



Individual, Groups and Neurosis: Critical Review

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ABSTRACT

For Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, neurosis is a conflict between the impulses of the Id that press to be satisfied and the prohibitions of the Superego that, through the mediation of the Ego, attempt to slow them down for Alfred Adler, however, neurosis does not derive, unlike what Freud stated, from the conflict between the libidinal drives that press for affirmation and the internalized limitations of the Superego, but from a sense of inferiority that would prevent man from achieving his ideal half of virility and security. Neurosis would form within a typical nervous temperament. The question is to what extent a group can be inclusive or exclusive or, if we prefer, how more or less open the group can be in accepting new members. It seems reasonable to expect that any young group will have neither the desire nor the strength to be able to manage a highly neurotic/psychotic and therefore particularly destabilizing person. Only highly evolved groups, where aggregative and lateral thinking prevails, are able to manage the presence of the neurotic individual.

Keywords: Groups; Neurosis; Superego; Individual; Tolerance

INTRODUCTION

Neurosis could be generally defined as a condition of suffering of the psyche caused by disorders, of psychic chronic type (that is psychotic), that mixed together different symptoms for instance anxiety, fear, compulsions, hysteric symptoms with different characteristics for example inhibition, insecurity, emotive lability, interior conflicts.

Every psychological approach used to describe a mental disease, has a different conception in neurosis. Let's make two examples, in Sigmund Freud psychoanalysis nervosa's is a conflict between the drive of the Id that urged to be satisfied and the prohibition of the Super-Ego, that through mediation of the Ego, try to suppress them. For interpersonal psychoanalysis instead neurosis is an attempt to adjust the subject to the environmental and relational conditions not consonant for a healthy upgrade.

For Fromm E"every nevrosis are an example of this dynamic adjust, essentially an adjust of irrational external conditions (particularly those of childhood) and in general self-defeating to the growth and the development of the child". As confirm,

Morrone, writes "when a subject is divided and anguished because of his internal conflicts, suffering could give him a way to relieve this basic anxiety. Nevrosis is an attempt to obtain that". According to a psychotherapeutic approach, a vocational psychoanalytic interpersonal and cultural guidance, nevroses are pulsions of the subject that make him find the security he has not.

So at the basis of nevrosis, as affirmed by Morrone, there is anxiety, base foundation of the model of Horney. Basic distress (or basic anguish) that exist in the child throughout the relationship with his own first environment, not suitable for an authentic grown, so that the child "feels himself alone and helpless to be in a world he considers potentially hostile" (ibidem). Relationships with meaningful people can endure him to give up being authentic himself and prevent him from being in contact with his truly self. Everything to respond suitably to the environmental needs. This isolation from the real self creates a fake self that, like a dress that doesn't fit because not of the right size, lay the foundation of an abnormal development of the Super-Ego, a huge idyllic idea of the self and a silent renounce

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of our real characteristics. This kind of development can only embitter the neurotic trends that, as affirmed before, have the aim of helping people to survive in a hostile environment that does not leave us free to develop our real potentialities.

A child does not have any means to contrast these pressures and manipulations, and he does not have a psychological strength to face a separation. "What he feels, practically", Horney affirms "makes no difference, as long as he feels secure. Feelings and desires stop being decisive; the child is no longer subject but object of himself" and an object used and consumed by others.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Horney introduces the element of confusion dismiss of Truly Self in his same identity: the person does not know his truly aim in life, except for the praise of his caregivers (or of any other person that can use authority over him), neither has he a profound consciousness of who he is.

The basic anguish produced by this conditioned love and the missed consideration of being a subject and not an object to fulfill parental neurosis, can be sorted creating new neurosis (needs of being praised, research of an agonizing perfectionism, etc).

That is why the mother's neurotic instinct of being accomplished in the perfectionism of the child and the approval of her friends, can produce new neurotic instinct in the new generation.

