

Anguish and development of affective functions.

Romeo Lucioni – Aldo Fumagalli – Roberto Romano

At birth the child must be considered an incomplete *biological unit*, given the many areas of immaturity that it presents in its development. As far as the psych mentality is concerned, one can also say that the development goes on in the months following birth and finishes within the third year.

The development of psych mental functions does not concern the survival and/or the processes linked to biological life, but concerns what was called “process of humanization”. That includes the ability to understand, deduce and program, besides the abilities related to social life or, more precisely, to affective-relational activities.

The development of the special and specific “mental organ” completes fully in the post-natal period, with the intervention of experiences and background that reflect the natural environment of man organized as a “family plot”.

The period of time between 15 and 25 months is considered fundamental for the psych mental development and the organization of what will be then called “affective intelligence” or the set of psychic processes that introduce to relation and socialization.

Enrique Pichon-Riviere, with the lucidity and the precision that he has always highlighted in his studies, talks about the “theory of the bond”, “paradigm of the third”, when mentioning the “dialectic of the basic nucleus” and the “basic anxiety”.

The attitude of renunciation and/or retreat should not be considered as caused by simple passiveness. It is the expression of an answer, therefore an action and an activity, sustained by the automatic functional abilities of the deep nuclei of the limbic brain or limbic lobe.

The perceptive problem intertwines closely with the one of emotions. All researchers agree that the sensory input generates a tension, that can be more or less intense depending on its characteristics, but above all depending on the nature and/or the structure that in the meantime formed.

This tension - that therefore is the first answer of the subject to the relation with the outside world - is always so disturbing (the newborn sleeps for 70% of the day and this period of sleep is usually for 80% REM) that R. Romano says that the normal response to the stimuli is emotive tension, or anguish or pain: “... pleasure has to be learned, whereas pain is phylogenetically predisposed”.

At the beginning of life the relation with the world doesn't bring pleasure but pain, in fact pleasure can be seen as *lack of pain*.

Exaggerating the picture, we can say that the newborn's normal answer (whose brain is not fully structured nor organized) is anguish, and the whole psych mental system is pushed to contain this disturbing emotion.

In the autistic, that presents a serious incapacity to contain emotions, this picture is very clear, just as the observation that only the intervention of an auxiliary Ego can succeed in braking the anxiety. It is well-known that these subjects manage to act (for ex. kicking a football) only if held by the hand of their

therapist and stop expressing themselves with a forced and repetitive movement only when they manage to establish a relation of trust.

We can therefore talk about a “before” and an “after” the interpersonal relation with the auxiliary Ego. These two stages reflect opposed moments of the development.

- a) In autism (Kanner type) the child is dominated by a perceptive input that is uncontrollable. Following Crespo-Facorro’s intuition, we can say that the frontal structures are blocked by the action of containing the responses of anguish. We remember that the prefrontal cortex has a preferential relation with the limbic system, that has back and forth connections only with this part of the neo-cortex (the other parts are connected with the limbic brain only indirectly, through the “frontal lobe”).
- b) When a normal functioning is reached, the frontal and prefrontal structures are free to structure as active modulators between the inside and the outside world, adding “quality” to the global psychomental system, that is the area of values or affectivity. In this model of functioning there is a “proto-Ego” that starts to form, opening the boundary between the Self and the world and proceeding to structure a “self-identification”.

Psychologists and sociologists now all agree in identifying a *catastrophic situation* that is characterized by high insecurity, precariousness and uncertainty and generates anxiety, disintegration and annihilation. This situation of violence and exclusion generates “terror” but also disastrous effects on the identification (sense of self) that lead to a “fragmented subjectivity”: “...*being unable to identify stimuli as non-harmful, the subject is hindered from learning*”.

Let’s talk about the “mechanisms of control on the effects of terror”, also seen as “psychic trauma experienced catastrophically by subjectivity”, or as “irreversible crisis” that can block the psychomental development in both its emotive-affective and cognitive-intellective functions.

