issues, effectively embracing the question that addiction is a multifactorial issue (Miller, W 1980)

Interdiscipline does not represent the division of knowledge into individual units, sealed with each other, but means collaborative unity, organization and cultural synthesis. In this way, the community as a whole faces the deeper causes that some of its members can lead to self-destructive behavior or other forms of psychological distress and not adorn the misery of daily life through "over" programs designed for the symptom and not for the causes and the social impasses that create it.

The development of these effective prevention and health promotion programs requires the cooperation of experts from many disciplines and fields as a starting point. It also requires networking with the wider social partners and stakeholders.

Clinical Community Psychology is developed and refined with the aim of improving the quality of life. It is oriented towards a systematic vision of the dynamics of the social world, integrating the levels of analysis of individuals and groups, as well as the levels of community, organizations and society as a whole.

The involvement to such an extent in the field of Prevention in Greece was not a predetermined request. There were few studies and experience at the national level in the field of substance abuse. At Community level, they showed the need to use the theoretical and practical enfoque of Clinical Psychology that could introduce knowledge and practices from its collaboration with Community Psychology, School Psychology, Neuropsychology, Social Psychology, Psychiatry and other Sciences.

Clinical Psychologists who traditionally work primarily at the individual or family, group level, are placed in a community context, where the reading of local culture, emotional symbolism, understanding of individual but institutional difficulties and needs described in the different dynamics of different groups, is necessary to offer the diagnosis of difficulties and to delineate a treatment piano. This role often needs to be discreet and leaves room for the development of approaches and other prevention professionals without losing legitimacy.

A major scientific and professional challenge for Clinical Psychology was to contribute to the creation of appropriate materials for interventions in the Community as sometimes the methodological tools did not pre-exist but had to be devised and created in collaboration with the Preventive Care team.

The Clinical Psychological Discourse intended for the community needs to provide clarification of the terms and clarifications required each time in the multidiscipline framework to reduce confusion and protect the scientificity and hypotheses of psychological actions.

The contamination of speech by this massive coexistence between science and approaches seems inevitable, but the challenge of self-acceptance and heterogeneity / acceptance in working groups gives the opportunity for a process of maturity of the individual and the working group itself. Psychological exercises for groups. The interdisciplined approaches, adopted by most prevention centers, are accompanied by the use of specialized material from Europe.

Conclusions

According to the 2005 annual report on the drug problem in Europe, the European Center for Drug Addiction Monitoring (EKTEPN), Greece holds a notable European first in the field of prevention Greece is a particularly typical example of the displacement of prevention policies from traditional

information-based and individual approaches (counseling) to the implementation of a true public health strategy, whose coverage b psi to maximize through prevention approaches in programs. The number of prevention programs in schools is more than doubled in Greece between 2000 and 2003 and family programs tripled over the same period. Obviously, all this success is due to the great and constant work of the Prevention Centers and the support of the science of Clinical Psychology of the Community. However, in addition to being recognized as an offer to promote resilience in the community, the application of the philosophy and practice of prevention through the creation of prevention centers has not been and is not easy or easy.

During their existence, the centers are facing many problems, created at the institutional, political, economic and scientific levels. The main issues that are at the heart of the criticality are:

Vulnerable institutional framework that affects people with specialization in the field of Prevention. This flexible plan in order to continue the “production” of trouble-free work must be institutionally protected in an absolute way.

Weaknesses in scientific training and studies. The scientific community represented by the university pole, despite gaining experience through a European Nationwide Survey (ESPAD)⁴ on young people's substance use of behavior, did not have much prior knowledge of local reality of each community or geographical area where prevention professionals operated.

The particular socio-cultural aspects and understanding of the emotional symbolism of the community required an in-depth study that was not available at the time, but managed to take place later.

These critical elements were exacerbated by the economic crisis and austerity suffered by Greece. This aspect is not irrelevant. On the contrary, it is very modern, because there is a danger that many countries in southern Europe are facing today, after the health

⁴ <http://www.espad.org/>

emergency and the economic crisis that seems inevitable, in terms of side cuts in the health system. Many professionals who had their education with public money could not operate in the CP creating a scientific migration to other structures or abroad.

At today, after many years of crisis and through the various economic difficulties, with greek ministerial support and assistance of local authorities, has been able to keep the centers as a reference point for the promotion of psychosocial health at the community level.

However, this great project, which is intended for all forms of prevention and has been extended for many years in Greece, can, through trained experience and activated studies, be able to provide the necessary information and reflection and methodological tools for the establishment of Prevention Centers in other European countries such as Italy and others and expand this network.

Italy has already shown great sensitivity and mobilization in prevention issues through university research and education. The International Cooperation, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), has supported the funding of international programs where have the contribute of Community Psychology at an interdisciplinary level to provide research and training in Central American countries.

The excuse for substance abuse is no longer needed, as there have been so many psychosocial health problems at Community level since the 1980s, most recently the health pandemic, and the enormous psychological impact on populations.

More than ever, interdisciplinary transnational cooperation seems to be the only way to build networks to strengthen resilience and support local communities.

Local authorities in close cooperation with universities,

Research Centers can provide training and supervision of the activities to be carried out, as well as the scientific framework required to

promote the prevention and promotion of psychosocial health in the Community.

More than ever, the scientific community seems to implement the experience gained at the national, European and international level in order to create the construction of an interdisciplinary network that could help address the problems that appear to cause health emergencies to ensure more resilience and support for community.

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Modern Family: between tradition and new (post-family) narratives

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Abstract

It is possible to be a couple without marriage commitments and even without living together (as happens to LAT couples); the couple can be restricted to the two partners or include wider relationships; one can be a parent without having generated children with natural relationships. In short, everything suggests that today being a couple and being parents are two possibilities that respond to different life projects, they go on their own. History and social evolution have shown how the classic family made up of mother, father and natural or adopted children becomes just one of the many possibilities of being called a family. On the basis of these considerations, the aim of this paper is to reflect on the physiological change in family structures. A culturalist conception of the family seems to be affirming itself from many sides, which understands it as a pure cultural product, rather than as a structure that humanizes people, through a relationality that operates through the symbolic exchange between the sexes and between generations (Donati, 2020). The new narratives lead us to take up the challenge of a possible post-human and technoliquid family (Cantelani, 2020) and in order to do this we need to seriously reflect on the fact that thinking of the family only as a question of love, affection and care, it can be very reductive. Rather, it would be necessary to restore originality to family relationships: family forms are the product of collective processes of morphogenesis of social structures and even choices, although they depend on individual emotions and strategies, are more deeply the expression of dynamics of networks of relationships. In other words, in the age of the anthropocene and of the ‘family warming’, it becomes necessary and fundamental to favor a *sustainable family*, in the sense of giving a new meaning to the elements of its social genome and the ways of connecting them (Donati, 2020).

Key words: Family; digital society; narratives; relationships; interculturalism

The essay is the result of the joint work of the three authors. However, paragraphs 1, 2.1, 3.1 were written by Elvira Martini; paragraph 2 was written by Paolo Palumbo; paragraphs 3, 4 were written by Raffaele De Luca Picione.

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It is not easy to say family

In every daily conversations, in reflections based on common sense, also in the most refined socio-psychological analyzes, we find ourselves increasingly in disagreement on the problem of family identification. We put ourselves to the test, trying to keep our definition of family, when we find ourselves faced with the different concrete ways in which our own family presents itself during its temporal evolution (Vespasiano, 2010).

Therefore, it becomes crucial to have a definition that differentiates the family from the *new forms of family*, which have already obtained or are still seeking recognition similar to those that society has so far recognized in a special way to the family. That is, it is a question of recognizing the specificity and diversity of the family with respect to the new forms of family (civil unions, cohabitation more uxorio, homosexual cohabitation, Lat, etc.) (Donati, 2007, p. 14).

A basic definition, considered by the scientific community to be quite acceptable, because it is sufficiently broad even if with boundaries that are not entirely defined, is that provided by Georges Murdock (1971, p. 9): «The family is a social group characterized by common residence, by economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom [adults] maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, their own or adopted, of adults who cohabit sexually».

This definition accepts some essential points to define the family:

- the presence of a man and a woman who decide to live together and have children (or adopt them);
- the submission of their union to the approval of the community;
- the declaration of commitment to cooperate economically for mutual maintenance.

It is a definition that encompasses numerous family types, even if it creates some problems

in identifying those that are not very widespread and those that recently ask to be socially recognized. On the other hand, it allows us to justify, on the basis of consolidated socio-anthropological research, also the definition used by Istat¹, according to which the family is: the set of people linked by ties of marriage, kinship, affinity, adoption, protection or emotional ties, cohabitants and having habitual residence in the same municipality (even if they are not yet registered in the registry of the resident population). A family can also be constituted by a single person» (Vespasiano, 2010, pp. 16-17).

For Murdock, no society has been able to find an effective substitute for the nuclear family and all its functions (reproductive, economic, educational, etc.): the nuclear family is a sort of 'social atom' that can be combined and become part of the composition of 'molecules', the composite families: polygamous and extended. With the model of the nuclear family, Murdock believed he had identified a constant, an indispensable foundation of every social organization.

Yet few companies exclusively recognize the nuclear model and today it is a hypothesis that is challenged from different points of view. Certainly, the social orientation to the family is generalized and still powerful. Part of its power lies in its emotional, sentimental, affective, sensual nature; another part, in its permanent ability to offer materially shelter, assistance, help, support.

The importance of the family appears indisputable - we repeat: beyond transformations and critical visions - in reproducing society, both biologically and culturally. The function of socialization and cultural orientation is still the prerogative of the family, despite being continually challenged by other socialization and collective orientation agencies (school and mass media, first of all), a situation that often creates strong concerns in parents and determines opportunities for crisis.

¹ See also art. 4 of the DPR 30 May 1989, n. 223 "Approvazione del nuovo regolamento anagrafico della popolazione residente".

But family social capital still significantly influences the adult careers of children and their social position (Prandini, 2003; Rossi & Bramanti, 2007); the reference networks still see the family one as a critical junction from which it is not easy to ignore to build and strengthen one's network of social relations (in some way, we can define it as familism; in some other way, we speak of radicalization; in some other way, it is defined social power). From this point of view, the controlled expression of sexuality, biological reproduction, the care and protection of newborns, the help given to young people for their social integration and economic support to non-productive members, are considered functions of the family (Parsons & Bales, 1956). International regulations clearly state this and sanction infringements.

Family, kinship, parenting: concepts in evolution and intercultural dimension

The conceptions of the family, of kinship, of parenthood have changed somewhat in recent years; kinship, today, is no longer considered only as indicative of blood ties (biological kinship) or alliance, but refers to all those ties based on any type of interpersonal relationship; or marriage, now almost always less chosen in favor of cohabitation instead (Palumbo, 2015); the one-child model begins to spread more and more, with the consequent reduction of the cousin network.

The increase in legal separations and divorces has multiplied the types of families: families of single people, incomplete or single-parent nuclear families, reconstituted families. Thus new forms of family emerge (Palumbo, 2017).

«Anthropologists in a century of studies on human societies have accumulated various knowledge on the vastness of family forms. A practical case of how this knowledge was capitalized and established dates back to 2004 when George W. Bush in America proposed an amendment to the American constitution to “define and protect the marriage of a man and a woman as husband and wife on the basis of the fact that the union between man and

woman is the most enduring human institution, encouraged and honored by all cultures and all religions”. The American Anthropological Association immediately distanced itself from this proposal, arguing that “the family based on heterosexual marital union could not be considered either ‘natural’ or ‘universal’, but that a century of studies had brought to light a wide range of types of families, including homosexual unions” (American Anthropological Association, 2004)» (Favole, 2015, pp. 29-30).