We need to mention that in the teenager education, these neuroses are based on prohibitions or prescriptions culturally applied but made rigidly absolute (a child that satisfies his parents, is not a moot point!) which reconstruct the Super-Ego, the ideal Ego, this fake Self, the idealized image of Self that every person wants to find during his whole life. In the above example, the image of a good teenager deserving attention just only reaching good results.

Anyway that subject feels that something, mentally profound, does not go the right way in his life. Not everyone is able to embrace this awareness and try to really know himself, to get rid of his fake self and regain control of a dialogue with his real self. This comes from the inside with determination through a personal language that can assume different forms, from subtle discomfort in everyday life, to psychosomatic disorders not better understood.

"The human being wants to develop his human potentialities so that he can manifest the particular vital energies of his true self: clarity and depth of feelings, thoughts, desires, and interests", Horney says and Rogers echoes with his "current inclination of the Self".

In the end, neurotic impulses have characteristics of compulsivity and rigidity that creates social relationships and adjustment unable to making the subject aware (likely!) of his needs of being helped so that he can established a dialogue with his Truly Self.

According to psychoanalytic-interpersonal and cultural approach (Fromm and Horney particularly), it is important to reassert that

neuroses are supported by cultural factors, generated by disorders in human relationships and represents an attempt to soothe basic anxiety [1].

Curiously, not so different is the position of a giant Jung CG; against another giant as Freud he affirms "Neurosis is an effort, not so economical, to shrink interior voice and our vocation [2].

Behind neurotic inversion the true vocation of the subject is hidden, his destiny, the growth of his personality, his willpower, find with him. Neurotic is the person that has lost amor fati; the one who has failed his vocation, that missed the meaning of his own life".

From neurosis, as from every crisis, we can learn a lot. Jung goes on: "we don't have to free ourselves from neurosis, but to understand and learn. We should be thankful. Neurosis give us the occasion to learn who we really are: So we do not heal neurosis, it heals us.

The top of evolutionism in the approach of a psychic disease

After having introduced our models of mental disease based on conflicts, we have to dedicate parts of the job to the approach based on evolution arrest. We are going to analyses the works of authors as R. Spitz, I. Matte Blanco e W. R. Bion, because we think they are historically important to set firm foundations to explore the development of some clinic trends.

In the text "First year of life" the author introduces concept of development organization with his words: "In embryo the concept of organizer refers to a convergence of a lot of lines of biology development [3]. This produces a series of regulator agents in the process in progressive and regressive sense], called "organizers", influencing future development process. Needham talks about this organizer's embryo with the purpose of having a center that irradiates influences. Before the emergence of organizers, a piece of tissue can be transplanted from a part of the body, for example from a region of the eye, to a completely different part, for example, the back, where it grows like the surrounding epidermis. However if the same tissue is transplanted after it was established the organizer for the region of the eye, the transplanted tissue grows in the back like tissue of the eye. So there is the hypothesis that contiguous analogue processes at crucial points might influence the psychic development of babies" [3].

From the above words it is evident how development organizers are the result of the integrative overcoming of some critical phases where "different current of development can be integrated one another with various sectors of personality, with the emergent functions, with abilities developed in the process of the growth. The result of these integration is a reconstruction of psychic system to a higher level of complexity, following a delicate and vulnerable process that leads to what we called "organizers of the psyche", which leads to establish a new "era" during the process of a person's psychologice development. The author identifies three specific organizers in the psychic development: the social smile that appears around two-three months of age, the anguish caused by a stranger, starting from

the eighth month, and the mastery of NO (gesture and word), starting after the fifteenth month. The founding of these three organizers, depends on the conditions and standards that define the forming of gestalt, according to the methods used in "psychology of the form", that configure perspective gestalt, so that every organizer can be identifiable and recognizable from a sympathetic external viewer. In the same way new "era" established during the development will show the gestalt characteristics, so the dynamic possible integration of figure/background inside a context emotionally and spatio-temporally integrated.