We are talking about the de-subjectivization, disorganization of the Ego’s functions, paralysis of the subjective position, but the result is always the block of the psychomental development and/or persuasive disorder.

In this perspective, Alfred Jerosulinky correctly says that “... there is no difference between autistic-autism and hyperkinetic-autism, because these cases, if treated with rigor and with an imperative NO, develop the symptomatic characteristics of Kanner’s autism.

A psychic trauma is therefore capable of inducing a change in the brain’s functional structure (this is supposed to happen only in the first months of life, when a certain plasticity is still considered possible), giving a precise meaning to the interaction between psychic and biological and vice-versa (in circular form).

Emotions control is therefore a learnt function that depends on the structure of complex circuits that link the limbic to the pre-frontal system and, subsequently, to all the cortical mantle.

The primitive response is of “tension” and “anguish”; Pichon-Riviere calls it “basic anxiety”, which is instinctive, primitive, a little controllable and acts according to the “all or nothing” scheme.

Also anxiety, anguish and fear are differentiated and we remember that the emotions are known as instinctive answers, automatic and highly defensive

because they balance energy for the automatic answers, almost reflexes, of short latency.

Instinctive functioning does not mean congenital, that is, already present at birth. On the contrary, it refers to an automatism that doesn't need a superior organization to function but a simple circuit, and for this reason it is of short latency.

Instinctive also means not conscious and that the functioning is related to the basic bio-neuro-psychological activities, such as nutrition, reproduction and above all self-defence.

From this point-of-view, also the emotive activity is linked to a learning that, how we often say, needs experimentation (repetition of experience) and memorization. Following these considerations, R. Lucioni talks about *emotive intelligence*, that is structured and combined with the affective and cognitive ones to complete the psychomental abilities-potentialities.

William James had postulated that "emotive experiences depend on sensations" and R. Romano underlines that "the anxiety is not a primitive answer, but an acquired one".

Among adaptive-defensive activities we also find *alert*, *tension* and therefore *anxiety*, *anguish* and *terror*, that usually, in their automatism, result nearly without object (lacking of the deep mechanisms of unconscious), whereas fear links phenomenologically to experiences related to more precise objectual supports.

The reactive answer to a stimulus is always *defensive* and, in ethological terms, can be identified as a consequence of an unpleasant input, experienced as *pain*. Juan Carlos Goldar puts in evidence how the primary answers refer to disorder, pain, as an increase in entropy that, by the second law of thermodynamics, induces a compensational tendency. This bringing back to order, later on, is experienced more as death than as life and, therefore, the *vital push* goes towards negative entropy.

The *vital sphere* leans on the distinction between order and disorder and

?? The steadiness of the inner environment

?? The diffusion of the genetic information

are the pillars of the "*negentropic*" *structure of the living realm*.

This observation is of great importance because a chronic state of tension and/or anguish can induce to criminal acts, aggressive and/or self-aggressive.

The irrational character of certain criminal behaviours is often mentioned, but the subjects that are responsible for them find their criminal strength in their mind.

The criminal act almost results as the only way to free oneself from a chronic and persecutory anxiety-anguish.

This violent tension derives from two factors:

?? Fear of possible and feasible attack

?? Anguish for the loss of the object.

These two fears, Pichon-Riviere comments, coexist and cooperate. In fact, if a subject fears to lose his own object of love (or loss of an object of exchange) and a person that triggers the projection of being the cause of the loss by chance passes by, a violent act can happen, even if apparently unjustified.

To better understand, we can remember Luciano S. case, an old psychiatric patient that started to hate his friend Giovanni, ill with a traumatic hemiparesis, accusing him of "stealing" only because he managed to get cigarettes by wheedling and insisting. The projective element was preceded by violent crises of

tension and anxiety that brought to such a destructive and aggressive restlessness that it disturbed the whole institute: "... one kills the thief driven by the anxiety of the loss" (Pichon-Riviere).