It is evident how the idea of naturalness of the heterosexual family seems to be cracking, in favor of an ever greater “culturality” (Fuccillo, 2019; Palumbo, 2019, Santoro 2018). Francesco Remotti (2010), investigating the anthropological archive on the topic, reviews the cases of African, American, Asian, Oceanian and, last but not least, European societies that deviate significantly from the family model based on marriage and cohabitation between a man, a woman and their children. The idea that the family has experienced a slow, but inexorable transition from extended forms to the nuclear or conjugal form has been largely denied. Rather, it seems now clear that the forms of the family have been continuously transformed in response to pressures of a political, economic, cultural and ideological nature (Salvatore et al, 2018; Mannarini & Salvatore, 2020, Fuccillo, 2019).

As for our country, there is no doubt that the Italian and Western families of the past thirty years are very different from those that preceded them (Barbagli, Saraceno, 1997).

«From the 1960s onwards, in the Western world, separations and divorces have increased, and families have increasingly found themselves exposed to the transformative action of at least 3 factors:

- the process of secularization has weakened the religious strength of the marriage bond; it is no coincidence that even in a country like ours the rate of marriages celebrated with a civil ceremony only has increased (Fuccillo, 2016; Fumagalli Carulli, 2016);
- couples have begun to build their marriage bond on the indispensable presence of

emotional ties alone, neglecting the strength of what had traditionally been the cornerstones of past unions: economic and patrimonial ties;

- the increase in the rate of work of women has shifted the primary objective of women: from the realization of themselves as wives and mothers, to the realization of themselves as workers and professionals (it must be borne in mind that, in these the last 30 years, the level of education of women has increased considerably) (Vespasiano, 2010, p. 23).

The reasons for this profound and silent transformation can be traced, certainly in the introduction of the law on divorce, but also in less striking attitudes and behaviors. «One of these attitudes can be traced to the *obligation of well-being*. This convinced the young people (and their parents) that their duty was to consolidate the economic and financial situation of the couple - before deciding the date of the wedding - and of the family - before deciding the day of conception -. And since children have an economic cost (they have always had it anyway), the same couple plans the number of children they can afford to generate, *provided they maintain a good level of well-being*» (Vespasiano, 2010, p. 27).

The result is a disturbing paradox: the concern to give a future of well-being to their children pushes many couples not to generate them or to reduce their number to a minimum. To ensure an “adequate” level of well-being for children (even those not yet born) it frightens and pushes couples to work harder to earn more, convincing them that in this way they will have the opportunity to “have and maintain” children. In reality, the more time is invested in achieving economic well-being, the longer the time taken for the decision to start a family, the more the vicious circle feeds itself. It is for these reasons that helping families to face the difficulties in which they find themselves and supporting them in the management of their life choices (parenthood, above all) is the duty of governments and states, beyond the ideological and political orientations that are legitimate and unavoidable, but which should in no way

influence family policy decisions (Fuccillo, 2019, Palumbo 2020).

Kinship

In recent years there has been «a renewed interest in kinship studies, attributable on the one hand to the emergence (especially in Europe and Western countries) not only of “new forms of family” but also of “new forms of kinship” made possible by more and more advanced reproductive technologies, and on the other by innovative ways of conceiving and investigating kinship inspired by the so-called ontological turn» (Viazzo, 2015, p. 38). Authors of great depth, such as Janet Carsten and Marshall Sahlins, deal, albeit with different analytical perspectives, to understand how kinship is put into practice in different social contexts and what are the meanings attributed to it.

Both agree on the fact that the construction of kinship is based above all on the social aspect, a focal point that often goes beyond biological ties; the question of the blood bond changes totally: if before by kinship we meant just this, that is all relationships must be based on a blood bond, now it seems that the primordial element on which a relationship is established is, among several others, the exchange of food, nourishment, home, home. Therefore, parenting and the various relational institutions of kinship are phenomena that go beyond the mere biological fact and indeed transcend them completely. Kinship is built entirely in society and culture and biology becomes a sort of metaphor especially in the Western world (Favole, 2015).

For Sahlins, kinship indicates that set of social relations marked by what he defines *mutuality of being*”, that is, relations built through conception, coexistence, “doing together”, characterized by practices of sharing in which the self and the other are closely interconnected. «If loving, caring for, feeding or sharing food, working together, living on the same land, providing mutual aid, sharing the fate in migration and residence, as well as marriage or adoption, are all terrains in which the kinship, it is because everyone knows, like

procreation, the meaning of participating in each other's lives» (Sahlins, 2013, p. 39 of the Italian translation)².

However, the work of Sahlins has met with some resistance in many scholars (particularly anthropologists). The author, in fact, tends to re-propose the well-known distinction between 'West and Rest', not considering the work of those who instead concentrate their analyzes in European or North American contexts. «Jeanette Edwards (2013: 285) complains that contrasting the extraordinary variety of expressions that kinship - or the *mutuality of being* - assumes in a myriad of extra-Western cultures with a monolithic image of the West runs the risk to neglect "a rich ethnographic documentation [on Western societies] and to sacrifice the specificities of kinship [in the West]" to give greater strength to an argument that needs an antagonistic representation to better highlight the characteristics that Sahlins attributes to kinship and to the societies in which it occupies a sociologically and symbolically central position. In reality, for Sahlins in the contemporary West there does not even seem to be a place for kinship, since the very possibility of the existence of a *mutuality of being* would have been swept away by the affirmation of a bourgeois individualism rationally aimed at profit material» (Viazzo, 2015, p. 39).

In other words, Sahlins highlights the historical decline of kinship and its disappearance in modernity. In the useful years, however, this view has been contrasted by those who have brought to light processes of non-linear change and not infrequent periods of growth in the relevance of kinship (Sabeau, Teuscher & Mathieu, 2007; Johnson & Sabeau, 2011).

In a volume by McKinnon & Cannel 2013, it is demonstrated how we can talk about the persistence of kinship in modernity, insisting

on its continuing or even growing importance in the economic-entrepreneurial and political sphere. «It is also evident that a persistent role of kinship - or even its indispensability - is increasingly spoken about also regarding the welfare functions that relatives are called to perform in the post-modern shortage of state assistance. Much questions are being asked about the consequences of socio-demographic changes such as the decline in birth rates and even more the decline or metamorphosis of marriage, which are producing a significant rarefaction of 'bio-legal' relatives. This rarefaction creates space - and perhaps, in fact, necessity - for 'fictitious' and 'performative' forms of kinship» (Viazzo, 2015, p. 40).

More attention should be paid to dynamic creations of fictitious kinships «through processes of doing as much as being» (McKinnon & Cannel, 2013b, p.13) but also to consider the fact that it is not enough to highlight only the functionally positive aspects of kinship as a source of support but it is also necessary to take into account the forms of violence, abuse, hierarchization, conflicts and tensions that kinship generates today in many Western socio-cultural contexts, where the moral obligation to help relatives is felt strongly unexpected.

Although in a concise form, one senses then, that it becomes somewhat difficult to find a way that describes kinship in universal terms. The same Sahlins who titled his book *What Kinship Is-and Is Not* cannot find a real answer. The title of Carsten could be more suitable when she proposes *What kinship does and how*, suggesting the importance not so much of what kinship is, but rather how it is performed and practiced, how it is created and how it is built.

Therefore, these are questions that still remain open and to be legitimized (Viazzo, 2015).

²Thanks to Sahlins and his comparison between conceptions of parenthood and kinship developed by different societies, we have several examples of kinship that have no connection with biology: the Kimeas consider the mother who breastfeeds the child (and it is not always the mother herself); the inhabitants

of the Nebilyer Valley in Papua New Guinea, believe that the kinship is created by the transmission of Kopong (which means fat) which is found in breast milk, sperm, sweet potato and pork. For these then we become relatives both through a sexual act and by eating together.

Towards a post-family society

The observations made above tell us that it is necessary to become aware that in the future society will be less and less ‘familiar’, at least in the sense in which it has been known up to now in human history: a place, that is, where women and men they feel protected, they live their sexuality, they build their future through the intertwining of the spousal relationship and the parental one, they generate the resources to support their old age, they transmit socially shared values and rules (Shorter, 1978).

It is possible to be a couple without marriage commitments, and even without living together (Think of LAT couples)³; the couple can be restricted to the two partners or include wider relationships; one can be a parent without having generated children with natural relationships. In short, everything suggests that today being a couple and being parents are two possibilities that respond to different life projects, they go on their own. As already said in the course of this discussion, the classic family made up of mother, father and natural or adopted children becomes only one of the many possibilities of being called a family.

In other words, a culturalist conception of the family is affirmed, which understands it as a pure cultural product, rather than as a passage from nature to culture, as a structure that humanizes people through a relationality that operates through the symbolic exchange between the sexes and between generations (Donati, 2020, p. 1).

About this, the metaphor that Donati uses to describe the family, a direct expression of the current geological era, the anthropocene, is very suggestive. The author talks about *family warming*, the overheating of the family. The growing hybridization of the family (precisely overheating), artificially or legally, places individuals in front of a plurality of

options that require responsible reflection and that takes into account the consequences. «It is therefore a question of understanding how far it is possible to modify the family genome without losing the foundations of an entire civilization: [...] it is not a question of keeping a fixed and immutable genome, but of ensuring that the genome, as device of transition from nature to culture, can use new technologies - which have always characterized the human being - in such a way as to enhance what is natural in it rather than distorting the human nature of the family relationship. This idea goes hand in hand with human ecology, which today is rightly claimed to promote a sustainable ecosystem. So we could speak of the need to foster a *sustainable family*, in the sense of giving a new meaning to the elements of its social genome and the ways of connecting them» (Donati, 2020, p. 2).

Without wanting to deny the importance of the affections and taking charge of the people we live with, we cannot however imagine reducing the family to a simple set of a few people who live together, whatever their relationships, as long as they are affective and “of care”. It would be a rather fragile, precarious family of the future, unable to face the challenges of life (De Luca Picione, 2017, 2020).

Donati continues: «Thinking about the family as a matter of individual choices is incorrect and misleading, because family forms are the product of collective processes of morphogenesis of social structures, because individuals as such are too weak and fragile to create solid relationships on their own in the absence of support from the public sphere, because the choices, although they depend on individual emotions and strategies, are more profoundly the expression of the dynamics of networks of relationships that dominate the individual, who is driven by the need to belong to those networks . Rather, an

³LAT (living apart together), that is couples linked by a relationship who decide to have separate homes, rather than a common residence. Experts (Roseneil, 2006) seem to consider homosexual couples and LAT couples a valid lifestyle and now an integral part of the

social landscape. However, it is an area that requires further research to determine its long-term social effects. Critics, in fact, raise concerns that this social deconstructionism could alter the unity of the classical family.

authentically relational culture is needed. It is a question of distinguishing between family relationships and other relationships, and social policies should treat them on the basis of criteria of justice and social equity that enhance the contributions that different styles of family life make to society» (Donati, 2020, pp. 2-3).