Why should we focus on the concept of organizers? Firstly because the concept of integration implicit is also taken up by the neuroscientist G. Edelman concerning the model of Reentrant cortical integration, making evolutionary perspective immediately current in the panorama of contemporary neurosciences. The clinic applicability of this model is revealed by B. A. Van De Kolk in the book "Il corpo incassa il colpo" [4]. "The sensorial information of the outside world comes from the eyes, the nose, the ears and the skin. These sensations converge in the thalamus, an area of the limbic system that is alike a cook inside the brain. The thalamus mixes up every input of our perceptions in an autobiographic soup perfectly blended, in the experience integrated and coherent of "that is what's happening to me". This thalamus cortical amalgam perfectly integrated contributes to reorganize the subjective experience that became possible to reentrant synchronization, through a process of reciprocal information of different brain districts. Secondly because the approach defined by Spritz, founds a way not only with the neuroscience, but also with the top of psychology of the Gestalt. In fact more specifically the author considers the phenomenon of a new awareness as a mediated experience structured by gestalitic properties of the experience "These considerations (referred to perceptive anomalies during the process of dental anesthesia when exploring with the tongue some parts of the mouth as the nasolabial fold, the lips, the inside cheek, hard palate, we perceive them bigger and as a foreign body) suggest that mnemonic track, corporal perception at least, are collected in a form of configuration with qualities of Gestalt. If the theory is correct, then the memory of an object of our perception becomes conscious only when the closure (of the Gestalt) happens. When, in the case of anesthesia, the closure is precluded through the process of suppression of a sufficiently large portion of Gestalt, there is not recognition" [3].

Thirdly because one of the meaning of the word Gestalt is put into shape or representation. This last concept is central for many psychoanalytic orientations since Freud's time; he was a pupil of philosopher of the act and intention Frantz Brentano, a precursor of psychology of Gestalt [5]. The concept of put into shape gestalt finds its realization in the model of cortical reentry integration, as already said, through the construction of reciprocal information; for a deeper study we suggest the text of G. Edelman "Un universe di coscienza" [6].

In this article we want to underline the intimate connection sometimes implicit sometimes explicit, by various authors, between the concept of representation and the concept of Gestalt, to

emphasize some consequences and clinic implications of this purpose. In this perspective the "biologic" conception of personality finds realization; according to this in the subject two ways of life coexist, one that answers to the criteria of symmetric logic and one that answers to the criteria of asymmetric or bivalent logic.

We will not focus on symmetric logic that is a conception of the primary process described by Freud, mediated by the famous principle of symmetry, an extraordinary deviation of the aristotelic logic, which states that "the unconscious system concerns the inverse relationship of every relationship as it was identical to the relationship. In other words it concerns asymmetrical relationship as they were symmetrical", for other references see the work of Matte Blanco. Here it is important to stress the asymmetrical side of the personality, the reign of conscious and preconscious, which in addition to being configured according to the modalities of the principle of non-contradiction and the excluded middle, presents, thanks to the phenomenology of Cortical reentry integration of Edelman, characteristics of Gestalt.

So where are the news proposed by this essay? According to quoted principle of symmetry of Blanco and the first three corollaries, that we report afterwards [7].

1. When the principle of symmetry is applied there cannot be any succession.
2. When the principle of symmetry is applied the part is necessarily identical to the whole.
3. When the principle of symmetry is applied, all members of a whole or a group are interfaced as identical among them and identical to the whole or the group. So they are interchangeable both compared to the propositional functions that determine the class and also to all the propositional functions that permits to distinguish among themselves and through which it is possible to state, in an aristotelic logic, that a given element of the group is not identical to another. We can say that when the principle of symmetry is applied, the mechanisms that consent serial organization of the experience and its space-time disappear, because the conditions that consent to distinguish the part from the whole non longer exist, both at a systemic level and gestalitic. In that way what we have heard by Spitz in relation to awareness, it is the same conscience that now is experiencing and it is impossible to know or recognize anything.