The anxiety-fear of loss is ambivalent and the attempt to "act" to stop the presumed thief provokes other crises of anxiety. And here is the origin of the loss of initiative (withdrawing into oneself and continuing to ask, showing a deep and regressive orality) and the "insane fear of growing".

These patients get "excited" even when one stimulates them too much by saying, "because you are good and have abilities to succeed".

The permanent anxiety seems almost always unjustified and is founded on a narcissistic and regressive structure of the personality. The dependence on the good object leads the subject to experience paranoid feelings of loss of the content and the container that becomes depositary of his good sides.

The more intense the "sentiments of loss" are, the stronger the Ego's dependence and weakness are. As a consequence, "fear" invades the areas of "volition" as action triggers an anguish of braking the bond with the object.

Therefore two kinds of anguish are created:

?? A first one linked to loss (depressive anxiety)

?? Followed by the one that leads to the "fear of action", to actuate (paranoid anxiety).

When the first one prevails, a constant inhibition is established that is sustained by sentiments of incapacity and inadequacy, because acting, achieving, growing become a "criminal act", destructive towards the object.

To win paranoid anxiety, the subject can project it onto a "scapegoat", depositary of evil, that this way can be attacked, justifying one's own "criminal acting".

These considerations adapt perfectly to situations of "jealousy" where reality and fantasy (projection) intertwine in a way sometimes unsolvable. The fear of loss of the object (passivity) and the one linked to anguish of the Ego's action (activity) presume the presence of two objectual links that both result as partial and, just for this reason, inseparable, generating again the anxiety of not being able to take a decision, open the door A or B. The subject finds himself always and inexorably at the crossroads.

To try to solve anguish, one accentuates the dependence, but this is also the cause of "hate", of rage and anxiety because it means giving up on oneself and the paranoia brings to project on the other all the good, all the capacities and qualities: "... I am in anguish because I find in the person I love all that I would like to be and that I will never be able to become".

Often this situation supports what can be called the "syndrome of truth": one looks for the truth to be able to act, but this never happens and, therefore, nothing can be made and one re-establishes the path of dependence.

Dependence and aggressiveness intertwine with paranoia (projection on the other) and with an almighty narcissism, putting the foundations of an obsessive-compulsive anal personality.

The chronic state of anxiety is also chronic mistrust, restlessness and insecurity that justify a chronic fear to act. This links paranoid sentiments towards the self for which every action is equivalent to an attack and others, as much paranoid, towards the other, that can always be seen as agent of vengeance. These swings between good and bad also extend to the object and, consequently, the bonds become weak, little satisfying, always ambivalent.

Studies on the social environment have shown that this ambivalence and the resulting state of permanent anxiety can be won with the presence of a strong leader that prevents “the mother from being stolen”, that protects against the attack of the other and stimulates initiative, awareness and a clear stance.

When one is “afraid” one’s resort is the “mother”; but fear is overcome by building an Ego that is firm and rich in paternal strength and confidence. When the fear, the sentiment of loss and the anxiety of growing prevail, the paranoid sentiments extend also to the father, who turns into the “persecutor”.

“Killing” and “killing oneself” become the extremes of the same paranoia that is always sustained by the lack of valid bonds: the other is never completely good or bad, neither can be totally trusted or mistrusted.

In this case, paranoia predominates, persecutory on one side and megalomaniacal on the other, and the border between being a victim or a victor is so narrow that there is a constant flow between one side and the other. This confusion between being an aggressor and fear of becoming a conspirator presumes mental processes exclusively based on projective and introjective modalities, so that they remain irrational. In other words, the lack of another-third, that can be seen as “name of the father”, becomes the impossibility to overcome irrationality.

The missing structuring of the affective sphere (valorisation) is, therefore, responsible for irrationality and/or the difficulties to structure more valid cognitive capabilities.