The new digital families

The context that can be glimpsed, then, is that of a libertarian culture that marries technological innovations, from biomedical ones to informatics-communication and robotic ones. It is the scenario of a growing estrangement from nature, a widespread estrangement from the natural roots of human existence, with all the problems it entails. In this scenario, the family will not disappear, but will be powerfully modified, because it is necessarily called upon to manage the (easy?) Relationship with the ICT society.

Every cultural revolution, every social change is accompanied by new frailties, which affect above all the new generations and which are then reflected in the family, in the school, in the peer group. However, we understand that the frailties of millennials are different from those of baby boomers. We are in two different eras: two different systems of capitalism (biocapitalism), the transition from the society of producers to the current consumer society, more sustainable and, above all, two different models of protagonism and social commitment, of aggregation: today the point of the meeting of protagonism is no longer the agora, but the virtual squares, communities, friends of the web (hundreds, sometimes thousands) that at any time, or for any reason, are deleted from our computers, Ipad and Iphone.

Since Castells (2002) started talking about it, the information society, the society of networks, has completely upset our daily life. And this is a fact. It is now a fact that everyone (natives, immigrants and digital late arrivals) can no longer do without technologies.

For McLuhan (1967), the transition from oral to written culture, to print and electronic media represents a real anthropological

mutation of the human species: the media are extensions of man, an extension of his senses (writing extends memory, the phone extends the voice and hearing, as the car extends the feet). The pressure exerted by the information sphere (info-sphere) appears to be radically changing the ways in which people perceive reality, elaborate fantasies, think and act in their social relationships. All this would explain how anthropo-centric modernity, which considers the person at the center of the everyday scene and technologies as tools at its service, is now increasingly replacing an anthropo-eccentric info-sphere, that is a situation that de-centers the people to the advantage of an increasingly autonomous role of technologies that are no longer and only manageable by people but in some way guide and use them (Donati, 2017).

It becomes necessary then to reflect in what way and to what extent this happens in families.

In fact, even the family was not unscathed by this great technological revolution, which often found parents lacking the tools on how to face the new challenges posed to their children in the face of small and super-efficient doors open to the whole world.

It would be naive to say that the advent of ICT in the family has only created problems; this is not the case because there are many positive aspects:

- communication methods: think of transnational families (*imagined families*) (Stark, 2012) that can easily “reach each other” on a daily basis or allow remote monitoring of their children and their movements (diasporic communities);
- time management: there is not necessarily a decrease in time in quantitative terms. On the other hand, the conception of family boundaries changes (because it is possible to act for the family even at a distance), the functioning in terms of the construction of rules or the way in which decisions are made;
- reversal of roles: erosion of the hierarchy in favor of negotiation in the name of an alleged superiority of children in knowing how to use ICT (adolescents are increasingly involved in family choices regarding, for example, where

to go on vacation, which appliance to buy) (Veer, Pawar & Kolte, 2019; Khandelwal *et alii*, 2020).

However, it is equally true that there are many pitfalls and gray areas that deserve to be addressed with attention and seriousness.

Very illuminating in this direction is the reading of the 2017 CISF Report on the Family in Italy. The merit of the research is to be able to identify four types of families in relation to the use of ICT (marginal, forced, adapted and hybridized). In particular, we want to analyze how the co-evolution of the family and the new digital world generates a family *hybridized* by the use of new technologies. Because we talk about hybridization because on the one hand family life is physicality; on the other hand, ICTs introduce virtuality. A mix is produced. Virtual relationships have their own undeniable dimension of reality. And the result is a hydrated family, expressed by 34.2% of the sample of families interviewed and which are generally characterized by singles/couples of young people, many unmarried cohabitants, LAT, immersed in the world of digital technologies.

The authors of the Report agree in defining the *hybridized* family as a different form of relationality, which does not always strengthen the bonds between family members. This hybridization of families serves to understand the post-media development phase (Eugeni, 2015) in which we find ourselves: the media are no longer bulky tools, they are no longer opaque, but wearable, intrusive, invasive (Rivoltella 2020). In other words, this means that being constantly connected doesn't always mean being in relationship. Therefore, a chiaroscuro reality appears: if on the one hand we are talking about a family that, thanks to hybridization, is kept together (e.g. family Whatsapp group), on the other we observe that families are kept together remaining

alone (Turkle, 2011). The reference to loneliness and isolation is a risk that tends to increase especially in families with minor children, in adolescence. A risk that is linked to the new temporal experience of individuals. It is a time that does not foresee empty spaces. It is not true that young people communicate less today, nor that they do not read and write, indeed they do it more than their peers in the 1980s. Kids today communicate too much, all the time. The lack of silence deprives them of attention to evaluate what is really worth discussing (right to boredom)⁴. Therefore, borrowing some of Luciano Floridi's reflections (2017), thinking about the media and the family means placing oneself on the so-called 'fourth revolution': not a semiosphere that has developed parallel to the real world, in which it is possible to enter and exit, but a migration of technology into our world. Our experience has increased: there is no disappearance of the body, but an amplification of it⁵. Authors such as Tonino Cantelani (2020) also speak of the technoliquid family, which is part of a scenario of maximum fulfillment of the processes of individual, relational, social deconstruction, started in the late 1960s. These processes have been enhanced by technology, thus defining the characteristics of postmodern man in the digital age and the new scenarios of the technoliquid mind. In other words, the digital revolution and the digital transformation of reality intercept, enhance and shape some characteristics of the liquid man: narcissism, speed, ambiguity, the search for emotions and the need for infinite light relationships.

Not just care but relationship

Despite the problems, the difficulties, the crisis, the weaknesses, the family survives. It evolves in form, but still remains that primary vital space in which the grammar of human,

⁴These could be the basis of web-mediated social withdrawal (think of the Hikikomori phenomenon in Japan).

⁵Statistics, at least those concerning our country, confirm that in Italy there is a growing diffusion

and use of ICT, but awareness of what they imply, whether in access or in consequences, is still very deficient (deficit of reflective capacity).

personal and social relationships is learned (Vespasiano *et alii*, 2010).

The new narratives lead us to take up the challenge of a possible post-human family and in order to do so we need to seriously reflect on the fact that thinking of leaving all the work of having to maintain the family and its harmony to love and affection is definitely a desperate hope.

Compared to the animal world, human care is a more complex thing because it is not based on instinct but, at least potentially, on relational reason, reflexivity and the intentionality of consciousness. Intersubjective relationships have properly human causal properties, that is, such as to humanize people, not when they are simply projections of individual desires, emotions, feelings and affects.

The substance of the family, made up of single individuals, is however made up of the relationship between the same individuals. And the dignity of these relationships can certainly be given by an attitude full of affection and by taking care *of* and *for the* Other, but it goes even further: it is more than this, much more⁶.

The dignity of relationships requires that the relationship be morally good, and this happens if it is formed on the basis of the elements that characterize the family *genome*, that is, gift, reciprocity, couple sexuality and the generativity, at least desired, that follows. The ego is relational, but it humanizes itself only with certain relationships and not with others (Donati, 2020).

Therefore, restoring dignity to familiar relationships; the family is the main socializing agent and generating relational goods: responsible motherhood and fatherhood, education in pro-social (and not just individual) virtues which are reflected in acting with justice and generosity towards

one's neighbor, accepting finitization and fragility as part of man's nature, to face the discomfort not simply by climbing over it but by training to stay inside it.

On closer inspection it is all this, it is all this entropy, which then in fact constitutes the vitality of every family unit and therefore of every social fabric.

⁶Instead of defending the naturalness of the structural principles of the nuclear family (the sexual union between a man and a woman and procreation), one could observe with Pier Paolo Viazzo and Francesco Remotti that «if there is a universal need to which these different forms [family] seem to respond, this is the

need to overcome the loneliness of the individual»(Viazzo & Remotti, 2007, p. 65).«It is being together, sharing spaces and resources, promoting cooperation and solidarity that explains the variety of domestic groups to which humanity has given birth» (Favole, 2015, p. 33).

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Neuropsychodynamic of anxiety

Di Costanzo Salvatore

Abstract

Anxiety theory is very important in Freudian psychoanalysis, particularly the concept of signal anxiety which is central to unconscious conflict. According to the relational paradigm, anxiety is an interpersonal and affect regulation problem. Through affective neuroscience, Sullivan's interpersonal theory and Fonagy's mentalization theory, it is possible to develop a relational theory of anxiety. The amygdala plays an important role in implicit learning of relational representations characterized by anxiety, which inhibit affective regulation. Finally, some limits relating to the integration of psychoanalysis and neuroscientific research are presented.

Key words: *Anxiety, affect regulation, relational psychoanalysis, neuroscience*

Introduction

According to psychoanalytic paradigm, in the clinical setting, enormous importance has always been attributed to the ego's ability to cope with a particular type of affect: anxiety. Sigmund Freud (1915, 1933) expounded two different theories on the origin of anxiety.

Before expounding the two Freudian theories on anxiety, it is appropriate, for the thesis that I present in this article, to clarify the distinction between anxiety and fear. According to Laplanche and Pontalis (1967) in classical psychoanalytic theory fear is linked to a specific external object, while anxiety is an existential state that does not appear to be linked to a specific object, it's a feeling, called also anguish, that in the Freudian economic model comes from the lack of discharge of internal impulses. But as we will see in the relational-interpersonal model anxiety comes from the outside, that is from affect regulation difficulties inside the mother-child relationship. With the rejection of the drive theory promoted by relational theory (Mitchell, 1988), the original distinction between fear and anxiety seems to have been nullified. The theory that anxiety develops from real fears born within the mother-child relationship has already been discussed by Winnicott (1956), who has made a great contribution to the insights described in this article.

Freudian theory

According to the first Freudian theory, anxiety is the result of the massive use of repression. For Freud, the affection joined to the representation turns into anxiety, in particular the process of transformation is the most important part of repression. The unconscious affect would thus be saved in the form of anxiety, specifically a part of libido is transformed into anxiety. For example, according to Freud, in the phobia the impulse was transformed into anxiety and shifted to an external danger.

While in the second Freudian theory, anxiety becomes a signal that announces a situation of

danger for the ego, which defends itself through defense mechanisms. For Freud it is no longer the repression that generates the anxiety, which would have existed even before the implementation of the defensive mechanism, but is the anxiety that generates the repression. Anxiety is linked to internal drive, in fact the drive satisfaction would be associated by the child with an external danger. For example, in the anxiety of castration, the sexual desire directed towards the mother is threatened by the castration of the child's penis. The drive investment that generates anxiety must be repressed, revoked and neutralized by the ego.

According to Morris Eagle (1993), in the second theory of anxiety sexual and aggressive desires are naturally and intrinsically enemies of the Self and therefore represent threats to the very survival of the person. From this perspective, a weak or immature ego would be faced with an excess of excitations of internal or external origin, which cannot be dealt with. The danger felt by the ego, at the origin of the sense of anxiety, is linked to the failure to satisfy the growing tension generated by desires. The anxiety would be linked to a fear of indomitable instinctual forces. In this model, the excessive drive can damage the ego. At the basis of all this there would be a primary antagonism between the id and the ego, which goes beyond the relational context in which the subject is inserted. Eagle states that the model proposed by Freud would be characterized by a strong contradiction linked to our biological nature, which is expressed through the fact that man born naturally with drives and an ego to which these drives are intrinsically enemies, as if the individual was "allergic" by nature to drives, which have always been entrusted to man through nature. Moreover, for the author, it seems that this model is not based on clinical evidence, but on a Freudian based idea that excessive arousal constitutes the prototypical danger situation for the ego, and that the primary source of this excessive arousal is the tension coming from instinctual needs which are not discharged.