This interference of the symmetric and asymmetric, could be leading us to the vanishing of the conscience and the subsequent burst into psyche of the terror of losing control over a situation. A patient of a group once reported she was afraid of panicking and losing control of the situation when she went out of the house and she had to leave their babies to the nanny. Indeed, articulation and integration between gestalitic and unconscious perspective is central for the possibility to organize and manage the experience, in an analog sense expressed by Bion in "Learning from experience", when through his essay, he presents his conception of function alfa [8]. The concept of organizers and critical phase, sum up in conclusion.

The phenomenology of personality. In relation to the psychic economy in this article, it will be appropriate to consider Bion's vision of personality composed simultaneously of parts considered normal, neurotic and psychotic, that thanks to the omnipotent fantasy, underneath the projective identification, are separated from global personality and projected in an object that from that moment will be used as a subject to keep under control [8].

The neurotic being for Adler

Unlike Freud, Alfred Adler argues that neurosis doesn't come from the conflict between the libidic pulsions that push to affirm and the interior limitations of the Super-Ego, but from a sense of inferiority that doesn't allow man to reach his ideal virility and security. Neurosis is structured inside a typical nervous disposition where the attempt to exalt the personality to overcome this sense of inferiority, come into tension with the adaptation to social life; adaptation that is difficult because of the ideal characteristic every man aims to. The man would be "nailed to the crucifix of his fiction" [9].

This attempt to overcome this sense of inferiority, will assume competitive and compensative forms where "the scary dog-Aesop would say-is the ones who barks loudly" [7].

This sense of inferiority, illustrates Rollo May (ibidem), has his roots in the real sense of inferiority a child feels compared to the adult world around him. However a sense of inferiority in acceptable limits is absolutely normal and experimented by every human being; also it can turn into a strong motivational force. The most important thing is channeling this energy not towards egocentric aims in contrast to the social or group dimension, but towards commitments that contribute to the well-being of others.

An excessive sense of inferiority can lead to neurotic behavior because compensation through the desire of power can become excessive when there is a fight for prestige. "Humiliation of the others is equivalent to our own elevation; if one goes down, the other one becomes superior" may give the example of gossip (ibidem).

In a normal subject this practice is kept under control and his efforts make social relationship easier; instead in a neurotic person this practice assumes force and compulsive personal characteristics so to aim at a fight for power that leads to antisocial aptitude.

Adler defines neurosis as an antisocial effort to take power: "so artistic and brilliant brain develops, but, if compensation is not at the height of needs and does not overcome this difficulty victoriously, then the neurosis develops" [10]. When a person integrates positively his experiences with surrounding environment, we have what Adler call "Creative self", that is to say an equilibrium between individuality of the person and the society. As we have already said instead, in neurosis we witness the predominance of individual dimension to the detriment of collectivity. "Only those who are conscious to be part of human society", affirms Adler, "can live a life without anxieties" [11].

Group, the need to belong, social identity, conformity

From the definitions of neurosis state of the quoted authors- from orthodox psychoanalysts as Freud, to the first dissidents as Jung and Adler, from the cultural-interpersonalist as Horney and Fromm, to the humanists as May- it is evident that the common denominator is always the difficult relationship between the individual and other individuals. We could say, with due distinctions between the different approaches, that at base it seems to be a contraposition between individuality and collectivity.

Man, hanged between these two needs, does not want and cannot renounce either one pole or the other.

Giving up one's individuality would mean annihilating oneself, yet on the other hand a person is annihilated if he renounces the opposite pole, that of social relations.