Following Roberto Romano’s thought, anxiety is the first answer, the more ancestral one, instinctive and automatic, linked to the limbic brain and can be overcome solely with the coming into operation of the “affective brain”: the frontal and prefrontal areas, responsible for social development and for the world of values.

Anxieties upset learning because they disturb every situation of change that brings fear of the loss of what one owns and also of who one is.

The anxiety linked to the “basic core”, in front of every change is twice as distressing because it is related to what one loses and, on the other hand, also to what one will face and does not know.

Immobility and renunciation are therefore direct consequence of the anguish that, how R. Romano says, is the primitive limbic response to too intense stimuli. These ones, if they act in a “chronic” form, also prevent the structuring of identity, of self-consciousness and of consciousness of objects; for this reason, responses become uncontrollable and destructive: the conscious intentionality is never destructive, nor of extermination.

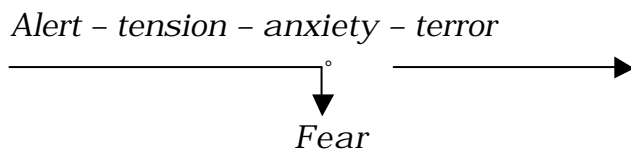
Basic anxiety also prevents the structuring of stable bonds and the assumption of specific roles and for this also the objects of reference result always partial, unrecognizable, modifiable over time and space, resulting not only as hardly identifiable, but also full of worrying and terrifying values.

Eugenio Borgna, while studying the “archipelago of emotions”, analyses as an example joy and discovers that there is not only a *mood joy* (Stimmung), but also a *sentiment joy*. In this it illustrates the passing from an *emotive sensation* (that is instinctive, not linked to external events), to a much more structured *psychomental process* that needs one object and/or the Other.

From this one deduces that:

- ?? The emotion is instinctive, intimate, personal, without object;
- ?? The sentiment instead is a process that we call affectivity.

If, following this sequence, we return to the analysis of anxiety, we can write:



This example can be explained through an experience:

Suddenly we perceive a noise that gets closer; we experience an attitude of alertness, of restlessness that provokes tension, of anxiety that is determined by something that we can't understand ... we are at the crossroads:

- a) We realize that a car is approaching at great speed and we are "afraid" of it (a sentiment is born);*
- b) But if we can't realise what is happening (in the instance of an earthquake) I we are anguished and/or taken by terror.*

This also explains how chronic anxiety can generate anguish, since it becomes unbearable, but, above all, unjustified and with no solution (we can't find a way out).

R. Romano says that every emotional state is released into a motor action and, in this case, we see that at the crossroads

- ?? Fear generates a flight (final motor response)
- ?? Anguish generates the cry, the paralysis, the tremble.

The theme of anxiety requires a few clarifications because, as we have seen, it becomes a "nodal point" in the scheme of the defensive responses.

R. Romano suggests to distinguish between:

- ?? *Anxiety, defensive emotive response, can also be defined as "avoiding response" that rises from the feeling that a vague and unknown danger is imminent;*
- ?? *Anxiety linked to incapacity or discriminatory impossibility in front of a pleasant or unpleasant situation.*

Educating and/or teaching would be simple if we could always have a clear sensation of pleasure and pain. The problem rises when the same pattern in some situations creates pleasure and in others the opposite feeling.

At this point anxiety is created that acquires the value of *decisional conflict* and, therefore, results in a sense of incapacity and inadequateness to face a situation, an experience, a relationship.

These situations that create doubts presume a certain degree of anxiety that can be considered normal, but if the tension exceeds the limits of tolerability one can talk of "pathological anxiety" or "state of anxious tension".