Eagle writes: “*The idea that instinctual impulses, particularly those of great intensity, are inherently dangerous to the ego stems from an a priori model of tension reduction in human behavior as well as a concept of the tranquil nervous system in its natural state and ideal, and disturbed to varying degrees by excitement*” (Eagle, 1993, p.122).

On the other hand, the conceptualization of anxiety in the works of Harry Stack Sullivan, who contributed to the birth of relational thinking in psychoanalysis, is different.

Sullivan's theory of Anxiety

In the model proposed by Sullivan (1953), greater emphasis is attributed to the interpersonal relationship between mother and child in the genesis of the sense of anxiety (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983). In order to satisfy the child's innate biological and emotional needs another person must be present, conventionally the mother, who, through an empathic process, regulated the affect arousal of children, experiencing the condition of tension created in the child by unmet needs as her own. All this is defined by Sullivan with the term “*tender behavior*”: the first mother-child relationships generate a need for tenderness that is fundamental in the development of the child's psyche, but not only that, these relationships allow optimal development from a neurobiological point of view (Schoore 2003). For Sullivan, anxiety isn't the result of a libidinal excess, but the child's perception of the anxiety that his own tension has transmitted to the mother. The anxiety is “*caught*”, captured by the mother, it is the relationship with her that generates tension and anxiety.

The child thus begins to divide his relational experiences with the caregiver based on the degree of anxiety they generate. Thus there are experiences characterized by an absence of anxiety, the “good mother”, and experiences characterized by a strong anxiety, the “bad mother”. The child will build his own self based on the validating responses of the environment.

Relational experiences without anxiety give rise to what the author calls “good me”, while behaviors that generate anxiety first in the caregiver and then reflected in the child are structured in the “bad me”. In addition, according to Sullivan, there is a third condition: in cases where a behavior produces too strong anxiety in the caregiver (and then in the child) it is excluded from consciousness, “dissociated”, in what is defined by the author as “not me” (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983).

In Sullivan's model personality is structured through “security operations” implemented to avoid the anxiety who is generated by the interpersonal context. The bad me and the not-me represent the parts of the self that generate the sense of anxiety in person.

As noted by Fonagy (2003), the evolutionary model proposed by Sullivan in the constitution of the self and anxiety is incredibly in line with the theory of emotional development presented by Gergely (1996), and on which the evolutionary theory of mentalization is based. The child has no symbolic capacity from birth to represent his own internal states, his arousal state acquires meaning thanks to the mirroring maternal response to the child's condition. If this is distorted due to the anxiety generated by the interpersonal situation (what Sullivan defines as a bad mother), the activation experience in the child can be distorted in the same way, leading him to “take” the anxiety from the other.

The development of anxiety in Sullivan's model therefore seems to be compatible with modern data from Infant Research. Both the theorists related to the theory of mentalization and the theorists related to the interpersonal-relational perspective believe that anxiety is an affect born within a specific interpersonal context and not the result of excessive libidinal energy not discharged.

The Social biofeedback theory

The social biofeedback theory ideated by Gergely and Watson (1996) explains the child's affective development by integrating

data from developmental psychology, attachment theory and mentalization theory. This theory explores the way in which the child's affective expression and the mother's emotional facial and vocal responses are connected in the child's mind, through a process of contingency. In this way the child associates the control he is able to exercise over the mirroring manifestations of the parents with the consequent improvement of his emotional state. Through this experience of mirroring, the child learns to regulate his own affective states, developing a sense of agency. The caregiver's ability to mentalize, and therefore to tune into the child's affective states, is crucial in regulating the self:

"The establishment of a second order representation of affective states it creates the basis for affective regulation and impulse control: affects they can be manipulated and downloaded both internally and through action, and they can also be experienced as something recognizable e therefore shared" (Fonagy et al. 2002, p.341).

As said before, the mirroring process must not only be contingent, but "marked". In fact, according to Fonagy, the mother have to communicate that the feelings she is experiencing are not really her feelings, that is, they do not constitute an indication of how she really feels.

In the absence of markedness, the child perceives the affects projected on the mother's face as not his own. This leads to an increase in emotional arousal, instead of its regulation, its "containment".

The ability to be able to respond adequately to the affective manifestations of the child allows the latter to internalize mental states that can represent and regulate affective processes. In this sense, an adequate synergy is created between affection, body and psyche. However, the mother must also be able, through complex linguistic and semi-linguistic processes, to make her child understand that her behavior and those of others are motivated by beliefs or desires, which constitute mental states. In short, according to Fonagy, only within an adequate intersubjective context can arise a symbolic

thought who is functional to the regulation of affects and impulses (Fonagy et al., 2002).

Fonagy's model draws inspiration from Bion's theory of the development of a thinking psychic apparatus (Bion, 1962). The part of the personality that allows to transform the somatic sensations, the affects, in thoughts takes the name of alpha function. For Bion the mother-child relationship is crucial in the development of alpha function. For Bion the affects that are not transformed into thought are called beta elements. According to the author beta elements are at the origin of anxiety, also called "nameless terror".

According to Tronick (2005), the mutual regulation of affective states is indispensable in expanding the "diadic states of consciousness", which contribute to the more complex organization of the infant's mental states. The communicative exchanges, verbal and not, within the relationship of attachment, are essentially aimed at regulating the affective states of the child. Communication is mainly based on the face-to-face exchange between the child and the caregiver. According to Tronick, the infant and caregiver are part of a system of affective communication in which the emotional reactions and affective experience of the infant are determined by the affective expression of the caregiver and by the implicit understanding of that expression by the infant, and vice versa, the caregiver's emotional experience and behavior are determined by the affective communication of the infant.

To illustrate this diadic regulatory process, Tronick devised an experimental paradigm called "Still Face" based on the microanalytic study of face-to-face communication between mother and infant. Several joint states can be encoded between the two: states that may coincide (Match), relatively close states (Conjoint) or distant states (Disjoint) (Tronick, Als, & Adamson, 1980).

Returning to Sullivan's theory on the development of anxiety, it can now be understood how he linked this concept to difficulties on caregiver affective mirroring. From a relational perspective, the affects and behaviors that generate distress in adults are

the result of learning processes related to the first attachment relationship. The concept of signal anxiety as defined by Freud can be reformulated today as an implicit process, probably mediated by the amygdala, which signals those affects and behaviors that have not been adequately reflected by the caregiver, since they have generated in the latter a strong sense of distress.

The contribution of neuroscience: Towards a neuropsychodynamic hypothesis

From a neuroscientific point of view, the amygdala can represent the neuronal substrate involved in the implicit processing of affective stimuli, giving shape from a psychic point of view to what Freud identified with the concept of signal anxiety. The amygdala is a group of interconnected structures that are part of the limbic system (Purves et al. 2017). It represents a center of integration of emotions, in fact, the studies by Downer (1961), and more recently by LeDoux (2015), have allowed us to observe the important role that the amygdala plays in the processing of stimuli endowed with a emotion, especially those related to fear. The amygdaloid complex plays an important role in comparing new stimuli with past experiences, it can be defined as the archive of our emotional memory thanks to the complex interactions with the neocortex and hippocampus. The amygdala analyzes the emotional value of the memories stored in the hippocampus, giving the memory an affective tone. When the amygdala processes a target stimulus, it activates the release of hormones that trigger the fight or flight reaction. According to Solms and Turnbull (2002) the lateral and central nuclei of the amygdaloid complex are the heart of the basic emotional system of fear, the balance between attack responses and escape responses is apparently determined by the interactions between the medial parts and latero-central of the amygdala. From an evolutionary point of view, the fear system allows us to quickly

escape from extremely distressing situations, avoiding them even in future situations.

Adolphs, Tranel and Damasio (1994) described a case of a patient suffering from selective bilateral lesions of the amygdala which allows us to observe how this anatomical structure is fundamental in the management of the anxiety-fear system (Panksepp & Biven, 2012). The patient was gifted with a remarkable intelligence, she was a woman able to understand everything at a very high cognitive level, who knew well what the concept of fear was. However, from a perceptive point of view, she could no longer recognize fear in the facial expression of others, nor was she capable of producing a scared facial expression. More significantly, her behavior was totally fearless, which led her to have an excess of trust in others. The life of this patient was marked by the fact that she was unable to activate negative responses in an adaptive way, that is, when such responses were required by the surrounding environment.

The anxiety-fear system is influenced by learning mechanisms, in fact, although it is an innate system, it is susceptible to life experiences, especially early ones. Within the system, representations are formed that are mediated by the intersubjective context in which the individual is inserted, as Sullivan (1953) observed anxiety can be learned in the interpersonal context. An emotional mirroring that is not very congruent with certain internal states of the child, characterized above all by an anxious state on the part of the caregiver, can trigger implicit learning processes in which these internal stimulations are associated with fear responses.

LeDoux's studies (2015) have allowed us to observe that in part the assessments of the amygdala towards specific stimuli depend on the subject's evolutionary history. The connections that associate the noxious stimulus, or the object to be afraid of, with the responses of fear-anxiety are connections that are established extremely quickly, and are then kept outside one's own consciousness, that is, they are unconscious. After a stimulus,

which can be external or internal, is associated with a painful experience, the fear system is immediately and automatically activated each time that stimulus is encountered again, even before it is consciously recognized. This form of learning is mediated by a "fast and imprecise" neuronal path in which the amygdala transmits information to the periaqueductal gray completely excluding cortical consciousness, which explains why some people may feel anxious without knowing why, in these subjects anxiety is associated with a learned unconscious representations (Solms and Turnbull 2002). In particular, according to Schore's research (2003), the right hemisphere plays a key role in the implicit processing of affective stimuli.

According to Schore (2003) early failed experiences in the first relationships with the caregiver lead the subject to resort to dissociation as an affective self-regulation strategy. The affects are thus evaluated negative by the subject based on the caregiver's response. Adopting the neuroscientific point of view it can be said that traumatic attachments form stressful affects induce maladaptive responses from the neurophysiological point of view. It should be remembered that it is not a question of examining only the verbal or explicit reactions of the caregiver, but above all it refers to pre-verbal reactions such as facial expressions, prosody and gestures, which can unconsciously communicate a sense of discomfort in the comparisons of the affective states shown by the child. As LeDoux (2015) observes, the intersubjective context can contribute to the conditioning of the amygdala towards those affects that in dysfunctional relationships have not received the right mirroring, that tender behavior emphasized by Sullivan.

By adopting a neuropsychodynamic point of view, the affects and behaviors which the

caregiver responds with anxiety do not allow the child to acquire an adequate capacity for affective regulation, forcing the latter to have to dissociate such affective experiences that have not received adequate parental mirroring, in this case the child is forced to implement internal defensive operational models against such dissociated affects, such as anxious avoidant, anxious ambivalent and disorganized attachment. The concept of dissociation referred to here is the one proposed by relational psychoanalysis, especially by Bromberg's theory (1998) in which dissociation becomes a constitutive process of the mind, and that only in the case of psychopathology does it become dysfunctional, not allowing the adequate management of the affects linked to specific states of the Self.

The states of the Self not mirrored by the caregiver generate in the child, as described by Sullivan (1953), a state of anxiety processed by amygdala. Those dissociated traumatic memories compromise the individual adaptive abilities (Mancia 2005). In relational terms, danger is not associated with the return of the repressed drives, as Freud (1933) had stated, but rather with the possibility of being able to relive those affective experiences that have not been adequately reflected, and that have been implicitly associated with the system of fear through the amygdala.