Needs of social relation is something written in our biological instincts but not only: our progenitors, grown in the savannahs of central Africa, had more possibilities of surviving gathering in groups where they could share the tasks of defending the group itself but also the resources. Moreover, the need to belong to a social group not only has utilitarian origins; like many animals, a young individual needs proximity to the others to grow adequately. This is particularly true for a man because of the exceptional complexity of his brain and his abilities to gain access to the complex world of emotions and consciousness. The phase of mirroring and emotional elaboration that a child live through his own mother and the kind of attachment with her for example, are largely-predictive of how the young individual will interface not only with the others but most of all with himself. The world of the dynamic relations determines the intrapsychic of a human being [8,12,13].

The man is a contradictory being: on one side he has capability to transcend that Nature he comes from, on the other going beyond it more and more, he loses the guide that gives him security [14]. A wolf, a cat, a crocodile are only guided by instincts; on the contrary man with his self-awareness, feels alone, scared, and desperately looking for the original fusion with the Nature. So regardless of safety needs for survival, individual needs a group to overcome the anxiety and the fear of being alone in a world too big for him. It seems trivial to say it but this is where the old saying, Comes from you, unity is strength. Maslow A, in his 'Pyramid of needs', indicates at the second level the needs to belong, immediately after the need of physical sustenance. Being sure of his physical survival (drinking, eating, sleeping...), man focuses on the necessity of his own security, which means eagerness of being part of something bigger and solid for him, a group, a community.

How can man bear insecurity inherent in his nature? Fromm wonders. "A way consists in being part of a group so that the feeling of identity is granted from belonging to the group, be it family, clan, nation, class. As long as the group works, his identity is guaranteed by belonging to the group itself" [15].

Fromm's observation is particularly true for people alienated from their truly Self who try to solve the problem of solitude

and loss of their own individual identity through conformity, and so becoming all one with the group of reference. Alienated people feel more confident as long as they adjust to the community of which they feel part. "Feeling different or in the minority are the dangers that threaten the sense of security hence the aspiration for unlimited conformism arises (ibidem)", continues Fromm.

Conformity to groups, as well as fueling existential security due to feeling part of something and not alone and abandoned, gives us also the security of not having to make decisions on our own.

The individual finds himself dragged from the mass, as an object that floats in the sea or in a river and, even doing nothing, he is carried by the streams. This phenomenon is called social inertia that contributes to the mentioned conformity. About that it is famous the experiment of the psychologist Solomon Ash [16].

The experiment initially consisted in showing a table with a line of a certain reference length to a group of eight subjects, seven of these had previously been trained by the experimenter, only one was the actual subject to be tested. After that a second table was shown with three lines of various length and it was asked which of the three corresponded to the first table. The seven subjects trained in advance, gave on purpose the same wrong answer. This dynamic obliged the eighth subject to query his perception that was evidently different from the one of the group.

Well then, this eighth subject had a tendency to conform to the choices of the majority, even if it was wrong. Moreover, in case his answer was right, he was ready to change his choice depending on the response of the group. In the original experiment made by Ash, 25% of participants did not conform to majority, but 76% conformed at least once to pressure of the group (and 5% of subjects adapted to every single repetition of the test).

The drive towards conformism is determined by different factors like the dimension of the group, future relationships with it, ambiguity of the situation (in case of doubts, the individual rests on the choice of the majority), attraction for this new group (if we want to be in a particular group we have to minimize possible differences of values) and, at least but not last, research of an identity.

This last aspect has particular strength in those people whose individual identity is fleeting so that they have to lean to an external identity, represented by the group (social identity).

Social identity was introduced by Tajfel H who, experimenting with "minimal" groups noticed that, belonging to a group constituted even only for futile reasons (the preference for a painter over another) was enough to create intergroup solidarity or hostility. In simple terms the group to which one belongs is the holder of values, competences and better abilities than any other group as well as the components worthy of greater consideration. This creates a gap between 'us' and 'them' [17].

Tajfel defines social identity as "part of an image that an individual creates of a social group or groups, united to values and emotional meaning associated to this belonging".

The group is capable of including/excluding: Can a neurotic or psychotic be part of a group?