This is how anxiety becomes a complex emotive experience, characterised by apprehensive tension or uneasiness that goes along with somatic expressions:

- ?? Acceleration of cardiac frequency;
- ?? Increase of arterial pressure;
- ?? Dilation of the pupil;
- ?? Perspiration with sensation of cold and hot;
- ?? Dyspnoea;
- ?? Sense of precordial oppression;
- ?? Reddening of the face skin;

- ?? Sense of inner uneasiness;
- ?? Muscular trembling or fibrillations;
- ?? Vesicular tenesmus, polyuria, etc.

In the same way the *joy sentiment* “transforms the way of being of the face and of the look”, frees for the hug, for the caress, generates tender words and as E. Borgna says, “... *brings us closer to a deep and uncontaminated stratum of the human condition*”.

“Sentiments”, affections take us outside the Ego’s borders, putting us in touch and in resonance not only with the world of things and people, but also with ourselves, with the most intimate and deep sense of oneself.

Affection addresses us towards the “*different from us*”, makes us recognise a value in the other.

The example of the origin of fear, allows also to analyse three moments:

- A. **emotive expression, mood** = autonomous interior protest determined and sustained by an external and/or internal stimulus.
- B. **sentiment** = linked to an event, that is not a stimulus, but an experience, therefore determined by a relation;
- C. **intentionality** = the motory response (muscular and/or verbal) that might seem valid or not, finalised or not, but always brings to the unloading of tension.

J.C. Goldar organises the observation referring it to the stratigraphic model, so he can see the personological expression as the result of the integrated action of three spheres:

- ?? **inferior or vital** that on the neuro-physiological side corresponds to the limbic brain;
- ?? **intermediate or enhancement** referred to the intermediate brain that allows to create values, structuring reflexes and putting in relation the vital layer with intellectual elaboration;
- ?? **superior or intellectual** referred to the outer cerebral cortex that is not able to independently produce vital or instinctive-affective responses.

- A. The **vital functions** (biotonic and instinctive) characterize each person just because they structure on the base of the experiential repetition and, therefore, the TEMPERAMENTAL TYPES (astheniac; hypertymic; explosive; soul weak; as K. Schneider indicates) that reflect the *vital predispositions*. The TEMPERAMENT is the vital form of the character.
- B. The **enhancement sphere** (sentimental and ethic) determines the CHARACTER structuring the affective orientation that organises between giving importance and/or staying indifferent.
- C. The **cognitive-intellectual sphere** allows not only to know, but also to foresee the harmful, favourable qualities, etc., of an event for which the character can take up an “attitude” towards what happens or what will happen.

In first childhood, the intellectual sphere lets in more responses of anxiety and fear that reflect in behaviours of abrupt retreat, of isolation, of flexion, etc.

This type of response vanishes rapidly, not because the emotive-instinctive sphere might disappear, but because the enhancing bridges founded on familiarity, on self-security and self-containment start to intervene.

H. and M. Harlow (1970) could prove that the primates kept isolated as of birth, show anxiety and terror almost constantly, just because they do not possess familiarity and means of comparison. These animals adopt attitudes in flexion (search for protection) that is the more primitive and instinctive motory discharge. The sphere of values is based on sentiments and, therefore, swings between *ethics* and *aesthetics*, that is to say between good and bad and between beautiful and ugly.

The temperamental foundation that includes vital affective and cognitive factors, influences and determines the organisation of the representational syntax that finally, results to be the active filter that rules and gives meaning to the perceptions.

There are therefore people than can be defined as:

- ?? Economical = usefulness prevails for them
- ?? Political = the power
- ?? Aesthetic = the form
- ?? Social = love
- ?? Religious = the sense of the world
- ?? Theoretical = the truth

that are oriented by the biological and enhancing predisposition.

J.C. Goldar says: "in any case there is a selective conduction of the cold knowledge until the warmth of the affective sphere and in this selective conduct the work of the value-affective sphere.

We can distinguish three brains (J.C. Goldar):

1. internal or limbic (amygdala and hippocampus)
2. intermediate of para-limbic (front orbital, temporal and frontal cingulum).
3. external or lateral (neocortex of the frontal corex and parieto-temporo-occipital).

that functionally subtend the vital spheres, affective and intellectual.