Relational trauma, attachment and amygdala

In the development of traumatic memories, associated with the development of signal anxiety, the concept of relational trauma developed by Hill (2015) becomes relevant. For the author, referring to the neuroscientific research of Schore (2003), relational trauma is a chronic misattunement of affective states in the attachment relationship¹. It is an

¹ According to Bowlby (1988), attachment behavior is that form of behavior that manifests itself in a person who follows or maintains a closeness to another person believed to be able to face the world appropriately. Ainsworth (1978) identified three major models of

attachment: the first called secure attachment in which the individual has confidence in the availability, understanding, and help that the parent will give him in case of adverse situations. The second called ambivalent attachment in which the individual does not

invisible trauma, not clearly evident, in which persistent difficulties in affective attunement on the part of the caregiver lead to psychoneurobehavioral defects in the primary emotional regulation system. From a neurobiological point of view, this difficulty would be mediated by the amygdala which processes those affects linked to traumatic relational memories as a signal of anxiety. According to Hill, the different forms of insecure attachment, which can be re-conceptualized as defensive behaviors (Fonagy, 2003), impair the ability to regulate affects in various ways. Avoidant attachment predisposes the child to respond to stress through hypoarousal strategies, mediated by the parasympathetic system. Ambivalent attachment, on the other hand, leads the subject to respond to stress through hyperarousal strategies, mediated by the sympathetic system. Finally, the trauma related to disorganized attachment is more serious than those already described, in fact the disorganized adult responds to stress through extreme forms of hyper- and hypoarousal, witnessing a simultaneous activation of the parasympathetic and sympathetic system.

Relational trauma would thus give rise to dissociated states of the self, encoded in traumatic memories by the amygdala, which would be managed in a dysfunctional way by the different forms of insecure attachment. From a neuroscientific point of view, the amygdala unconsciously evaluates external stressors that can reactivate internal traumatic experiences, activating the individual's usual defensive modalities. While subjects with secure attachment are able to implement flexible and adaptive behaviors, making use of adequate mentalization skills, those who are characterized by forms of insecure attachment put in place rigid defenses that prevent adaptation to different relational contexts.

have the certainty that the parent is available or to give help if called into question. The third called avoidant attachment in which the individual expects to be rejected by the caregiver. Subsequently, Main (Main &

Leigh McCullough: Affect phobia

Recently, psychologist Leigh McCullough (2003) introduced the concept of "affect phobia" in order to re-conceptualize the classic concept of intrapsychic conflict in the light of the theory of affective regulation. According to McCullough, by integrating the behaviorist theory with the new dynamic perspectives, phobic reactions do not develop only in relation to external stimuli but also towards internal ones, that is the affects. In a specific relational environment, certain affects can be associated with dysfunctional emotions, such as anxiety or shame. According to the author, the sense of guilt, anxiety and shame can be conceptualized as inhibitory affects, which can counteract the expression of other affects.

McCullough's theory (2003) is in line with what has been exposed so far in this article, in dysfunctional relationships the affects of the child can be associated with anxiety due to traumatic relational models in which the caregiver has not shown adequate empathic mirroring. This form of learning, mostly unconscious, would be mediated from a neurophysiological point of view by the amygdala, a structure that plays a fundamental role in the processing of affective stimuli, and whose representations are susceptible to the life history of the subject.

In line with McCullough, the intrapsychic conflict is not the result of endogenous instinctual drives that seek a way of discharge, but the result of the association between inhibitory anxiety and affects. It is thus possible to observe how the relational-intersubjective context shapes those intrapsychic dynamics that have always been discussed by classical psychoanalysts.

The term phobia is used by McCullough as a metaphor to express the avoidance of affective stimuli by individuals with various psychopathological disorders. For the author,

Solomon, 1986) identified another attachment pattern called disorganized in which the individual manifests a contradictory and stereotypical behavior towards the caregiver.

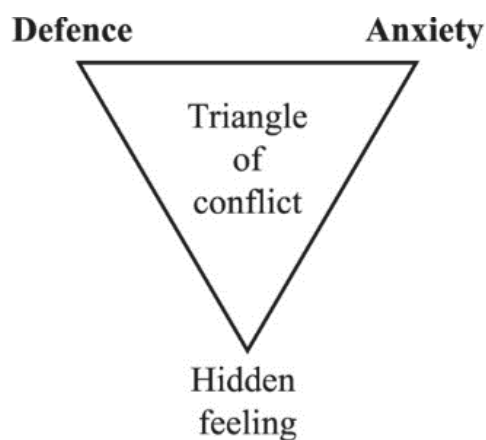
the therapeutic goal is to provide a new relationship that allows the subject to desensitize phobic affects, that is, a relationship that allows the dissolution of those affective conflicts born in specific traumatic relational contexts.

A new theory of conflict

Ezriel in 1952 introduces the conflict triangle (figure 1), later taken up by Malan in 1979. According to Malan this triangle partially summarizes a cardinal principle of psychodynamic psychotherapy. In the triangle of conflict at the extreme left there are the Defenses (D), at the extreme right the Anxiety (A) and at the lower extreme the Impulses and unconscious Feelings (I / S).

In every psychodynamic therapy the patient is helped to recognize their own dysfunctional defenses put in place to protect themselves from the awareness of their own drives that are a source of anxiety. Malan's scheme, although anchored to a mono-personal vision of psychic conflict, is an excellent reference to summarize what has been said so far. From a relational point of view, the affects that generate anxiety or stress are those internal stimuli that have been associated with the fear system, through the mediation of the amygdala.

Figure. 1 Malan conflict triangle



In a maladaptive context, the subject responds to these stimuli with defensive responses which, from a behavioral point of view, manifest themselves with forms of insecure

attachment, which will then be internalized in internal operational models that give shape from the intrapsychic point of view to the various defense mechanisms highlighted by the classical psychoanalysis. In other words, the intrapsychic conflict as represented graphically by Malan is the result of implicit learning processes that originate in the intersubjective context, determined by the child's primary need for attachment. Similarly, McCullough (2003), more simply, defined conflict as the result of an unconscious association between affect and aversive response, in this case from the activation of the fear system.

Conclusions

This article has attempted to bring together different perspectives born in both psychoanalytic and neuroscientific fields on a crucial issue for psychopathology, namely that related to the regulation of anxiety. Psychoanalytically oriented clinicians have always been interested in how the subject regulates his own feelings of anxiety associated with the drives coming from the Id. In particular, classical psychoanalysis has focused its attention on how the Ego, from an evolutionary perspective, masters the instinctual drives of the Id through defensive mechanisms that gradually become more adaptive. In doing this, however, psychoanalysis has not taken into account the environmental-relational factors that intervene in the management of affects, and specifically in the learning of aversive responses characterized by anxiety. As Morris Eagle (1993) observed, it almost seems that for classical psychoanalysis the instinctual drives of the Id are intrinsically enemies of the Ego.

From this point of view, the research born in the neuroscientific field becomes important for psychoanalysis only if we refer to the relational movement, in which the intersubjective context becomes fundamental in the genesis of all those intrapsychic phenomena described by classical psychoanalysis. For example, the idea that the

amygdala can represent the neuronal substrate of the concept of signal anxiety takes on an important meaning for psychoanalysis only if we refer to the concept of signal anxiety as the result of implicit learning processes related to the intersubjective context of the patient.

However, this article has several limitations, first in psychoanalytic field the concept of anxiety takes on different meanings based on the theories proposed by the different authors, making it difficult to define univocally what anxiety is. In this article, reference is made to Freud's definition of anxiety, which in 1926 defines anxiety as a signal put in place by the Ego in front of a dangerous situation in order to avoid being overwhelmed by the influx of excitations related to a previous traumatic situation. By traumatic situation we mean a non-controllable influx of too numerous and too intense excitations. As I have emphasized several times in this article, from the relational point of view, the out-of-harmony

between caregiver and child must be considered as a traumatic situation, out-of-harmony that produces traumatic memories, very often dissociated, which are managed by the amygdaloid complex.

A second limitation of the article consists in the not easy overlap between psychological concepts and studies related to neurobiology, although they may be compatible, there is always a gap linked to the patient's subjectivity, something that psychoanalysis has always tried to investigate with its own method. It is important, however, that psychology, especially dynamically oriented psychology, dialogues with affective neuroscience, being able to explain the "tools" through which psychic facts are manifested, even if by adopting this method one can easily commit a oversimplification of mental functioning.

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The Smell of the Soul and the Smelling Soul

Mengheri Mario

Abstract

Starting from a oneiric representation with a strong emotional-olfactory content (miasma, fetid smells), is reported a narration linked to the author's early life, evoking poignant, painful and nostalgic memories. An exploration of an olfactory path to the unconscious emerges through a synchronistic and incubative relationship between the events related to the health emergency of the Coronavirus pandemic and the transpersonal dimension of the Anima mundi. In this imaginal space, memories and primordial images with a strong mythic content converge. From the image of a poet who reads her writings, the author found himself immersed in his uncanny restlessness, in his uneasiness. These emotional tones accompanied him on his return home and, during the night, in a particularly significant dream. He perceived and sensed its evocative potentiality, in turn capable of activating ancient domestic images moving forgotten sulphurous smells. Just as the complex structures its roots in the collective unconscious, so these sensory/olfactory images are combined with «Shadow stench». In a diaphanous, nebulous and protean interlayer, the images slowly transformed, giving back, as in an airy and clean room, a condition of well-being that the author was able to collect in a suggestive poem. The numinous experience deeply shaken the psyche and the reflective processes themselves towards moments of intense and courageous creativity. A short biography covered the entire writing, paying full homage to a differentiating ulteriority that was waiting for the path to exist. The emergence of meaning was synchronistically captured through a sort of perturbing emotional and collaborative intelligence between Covid-19 and adaptive self-organizing symbolic systems: hence the way to a poem that, in memory of distant times but not too much, emerged by giving itself to the contention between the two co-protagonists of the dream: the author and the Irish goddess Badb Catha (battle crow).

Key words: *corona-virus emergency; synchronicity; dream; individuation*

Corona virus emergency

We are facing
a health emergency,
to an economic emergency,
to a political emergency,
to a psychological emergency - the signals of
which have been coming to us for some time
from numerous requests - the media does not
speak of this. Such is the insensitivity to the
suffering of those with mental disorders or
discomforts. The problem of mental health is
too often seen as an argument between
trivialization and marginalization.

The levels of social stigma associated with
this unease remain high.

We PSY professionals are there and we offer
our psychotherapy support and contribution
in a dialogical confrontation, alongside those
who need us. We are psychotherapists on the
Coronavirus front line intending to question
and reflect on the feelings of finitude,
helplessness, existential anguish, «emotional
and physical earthquake», which dramatically
and, apparently suddenly, characterizes the
particular moment of individual and
collective life that we are experiencing. With
an open look, we intend to proceed, on a path
of awareness, in the search to give meaning to
themes of painful relevance such as:
complementarity of birth-death, beauty-
horror, domination of the will to live and
anguish of death, vulnerability and feeling of
impotence. Through an appropriate and
conscious approach, we wish to accompany
the *mysterium* of living and dying, in the
consideration that this natural process often
remains prisoner in an eternal circle of fear
that generates further fear. Promethean
identification leads to false hopes of food
immortality in particular by those entrusted
with the power of living and dying (doctors,
surgeons, scientists, legislators, politicians,
etc.) which involves perceiving and living the
world as an chthonic enemy of death. But if
you do not want to risk giving up your life,
you need to rely on your own emotional
experience, on inner sacredness and, through
greater self-centering, commit ourselves to
weakening fear by measuring ourselves with

the demons of our time and letting them go
with their effects of dehumanization.

