

I As a philosopher, what is it that interests you in psychoanalysis, and why?

The unconscious and the dream. These two aspects, which are a key to psychoanalysis, have never ceased to involve me. The magic of Freud consists in having urged us to consider the unknown not only as the true object of knowledge, but also as the very engine of a new subjectivity, already scrutinized by Hegel and Nietzsche. That's why generations of psychoanalysts and philosophers continue to interpret the statement that says that the Ego must become where the Id was.. Right there, within the unknown, what remains of our subjectivity must be processed. A fascinating operation that Lucio Russo defined "ignotizzazione" (a "making unknown", a form of de-familiarization of the known). Today philosophy can claim to be radical again, something undoubtedly solicited by psychoanalysis.

II What is the most significant contribution that philosophy has made to psychoanalysis, at least from your personal approach to psychoanalysis?

Given my interests, I came across psychoanalytic issues not only through philosophy but mostly through figurative arts and literature. To stay with the latter, studies on Joseph Conrad, Louis Stevenson, Arthur Schnitzler, T.S Eliot, and then Pier Paolo Pasolini, J.M. Coetzee and Philip Roth, have certainly contributed to stimulating my interest in psychoanalysis. Obviously, it's no mystery that in all these authors ideas and themes, even philosophical, are strictly connected to psychoanalysis, though in different ways.

With a similar perspective, in a more strictly philosophical context, I was able to grasp, sometimes after more than one reading, passages of profound interest when interpreted in the light of the different psychoanalytic schools, in Spinoza, Leibniz, Hobbes, Hegel, and Marx. Setting aside those authors who are now classically approached to psychoanalytic reflection, such as Plato, Nietzsche, Sartre, Deleuze, Derrida, and Simondon, and even those who, once approached to Freud and his "followers", are rejected like by a magnet of the same pole, like Jaspers, an author relevant to me. However, the psychoanalytic echo of Hegel - in my opinion the greatest philosopher of modernity - remains to be investigated even more deeply.

III Apart from Freud, what other psychoanalyst, according to you, has contributed significantly to a philosophical reflection on psychoanalysis?

Thanks to affinity, idiosyncrasies and randomness, my path has crossed different authors, from Otto Rank to Sándor Ferenczi, up to Bion and Matte Blanco. Besides Freud, nobody has interested me as much as Jacques Lacan, read in maturity: a certain prejudice shielded me in the past from his greatness.

IV If you have undertaken psychoanalytic training, or if you are a practicing psychoanalyst, might we ask how you view what transpires in a clinical analytic practice? In other words, what is it that really happens during a cure?

Those who have faced an analytical path in a somehow "classical" way usually approach the great questions of psychoanalysis differently from those who face them from a theoretical point of view. The impulse to enter into the psychoanalytic journey is different from that leading us to study

knots and aspects. Even more subjective are the motivations that could induce it to continue, often for years. Entering a psychoanalytic treatment means first of all establishing a network of relationships: with the analyst, with our own multiple self, and with others, in the light (and shadow) of an experience that, when it takes hold, involves changes, a reconversion of oneself. Psychoanalysis is really an experience, in the basic sense. In other words, it implies a constant or tearing transformation. During the analytical experience, one looks at the world from different, unusual, traumatic angles. If there is no trauma, one wonders if the analysis is really working.

IX Starting with Popper, over the past decades a trend of radical criticism of psychoanalysis has developed that denies its scientific plausibility, comparing it to a mythology, and contesting any validity of the analytic practice. Where do you fit in this debate, if you do at all?

In an era where nobody hesitates to contest the validity of "traditional" vaccines and oncological treatments, it is certainly not surprising that psychoanalysis is not considered a science. If for Freud, given the times, it was a legitimate source of concern that psychoanalysis was not accepted among the sciences, today this inclusion is no longer necessary. The uselessness of an approach to psychoanalysis that intends to measure its scientific nature on the basis of its falsifiability is quite evident. Rather, to resume Peter Fonagy, who also played a role in that debate, there is no doubt that as long as the same term and concept will be used with deeply different meanings by the different schools and trends of psychoanalysis, with total disregard of their use for the others, the tendency to fragmentation will remain and, frankly, this aspect will not constitute a richness for the psychoanalytic movement.

X Do you find it important that psychoanalysis today confronts itself with biological knowledge (evolutionary sciences, neuroscience), and with science in general?

New acquisitions on neuroimaging, neuronal processes, any possible desirable progress in investigating the nature of the dream should be taken into account. The latter remains a field still largely unexplored, even by neurophysiology. The rule of Henry James is not always true: "Tell a dream, lose a reader". Also because most often the classics of philosophy are still a goldmine of reflections. Augustine's reading of dreams (see, for example, Confessions, X, 29, 40) is as stimulating as recent research.