Summing up the concepts of functional neuroanatomy, we remember that:

- ?? **limbic centres** in the strict sense are: the amygdala, the hippocampus, the septal area, the back orbital cortex, the olfactory tubercle, the accumbens nucleus, the mammillary body, entorhinal cortex, the subiculum, the presubiculum, the thalamic nuclei: the anterior, the dorsal superficial, the dorsal medianus.
- ?? **paralimbic structures** are the orbital anterior cortex, the temporal basolateral cortex, the frontal girus cingulum, the thalamic dorsomedial nucleus, the ventral putamen and the tail of the caudate nucleus.
- ?? **hemispheric structures** have no emotional functions.

R. Romano underlines that the structures of the Limbic System are considered only the anatomical structures with emotional functions and he consider limbic only the structures localised from the central grey matter or the brainstem to the septal area and constitutes the basal forebrain .

Behaviours, even language, are expressed always in a motor form, for this reason emotion is directly related to the same laws which regulate the motor system. The

motor movement, is composed only by flexion and extension, and these functions, in order to be active, need a muscular tone and a posture (complex attitude). The responses for fear, avoidance or anguish are always in flexion (and are already structured in the foetus, they are very primitive and are established in the central grey matter), the exploratory or pleasure ones are extensive (they are acquired, learnt and established in the rostral forebrain, the septal area). The emotional tone is regulated by the amygdala, a parallel structure, that is outside the forebrain (it has no emotional function and is not in parallel with the other emotional structures): the amygdala is with the forebrain, as the cerebellum with the motor system.

According to Antonio R. Damasio, it is right between the 15th and the 25th month that the front connection of the brain are structured (the “frontalisation” takes place that, for many, is the process that determines the “humanisation”) and, therefore, in this period the child starts to be able to take advantage of the neuro-cerebral structures that allow him to control (contain and modulate) the emotions (anxiety), to access all the affective functions and, therefore, also to fully benefit from the cognitive and analytical-deductive capacities.

If, from a neurophysiological point-of-view, we can talk of myelinisation and complex connections, from the physiological one we understand that the principles of relationship with the Other or with the self in terms of values and truths start to establish.

This process is essential to start structuring a conscience of oneself and of the objects, that so become *permanent-objects* that do not dissolve with the changing of the perceptive situation. Autistic children, that do not manage to reach this level or degree of psychomental development (unless with the beginning of adequate psychotherapy), live moments of true anguish and/or of terror, when a usual object is shifted, even if by accident, or when they look at themselves in the mirror. For them the objects are only “partial objects” charged of ambiguity, of vagueness, of inconsistency and, therefore, with the possibility to “vanish in the nothing” (that is much worse than dying, because in the dissolution there is also the loss of the “body” as “real and consistent” part).

It is through this process of “becoming aware” that counts with completely instinctive and unconscious, besides other conscious parts, that the child structures both the sense of permanency of the object and the one of truth.

In the psychotherapeutic-clinical work it was possible to focus well on this process that needs the Other, the third, as the psycho-sociologist Pichon-Riviere remembers in other words.

It is in the eye of the Other that the subject discovers the “truth”, that is above all truth of Oneself, that finally exists and counts, and then the truth of all the objects of the reality and finally the truth of own desires.

Gurus like Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj say that “*the faith in the Guru is based on the interior conscience... “; “... the world is the image of the Ego”; “ with the I am, the world starts”; “...when you know who you are, the world is; if you are not, your world is not”.*

Conscience and truth are the foundation of being and their origin is the relationship with the Other, that gives certainty and permanence, frees from the necessity to return and verify and, therefore, from the compulsion to repeat (as in autism).

Becoming aware is transforming into a “person”, becoming a “unique and unrepeatable manifestation”.