Death and rebirth, dismemberment and
recomposition are the great trials that every
individual, who wants to acquire a new
knowledge and a new knowledge must face in
order to complete his mission of a life worth
living and not risking, for an unsustainable
position, the evil of living. What today man
desperately tries to escape from more than
from death, understood as the limit of his own
existence, is from the recognition and
comparison with his own, necessary
transience. Denying it means wanting to be
like the gods, it is perversion and betrayal, it
is doing violence by declaring war against
oneself and against others.

In order to be accepted and not feared, the
theme of death requires a look to which, both
individually and collectively, we are no
longer accustomed, but the only possible one
remains: it is an open look on myth and
mythical imagination, where the psychic
presence of death tends to be restored by the
voice of the unconscious.

Looking the Gorgone in the eyes and
revealing through its double face, the
numinous inner and outer reality, offers the
possibility to release blocked energy not
recognized in its true essence and pacify the
mind-body. Knowing how to welcome and
integrate in the unpredictable dance of life the
ghost of death kept in the mind and in the
depths of each of us, revealing its horror and
beauty, is configured as a fertile care for
oneself and for the Other.

The profound call to change that the C-virus
epidemic imposes, challenges and encourages
us to descend to the Underworld and, having
crossed the door of Dite, reach the hidden
treasure and return, *Deo Concendente*, to see
the stars again!

Jung (1958) writes: «The effect at which I aim
is to produce a psychic state in which the
patient begins to experience with his nature a
state of fluidity, change and becoming, in
which nothing is eternally fixed and petrified
without hope» (*Opere*, p. 54).

What now unites us about *Anima Mundi* is her dark side, the *Umbra Mundi*. The Coronavirus, the bringer of death is the invisible enemy of unprecedented violence that moves among us, dragging us into its vortex. It is like indomitable fire that blazes and *burns* anyone it meets in its path. But how fire destroys and sheds light. It is everywhere, it is the *mysterium tremendum et fascinas* that invades and infects, moving death and terror, melancholy and individual and collective ghosts that swallowed and felt, expelled are in us, hidden inside a crypt, the primordial uterus of the Mother Goddess, the unconscious, the ring of conjunction between life and death. What do we tie the *Umbra mundi* to? Metaphorically to the pandemic, which in turn is linked to the air, to the breath that leads to the idea of the vital *breath*, the Soul of the Greeks, archetype of life itself.

'The Covid-19 pandemic has caught us off guard and left us speechless, petrified. The image that calls to mind is the primary Cry, the gaze of Medusa, the *scream* in the work of Edvard Munch, whose underlying archetype, is still that of life itself, to come to light: the birth of the Child, to whose cries the answer is not the gag, but the *Here I am*, the loving embrace of a mother or, at least, the welcoming gaze of a mother sufficiently present to share eye contact.

Only in this way, similarly, the horror of so much pain and death can presage the capacity of a response mediated by the archetypal defenses of the Self, which activated, enantiodynamically, solicit the complementary and inclusive incubation of a new sense of community and shared sociality. A few months after the appearance of the unexpected stranger, I see a small light. Together with anxiety, anguish, isolation and so much destruction, unexpected and timid, fragile reciprocity already emerges, heralding a new and broader sense of responsibility and belonging towards the rediscovery of that *high* and *other* otherness that is inherent in each of us. Making the most of the numinous pandemic experience can be a way to take and

find again, with a more harmonious and wiser step and breath, the meaning of one's life. It could also allow us to inhabit the present moment as a propitious time, *Kairos*, in which to grant us time and space for a more reflective and opportune look. A time no longer punctuated by rhythms pursued by the frenetic footsteps of victims and executioners of our time, who perpetuate, unaware, a perverse de-humanized and dehumanizing that brings loss of meaning, death and destruction.

We have deforested, polluted and defaced entire territories, wounded the earth, the sea and the sky, insulted and enslaved peoples, forgotten paternal figures and designated the evaporation of the Father; the old today is just an *old* whose physiological mental and physical diversity is often the subject of ridicule; *mortified our teachers, disqualified and humiliated the sacred values without building new ones. We have exiled from Olympus the gods who now, having become our symptoms and diseases, inhabit us. Hubris is rampant everywhere!* Like a boundless Titan with feet of clay, our existence, a prisoner of itself, crumbles at our feet leaving us helpless to moan fear and anguish: we do not know how to recognize ourselves, nor we know who we are and where we are going.

The blind urge of the psyche to maintain *status*, despite the worry of saying that «nothing will be the same», even when it is extremely painful for us, escapes our sight and awareness and deceives us, persuading us with the deception of be free and safe. In this way our psyche declares war on us and arms its / our borders and we make ourselves available to trade freedom for some security. How we fear the stranger, the different from us: a woman / man representative of the whole female/male gender, the homosexual, the disabled, the non-EU citizen, the Jew, the black, the yellow, etc., as well as the same way we are afraid of an inner change. But which is the foreigner? Before coming from outside the stranger lives in us. It is made up of those parts of extraneousness that belong to us and that we hide from ourselves and from

others because we do not understand and fear them. In each of us there is an Epimetheus, a Cain, a fratricidal *enemy*, a foreigner.

To live in health and harmony it becomes essential first of all to welcome, integrate and develop precisely the foreign-internal *one*. It is necessary to make this possible that our identity borders become permeable and plastic. It is the stranger who lives there, the person, the shadow, the complex, which can lead us to recover or maintain health by creating a breach in the rigid armor that, paranoically, we have erected as a reassuring element.

The Corona virus in this context can constitute a tragic resource, a way to try to recover from a decline in identity and regain the transgenerational heritage. If the fear of contamination in some way distances one from the other, having broken its wall, it can re-approach us by assigning each new identity and reciprocity.

New worlds will open up when our psychic boundaries, no longer defended and supported by *hubris* and omnipotence, will become plastic and permeable and a new dermis supported by an I originated and in dialogue with the Self, and therefore stronger, will surprise us capable of not to disperse ourselves merged into the insignificance and formlessness of the Titan, and to rejoice knowing how to welcome in reciprocity the stranger who is in us, that otherness that we are.

Dream Remembrance Reflection

Usually, we think about the *Anima Mundi* as a loving presence, as a Primordial Mother who acts in the psyche as a containing and helping generating force, capable of weaving the connection between people and between them and the world. We often neglect to consider the other aspects of its primordial character, in an ambivalent and transforming power. In addition to the aspect of a nurse she also possesses that of a devourer; it can nourish and save and at the same time destroy and generate. Equally neglected today is the category of Time, personification of the Primordial Father from which derives the sense of the I as an individual who over time has managed to separate from the Great Mother.

Ours is a Time ruled by the Titan¹ Chronos² (Saturn). It is a linear time that can be *numbered* by consciousness: Kronos/Senex, paternal law and finitude, but also a point of support and containment. It is the delimiting presence of the paternal function that allows the appearance of a cyclical time, *the propitious mixture*, for the construction of memory, *of due time* (Traverso, 1994), that of the child, of the Puer and not of Chaos : «Propitious contingency that gives rise to every identity, including the phenomenon of Mind or Consciousness» (Marramao, 1993), which offers the opportunity to re-actualize and re-elaborate an experience that had remained potential in the unconscious until then.

Zoppi (2006), revisiting Fissi (2000), remembers:

¹ The mythologem of the Titans, centered on the dismemberment of Dionysus and on the process of death and rebirth, constitutes a fundamental interpretative grid of the dynamics underlying many of today's pathologies, which we can think of as «diseases of borders».

² Cronus, when he was a son, I will castrate his father Uranus, precisely to allow the affirmation of a psychic dimension differentiated from the instinctual one «of the great cosmic night»: fusion with the maternal. Later, in the role of father, Cronus performing a symbolic act (he swallows his children),

will activate the paternal function, the law of the limit, which represents the first act of humanization of the individual and of the whole society as an effective and indelible antidote. to counteract the social involution towards a pre-human time dominated by the Titans. The destiny of man seems to be determined by the psychic balance of his dual nature, titanic and Dionysian, where the dominance of one and the banning of the other pole leads to a dangerous and destructive inflation and one-sidedness, that one-sidedness that, now creeping and subtle, it feeds on the liminal void, which the absence of myth has determined in the collective psyche.

«To consider the archetypes as *psychic organizers* that make possible the passage from the unknowable *noumenon* to the psychic experience. In other words, we can say that archetypes fulfill the fundamental function of *organizing the experience to make it thinkable* and for this reason they are placed in *the critical sphere of the interaction between body and psyche*, where the olfactory perceptions [...] visual, visceral, find the images, even before they find the words» (p. 78).

«Only occasionally in dreams we use hearing, touch, taste and, even more rarely, smell. Yet, as Heraclitus says even more rarely, smell. Yet, always as Heraclitus says» In Hades the souls they perceive by smelling »and, again, if all things became smoke, the nostrils would distinguish them from each other.

Smell, memory and interpretation

«Only occasionally in dreams we use hearing, touch, taste and, even more rarely, smell. Yet, as Heraclitus says even more rarely, the sense of smell. Yet, always as Heraclitus says, «In Hades the souls perceive by smelling» and, again, «If all things became smoke, the nostrils would distinguish them from one another» (Hillman, 1979).

In an interesting article the Jungian analyst Fred Plaut referred to our self-descriptive or autobiographical memory as a fundamental tool of our being-in-the-world, focusing on sensory perceptions and their role in interpretative processes. In particular, he addressed the study of the olfactory function in the analytic work by relating it to the intuitive functions and emerging interpretations. He emphasizes a constant and significant role in a daily life as the bearer of a real *mystical* character, probably unique among the senses. Analysts, perhaps even literally, don't sniff out their patients' secrets? «After all, we smell before we can interpret» (Plaut, 2009)

The smell can introduce an aura of mystery. We know that smell plays a crucial role in communication not only between animals trying to identify and recognize themselves by smell, but also between humans. A further object is to grasp the scope and meaning, underling the close relationship between memory, spontaneous associations and intuition. Interpretations not only come from audiovisual perceptions but extend to all other sensory perceptions: smell, more specifically. Intuition has often been commonly considered independent of sensory assumption. Plaut instead reiterates that sensory assumption precedes both intuition and memory, or memory.

The meaning of associative olfactory memories was recounted by Jung in an autobiographical anecdote. He noticed an unpleasant smell in the room where he was staying as a guest in an old farmhouse. He associated it with the stench coming from a patient with an open cancerous wound (Jung, 1950). But there was nothing in the room that could cause that smell. When he reported this sensation, he was told that the room was known to have been haunted by an unfortunate previous inhabitant.

The ability of smell to persist beyond the temporal dimension of the here and now has never been sufficiently explored in the psychoanalytic literature as an important factor of psychological impact. Writers can neglect to discuss it because often is associated with an adverse event. Generally, we welcome the scent of a rose and the other flowers, while the fecal odors, as well as other decomposition odors are considered repellents and then discarded or basically not considered as objects of interpretation. It is interesting and chemically proven that the biochemistry of many perfumes designed to cover or counteract unpleasant body odors actually resemble the same composition as the unwanted odor, albeit at lower concentrations.