After illustrating the concept of neurosis for some authors and their approaches to the human structure as well as the dynamics underlying the need and will to belong to a group, now we are curious to what extent a group can be inclusive or exclusive or, if we prefer, how much this group can be opened to accept other members. The answer cannot be univocal due to the complexity of the situations in which an individual or a group finds themselves considering that there are different kind of groups (work, friends, family, religious, with defined or immediate purposes, psychotherapeutic, etc.).

It could be useful to make some considerations according to the great experience of well-known experts as Yalom I. It is important to say that his considerations are referred to psychotherapeutic groups with clinic purposes and that an excessive generalization to other types of groups (for example family or friends group), could be misleading.

After this premise, we see that Yalom affirms that "therapeutic group is seriously challenged when a member develops psychosis during the treatment" and so "the patient highly psychotic should be excluded in the initial selection process of group interaction therapy". Anyway, the same Yalom, affirms that "it is difficult to combine opinions" and even more "we will be struck by the several contradictions existing in clinical literature [18].

Few are the contraindications to group therapy for which it is not possible to find a contrasting opinion or anecdote".

In fact different is the view of Morrone [19]. He highlights the importance of having the same trust in the constructive strength of the group and of its members, as well as in the patient "grievous ill". It is also true, as Yalom reaffirms, that every episodes absorbing at the beginning too much energy to be managed-because of a delicate phase of initial development-can be considerate destructive for the group. Therefore the subject who causes it (a patient extremely neurotic or even psychotic), can be relieved.

Paraphrasing the observations of Yalom and transferring them to other types of groups, we might reasonably expect-we say this with prudence-that every young group do not have either the will or the strength to manage a highly neurotic/psychotic person so very disruptive. Actually what groups (systems like organizations of workers or family groups) tend to do is maintaining their status quo, a sort of balance, made of relational dynamics of different nature, that in some way keeps the group together. This does not mean that these values and dynamics are functional to the development of a human being-think for example of totalitarian regimes such as Fascism, Nazism or extreme communism.

In those cases the most important thing is to hold up the group/system (as it is in some families or couple when even in situations dysfunctional to the individual authentically growth are instead functional to the maintenance of certain neurotic and/or psychotic tendencies).

Cohesion of a group should grow with time. Cohesion is defined as "result of every force that act over all the members to

keep them in this group" or also "the appeal of a group over its members" [18, 20-25]. Cohesion contributes to strengthen the group itself so that it can even better manage a neurotic disruptive individual, as long as this disruption does not exceed the typical level of the group. The situation is completely different when an individual, who was an active member, shows signs of instability.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can reasonably affirm that a group or an organization can be defined inclusive when, like what happens in an individual, all strength have the aim of authentically growth and not the aim of maintaining the status quo of our neurotic tendency. "The more a person tends to maintain the status quo, the more impenetrable his defenses will be" claims Horney. Same thing can be said about groups. When a group is open-minded and tolerant it does not fear anything that can disrupt it; it is sure of its values, it has a solid identity and the ability of being emphatic with the "new" carried from a neurotic or psychotic person. Is this something that can contribute to the growth of the groups? Can accepting this person be positive for the group? Can the group welcome this new person and offer the gift of a new opportunity for help? A neurotic person bears into the group a neurosis, can the group be so strong to overcome this and discover other positive peculiarities in this individual?

Narrow-minded groups maybe because the members are interested on a physical object (the last model of smartphone, for example) or are bound by an ideology (far-right or far-left ideology) are particularly exclusive because based on the maintenance of a shared neurotic trend (narcissism, pride, anger, revenge, resentment), creating a competitive and coercive rather than collaborative power.

Body spirit, social cohesion to the belonging group, antagonism towards the others etc., "they are all suggestions in favor of team enthusiasm, ignoring the fact that there is only one truly social orientation: Solidarity with humanity. Social cohesion with the group, combined with antagonism towards strangers, is not a social feeling but extended egoism".

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