The analytic process offers the opportunity not only to remember, but also to relive particularly significant events; the memory is

not only a discrete entity but, in all the circumstances that matter, is a fundamental aspect of the life of the whole person. In this regard we know that even the analyst's personal autobiographical memories sometimes sleep buried. It is a kind of knocking on the door, activating «a memory of a memory» (Plaut, 2009). It is a definite feeling that there, where there should be a clear memory, there may be an awareness of something that has been forgotten. Here the *flash* can appear as a recognition of a more relevant and significant meaning, which at the same time is also the most likely to remain in memory.

In less *lightning-fast* circumstances (i.e. the smell of the *mother's kitchen*), Plaut reminds us, smell is the relevant sense that can become the triggering factor when analogically similar circumstances are recreated. Therefore, the *meaning* seems to dwell in the sense of smell or taste itself and in the memory of taste or smell. Although memory is available to our consciousness it cannot always be transformed into words and repeated, yet it can be recalled. Plaut tried to open the door to new reflections on the complexity of the synaesthetic system as a gateway to memory and intuition. Smell and taste in particular are an integral part of the unconscious perceptions of the world and contribute to what is instinctive as openness to the imagination and the imaginal world. In fact, even the language we use supports the hypothesis that intuition comes from the unconscious perception of smell as well, like other more privileged sensations. This cannot fail to have important implications for analytic practice itself.

³ In Irish mythology *Badb* means *crow* or *vulture*. It was associated with war and death and appeared to herald mass deaths or to participate in battles, in which it created confusion among the soldiers and fed on the discord born of the conflict. She was a war goddess who took the form (also) of a raven, which is

With the night inside

This brief introduction to hint at how my wandering as a traveler in / of *my* life unfolded.

Over time, my experience, as an image of a karst river, had its underground points, emerging in dreams, images, sensations, perceptions and, for a long time, in profound inner silence. In this regard, a sentence by Verdi Vighetti is in tune with my feelings:

«*Karst time* is for me the expression of the hidden presence of the *tension* towards individuation, rooted in each individual or unconscious (Jung, 1946/1954, p. 219). It flows silently and parallel to the path of life and analysis and, from time to time, even in the absence of significant events, it emerges in the light of consciousness in the form of intuition, of sudden understanding of one's emotional state. Just like a spring of fresh water that gushes out of nowhere, at times assuming a negative, emotionally pregnant form that allows us to glimpse new glimmers of light and hope» (2012, p. 17).

One night at the time of Covid-19 something new happened.

In a dream, a fetid smell sprouted from a disturbing female figure. It was a pungent, sweet, sulphurous, putrid smell of decaying organic matter. Smell of death. That female figure I felt was a traitor, an affective manipulator, an instigator and a slanderer of souls, reported being *Badb Catha*³, Celtic goddess of death, personification of Hecate. No demonic figure from serpentine hair, but maybe through her, the smell with amazing ability and extreme nitid and ty has awakened a familiar memory. Memory led me back to 6-9 years of age. A putrid air floated, infecting the place where I grew up and in which I immersed myself every evening and from

why she was called *Badb Catha* (battle raven). He often caused fear and confusion among soldiers in order to shift the outcome of the battle in favor of his favorite (the positive counterpart), or to predict the death of some famous person.

which I was enveloped. Impregnating bones and flesh that smell reached up to the soul, becoming something not separated from me. It came from the bedside table that separated my bed, where I slept with my twin brother, from that of the *pater* grandmother. It was her stench, the stench of a wild female who doesn't ask, it is. The powerful image of *Badb Catha* in search of my soul with so much aggression or the stench moved by the fragile ancient grandmother, in the dream did not lose its energy on the contrary, it appeared a numinous reality. Abandoned the corporeal matter it was as if I perceived her pure form with the omnipotent faces of the Mother Goddess, who imposed, terrifying, her sacrificial tribute demanding a ransom, a recognition that only much later in the years I realize I had accepted by giving up a little selfishness. It was when Hecate rushed to Demeter's aid and heard her desperate cries for the kidnapping of her daughter from afar. Demeter, Mother, with blond ears, mistress of life and mistress of death, when she does not receive the right consideration, she manifests herself by hindering the normal flow of life at the level of individual and collective consciousness, determining consequences on the birth and especially on dying, making the earth sterile, arid, lifeless, unable to (re) welcome its fruit into its bosom.

The dream begins to activate me a timid indistinct awareness of existing that allowed to make contact with the reality surrounding myself, a depriving and constricting physical, psychic and social environment in which I felt thrown.

I perceived a desire to move away from the place of my origins inhabited by miasmas, pollutions, promiscuity of age, caused by the lack of physical and psychic space, by an inability, innocent of knowing how to grasp the significance of the needs for affection that for contingent social and cultural, could not have fully recognized and restored me. The priority was *survival*. The condition of lack, scarcity was what characterizes the time of each post war.

Of the five senses, olfaction, linked to the animal condition and primordial survival tool, is the one most connected to memory, the privileged builder of the building of remembrance⁴ of Proustian memory.

The smell activates the rhinencephalon circuit and helps to stay in the instinct, in the emotion that one feels, disconnecting, at least temporarily, the rational part.

The intense unpleasant olfactory perception announced an initial and dark sensation of presence in the world that over time would have allowed me to give meaning to events and could have turned into freedom to design. «A being for death» as Heidegger says, a reality from which, once overcome,

⁴ From the Latin the etymology of the verb to remember, *re-cordare*, composed of the particle re-again, backwards, indicating the return, and cor-da *còrdis* -cuore, considered the seat of memory, recalls the fact that nature memory itself, its cause and purpose reside in the heart. A well-tuned memory is always moved by emotions. Mnemosine, the Memory, was the third wife of Zeus. With her he slept for nine nights to have children who protected the arts and sciences of men. Nine beautiful girls were born, the Muses, inspirers of the liberal arts, who governed poetic inspiration and all intellectual activities. They represented the supreme ideal of Art, understood as the truth of the whole, or the eternal magnificence of the divine. They symbolize not only the importance of poetry as a memory of tradition, but also - almost inversely - the importance of memory as a mnemonic learning as a guarantee of transmission of poetry. Mnemosine, goddess personification of memory, whose kingdom, opposite to the lethal one of oblivion, is the immaterial but vital space of memory that evokes the soul of things.

There are the treasures of the innumerable images of all sorts of things that sensations bring. There is the possibility for men to know and participate in the sacred and the divine, the sacred and the divine that he carries in his memory. Each gesture repeats a divine model and every moment flows from the silence of the origins. IT IS Mnemosine who chooses from the present what to transform from the past. It is memory, inscribed within each of us, which gives continuity to existence and which binds us to the origin and the future. To reach coveted goals and overcome moments of crisis, even today's man can make use of the gifts of Mnemosine, creativity, art, poetry.

Plato recalling the dialogue between Socrates and Menon argues that the soul must never be destroyed because it is immortal and, repeatedly reborn, has seen the world here and that of Hades, so he affirms that «knowing is remembering». Mengheri, citing Caramazza (2010, p. 55) reports that: «to know is to be born together with the known thing». It is a challenge. It is knowing and recognizing oneself, it is becoming aware again and in spite of everything (2016, p. 119; Mengheri 2018, pp. 108/1016).

the possibility of rebirth into a higher state of consciousness can filter. A key to understanding and living my life more deeply. If on the one hand the phenomenon, as a smell coming from the underworld, is synchronously capable to generate an irreversible change in the nature of things, producing an elevation, on the other hand, it can also diachronically become blindness or suffocation if we do not understand the nature of the thing. that we are smelling along with our limits. We know the devil used to manifest himself and recognize himself by smell.

«The unconscious is continually active, combining its material in ways which serve the future. It produces, no less than the conscious mind, subliminal combinations that are prospective⁵; only, they are markedly superior to the conscious combinations both in refinement and in scope. For these reasons the unconscious could serve man as a unique guide, provided that he can resist the lure of being misguided» (Jung, 1928, p. 117).

Thanks to the stench elicited by the dream and the female image in me, an important intuition sprouted and rose to the surface, like something that breaks the chains of sadness and anger that bound myself to my mother. Without knowing it, I lived that parallel time that flows imperceptibly to the conscience and marks (the times) of the psyche in tension towards an unknown goal to discover a more authentic self (Verdi Vighetti, 2012).

The constitution of an intermediate, imaginal space, the realm of oneiric, imaginative-creative activity and of thinkability had moved the limits of my boundaries, giving them a new form from which filtered a possible way towards differentiation, a potential *medium/re-medium*.

⁵ In epilepsy, in particular, frequent already an hour before the crisis, premonitory auras appear that can manifest themselves in many forms and affect one of the senses. The sense of smell is privileged. In this case it is a very characteristic and specific odor in each person who appears anticipating the seizure. It is

Regarding the review of what happened, Zoppi, recalling the thoughts of the Zurich master, writes:

«For Jung the memory traces undergo a selection process whereby only those connected to the main and significant experiences for the survival of the individual and the species are transmitted. So the archetype results from a typical form of an experience repeated over time, which led to the consolidation of memory traces, to the selection and integration of brain circuits and structures in affective patterns, central to the survival of the species, thus equipping the little one of man with a *facultas preformandi*, a possibility given a priori of the form of representation» (Jung, 1938-54, p. 81), necessary for the encounter with the world (2006, 77-78).

The *via regia* for the unconscious traveled thanks to the complexes brought the dream, the smell and the Goddess, making me cross a very rough and bumpy path until I touch the feeling of fear for the existence of something repugnant, source of anguish, psychic fragments buried in the archetypal structure of the psyche to be integrated into consciousness. Entering the imaginal and mythical territories of the relationship allows us to understand how much they, no less than reality, can be *real* and above all, can be experienced. In this regard, what Hillman asserts about the *certainty* of the myth *versus* the *truth* of the myth is significant.

Love can transform itself into a force that is not independent of the complexes, when Eros, already within them, is called to ignite Psyche and in some way to guide it, bringing love *to* the soul and *of* the soul. This is the true power of Eros. Psyche is highly flammable, evidence of this is the current epidemic of C-

a «specific individual» smell like an imprint of the psyche. An example would be the acrid and strong smell of a cat's urine. Aura which in this circumstance has a life-saving function.

virus which before being a viral epidemic is a psychic and sometimes emotional epidemic in the sense of Wilhelm Reich (*emotional plague*).

The Soul calls

The dimension of the soul, and everything that belongs to it is the home of the invisible. It all depends on what we trust. To believe *in* the invisible is to be *with* the invisible. The way to feel good is also to nourish the poetics of the mind and to root psychological action not so much in science as, *first of all*, but in aesthetics and imagination.

Today, the Corona virus pandemic has upset our daily lives and the psychological distress that affects everyone is serious. There are many patients who bear the most varied sufferings, archaic and ancient, personal and transpersonal. In this surreal and painful situation, dreams are more easily allowed to break through and manifest themselves. So, it was for me.

That image and olfactory perception, come back to visit me with their symbols and myths, have led me in the clearest possible way to grasp the sense of a reconciliation that has occurred in me and between me and the world.

By borrowing a lack with an image, I intended to trace a brief biography of the personal experiential path of my soul and of its sacrifice in search of an affectivity that could give myself and the other-from-me a bit of the full and serene emotional realization that today not only at work, but, above all thanks to my family, I feel I have achieved.

The soul, like nature, loves to hide herself. I believe that precisely that smell may have been the means to *smell* my soul and that of others, and at the same time move and encourage the desire and will towards the search for a renewed and restorative social and human redemption. I experienced a sort of emotional detachment from the place of origin dictated by an intimate need for change, which at the same time allowed me to

preserve, loving them, my grounded roots. My ability to mediate between the personal, family and social world made it possible to balance the opposite poles and to welcome not according to a disjunctive principle *or* that *or* those worlds, but *and* one *and* the others. This determined in the field of my conscience a sort of surrender and a feeling of freedom and pacification which, accompanying me through the impervious and karst territories of life, unraveled the knots of my personality, tracing my destiny and my goal.

The same dream reappeared in several nights and always following frustrating experiences such as the refusal to welcome in professional groups. The psychological differentiation of consciousness and the relative integration and growth of the assimilable portions of the unconscious must be able to evolve throughout the duration of our life. In a becoming that will be completed with a mutual influence of the parts and will continue to end and restart in «a reciprocal work of affective contamination, so to speak of *familiarization*, which on the symbolic level corresponds to the growth of the intrinsic feeling of the personality» (de Luca Comandini, 2019, p. 17). The crucial role of *feeling*, as a psychological function of orientation, is the trait that mainly distinguishes the relationship between consciousness and the collective unconscious. This function, then *inferior* in me, in the shadow, is now more present and has played a decisive role. He also moved with *Badb Catha*.

Again, de Luca Comandini: «The *sentiment* gives the measure of what is possible in the communication between the parties. As such, it is functionally connected to *Eros*, to the factor of cohesion and interchange between different people: what most needs to recover an adequate awareness for a humanity in disconnection, with respect to itself and its own context. [...] Familiarization between Man and his dreams is the cornerstone of this commitment of connection between *nature* and civilization, between the inner instinct disregarded by

contemporary humanity and the anxious compulsion that drives it, blindly, in an extroverted direction between omnipotence and impotence, feelings of guilt and irresponsibility» (*ibidem*, pp. 17-18).

A qualitative leap to symbolic awareness can take place with jungian active imagination a psychological- individuating vision which, using this imaginal process, has contributed to the thickness and breath of these few pages. Many and precious have been and will be the initiations that stud our fate in life, as many as there are wounds. I searched where love hides and therefore, I followed the path of the soul, of images, listened to the voice of the pagan goddess and of Demeter, which I already had within me, as an act of courage and not to withdraw from these appointments, to be - there.

When I woke up I took pen and paper to give shape to the dream and voice to *Badb Catha*, to allow her to exist, in me for me, a little more. Having overcome the lunar fascination of the secret Goddess, who at other times had prevailed and suspended my most ardent demands and the most tenacious resolutions to live, I understood and began to love her essential duplicity: contradictory and fullness of existence, trusting and welcoming. of the fruits of the world.

It was not I who guided the process but the image itself guided my hand in writing. Where was she taking me? What is its intentionality and purpose? The following poem is an amplification of the whole dream.

Here I am

You called me,
I'm here, in the middle of the night
barefoot in your hour
turned on you are dark and I reached you
A sheet of paper, a blue pencil,
a lot of you and me
You are sweet, oh how sweet you are!
Shadow and light, friend of heaven and earth
You ask me to be there
It is not a little thing, I do not know how to
escape.
Your black eyes,

blue drops, light, flaming in the night
What do you want, what are you looking
for? I softly ask
I am alone, alone in front of
our *soul, unus mundus*,
but you don't ask, you demand
You excuse your action with words:
«Let's talk about personal things».... «How I
didn't know...»
Do You give me protection? Or spell?
both live in you, both
the voice is blue, not the tones, the eyes, no
Not even the voice
Your mother knew,
my soul feels, sobs,
then she recovers and solemnly falls silent
silence
It is silence, deafening,
it gives no refreshment. I love silence
«Let's talk about personal things», you
repeat, or I repeat ... «How I didn't know»
How many years have I spent with and
among us.
The laughter, the fall, the thunderous
laughter of others,
which others? I don't remember them, yet a
hundred and more were,
no, not with us.
Even then clouds at the mercy of the wind,
others were not there
My soul, yours, the lock of hair that,
not with a novice manner did you correct,
you arranged, you did not welcome,
easier to fix,
speak, act,
block, destroy
Yet I have been knocking and, without rest
for years,
to your soul, far from appearing, closed,
locked
You have therefore sealed the heart. Since
that time? ... from before, from long before,
not center me in this closure.
A gift remains: the wait, a dream
Soul, bones, flesh and spirit
as an eternal stone.
He waits for his breath
I shell rosaries of burning sighs.
In the wind, a sound as friend
it is an odorous soul

you will know it.... we will know it.

Smell and the underworld

Hillman writes «Only the nose is not wrong» (1979, p. 176). If it is true that only the nose knows things, then I have not limited myself to imagining what I experienced in the dream simply as a vulgar event relating to instinct, or as an event from the past relating to ancient memory, but rather as something induced by entry. on stage of the intuitive function; «[...] I would consider the dream event as something essential, pneumatic, aesthetic, even ethereal. When we smell something, we are welcoming its spirit within us, so it is worth knowing what we are smelling. Ethereal can also mean otherworldly and arcane, in the diabolical sense; even the devil can be recognized by smell» (Hillman, 1979, p. 176).

It is interesting to remember how even in the epic of Gilgamesh, when Enkidu descends into the underworld, he is recognized alive by the souls because of his smell. Souls *feel* the smells of life. They gather around him, perhaps taken by the irresistible nostalgic call of life.

Thus, the phenomenon that occurred together with a smell came from the underworld. To discern the nature of which it was necessary to put myself, down in that world and question me and to sacrifice parts of myself. Commitment, fear and sacrifice are indispensable factors to propitiate the psychic movement and expand it to the awareness of one's soul.

I have developed the conviction that every form of literalization (be it word, phrase, speech, answer) is deadly, it opens the doors to darkness, to the shadow in its most tragic and sometimes paranoid ways.

Only the question gives depth to the possible meaning of existence. The Oedipal myth where the detachment from the Great devouring Mother is overcome by Oedipus only remembers this well. We humans, like the great problems of life, cannot be solved, but only overcome.

The struggle to free oneself from the Sphinx, the unconscious, requires a further and tenacious battle that is to be waged through life. Oedipus remained a prisoner of the only material expression of his person and has precluded the possibility of drawing on the *other* who is in himself and reaching the fullness of syzygy and adequately facing the challenge which his tragic existence imposed. In Jungian terms, it was a missed sacrifice, he did not listen to the voice of his heart. How powerful and meaningful Jung's words resound when he speaks of *Felix culpa*: «[...] He knows that one can miss not only one's happiness but also one's final guilt, without which a man will never reach his wholeness» (Jung, 1944, p. 33). Health is not just looking for the answers, but asking ourselves the right questions. The question must be able to wait for the unraveling of the thought it hides. The rejection of asking questions and probing the unknown proceeds parallel to the regime of psychological incest, to the one-sidedness of consciousness, in which contact with the unknown is rejected, the confrontation with the stranger in us, intimacy. with the different, the contamination and fertilization by the different.

The denial of symbolic thought suffocates the authentic value of all relationality. Respect for oneself and for the «other-than-itself» passes precisely through the relationship, it is an essential element, above all, for those who dedicate their lives to meeting, listening and welcoming others in the basic awareness that «we are the other».

Conclusions

Birth and death constitute the initiation processes that begin from infancy through the different stages of development up to maturity and old age to finish with death. Our health depends on psychically living each of these stages. The given soul, as every alchemist knows, asks to be worked, the material to be refined, the raw to be cooked, melted and coagulated many times. Passages after passages, from nigredo to albedo until

reaching the Great Work, the transmutation (principle of individuation) of the metal (I) into gold (Self) which manifests itself in the form. Thus, similarly, it happens with the interior initiatory work of each of us, aimed at discovering the full psychic potential that lies buried deep in the dross, to bring it to the light of consciousness. The Jungian *conjunctio* of matter and spirit is grafted into an *intermediate place* (*metaxù*), between the sensible and the real, where consciousness and psychic matter integrate interacting.

Metaphorically, birth and death are present and consubstantial in every real transformative experience, constituting the central nucleus, the very heart of the individual's realization process. Any progress towards greater awareness necessarily involves a real (change) and symbolic (sacrifice of the current identity) death, to which the individual opposes strenuous resistance. Even though it is a healthy transition that contains the promise of a truer and more authentic life, he may not turn to stoop towards the darkness from which he comes and listen to himself. Our mind is conservative, more inclined to security and certainty, sometimes to the point of rigidity and presumption. Very often a disjunctive, dichotomous vision makes us prisoners of one-sidedness. The omnipotence kingdom and the ego domain of consciousness tend to expand indefinitely towards the dissipation and death (entropy) and today we find ourselves totally unprepared to unconscious compensation (syntropy⁶) increasingly exposed to terrible psychic inflation and the risk of literally destroying the world we live in.

Covid19 has unexpectedly brought us closer to death, a *status* that affects everyone; and if

on the one hand, it seems to constitute an unacceptable existential check with respect to our omnipotent and narcissistic dimension, on the other it exposes us to a condition of greater receptivity and sensitivity in seeking the truths of the psyche. At the same time, the archetype of death seems to reopen and re-orient our gaze towards myth, towards a mythical imagination, listening to the voice of the soul.

In observing and revisit my dream experience I found full *synchronotopic* and *sychromorphic* adherence between self-regulation processes and psychic compensation during the evolution of my consciousness with the unconscious imagistic dimension and unpleasant olfactory (smell fetid miasma). At the same time, I perceived the subversive and disturbing nature of a terrifying and deadly collective shadow. The Great Mother/*Anima Mundi* and her suffocating and gloomy faces, of which the Corona virus, confronted the positive/negative sides of the evolution and historicization of my personality, became a weaver of this process in terms of protection/threat. Synchronistic events occurred as a result of simultaneous occurrences of two different mental states, one afferent to the inner world and the other to the outer world, both converging towards the same integrative and restitutive meaning. What had for some time been incubating in the depths of my soul had sprouted and which showed itself as awakening from a physical and psychic *sleep*, in the body-psyche, a unique matter where the somatic is already psychic even if it is fit for us unknown, which was incorrectly recognized as a separate existence.

⁶ Syntropic is the energy that governs every growth process in life, even healing. It implies the tendency to concentrate and absorb energy, the differentiation of complexity, the formation of structures and organizations. IT IS complementary energy to entropy, the second law of thermodynamics, also known as thermal death. The physical-material world is governed by the law of entropy, that is of causality, while the biological world is governed by the syntropic, teleological law of finality and attractors

where the law of attraction governs, to be understood as love that orients towards an end meaning. The physicist Fantappiè discovered, among other things, that entropic, causal energy is visible, while syntropic, retrocausal energy is invisible as it comes from the future. Our life lies between the visible (the past) and the invisible (the future). «And the invisible is perceived through the invisible, that is, by the psyche» (Hillman, 1996, 56).

The great renewals never come from above, but from below as trees do not grow from the sky, but from the earth although their seeds originally fall from above.

Only when we experience this vision in transparency, *through things*, is it possible for us to grasp the symbolic fullness of reality. Then we can truly become pearl fishers and stone seekers and our soul will be able to guess what really moves the world.

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