From what has been analysed so far, we can deduce that:

- a) The psychism is not born with the child, but it needs to be founded, conformed, structured and compacted;
- b) Before frontalisation, before the structuring of the relational and social (affective) functions, the psychomental functioning can be considered as “reflected functioning”, produced by a stimulus that generates a reaction, a discharge of the nervous system;
- c) The primitive and reflected psychomental system alters under a stimulus and searches the discharge to find the balance, the stable-state;
- d) Before the “consciousness” appears, the child acts referring everything to himself: “my grandmother”, “my things”, “my daddy” and this because the psychic functioning translates into a “real thought”, that is born and remains linked to perception: perception becomes a thought;
- e) It is by becoming aware that the “symbolical” starts to structure and, therefore, the thought can detach from the perception to make oneself “universal”. The little girl starts to say “... grandma, come and visit me”, thus structuring two separate entities, that are independent but united by the memory and the structuring thread that is love;
- f) The psychomental activity in the affective order does not look for tranquillity any more, but for action, activity, discovery.

Seen from a different point-of-view:

1. The primitive psychomental action generates anxiety (characteristic emotional element for this phase) and anguish that activate a simple answer:
 - ?? Of passivity, of flexion, of renunciation;
 - ?? Of indiscriminate attack capable of dissolving anguish that, if maintained chronically, generates aggressive inadequate and uncontrollable behaviours. In R. Romano’s experiments with cats stimulated in the lateral stomach area of the hypothalamus, the behaviour, that is generated by a stimulation causing anxious hyper-saturation, discharges in the fear and in the flight in front of a mouse. When the stimulation stops, the cat behaves normally as the feline that swells the pupils, extracts the claws, pricks the fur and prepares for the attack.
2. Psychomental acting structured in the affective dynamics, since above all they converge to control and modulate emotions and anxiety, leads to search for new experiences, because it’s in the action, in the extension that the Ego recognizes himself as “alive” and able to confront with the world, that lives thanks to the “Ego in action”: the Ego discovers and makes live.

To approach a study on the themes relative to the psycho-neuro-biological functioning that regulates the relation between stimuli and answers, therefore between inner and outer, one must refer to a basic conceptualization that we can call “structure of the functioning of the personality”. In this sphere, a “stratigraphic-Schichtentheorie” or “theory of the layers” is still prevailing and the

personality is intended as specific and/or individual way to respond to internal and/or external stimuli.

The deepest, most inner and basic layer of the model is directly linked to repairing and stabilising processes of the internal environment that comprise:

- ?? Feeding
- ?? Reproduction
- ?? Defensive responses of flight and attack
- ?? Reactions of pleasure and regret
- ?? General activation of neuro-biological symptoms
- ?? Endogenous rhythms

The “growth“ and “development“ of the psychomental system, with the induction of the affective level is a “driving growth“; we can therefore observe the attempt to “create new vital units“ that presume to be able to stand, control and modulate a higher level of tension.

Romeo Lucioni, reporting the case of Ivano (an autistic child in very serious condition, terribly aggressive), points out how the psychotherapy brings the child to get into the car and from there to greet passers-by, people on a bicycle that meet, he can start to accept new experiences and the contact with other people (other than the therapist) even those he never met before. From this example one can deduce that the fundamental change stays in the “driven“ character that, unlike the emotive stimulus that generates a punctual collision, activates a “constant force of collision“ (Adriana Orquiguil) in front of which the flight is of no use, since a more continuative work is required that brings to the transformation. Affectivity is accepting the transformation, accessing to the change that is not seen any more as destructive and that does not generate sensations of loss: the image of the grandmother (symbol) accompanies the girl that, hence, does not live the fear of losing the “object grandma“ any more.

We ask ourselves how affection comes up; how the psychic processes develop to pass from emotions to affective experiences; how one passes from a mind centred on oneself to another centred on the value of the Other.

Adriana Orquiguil recognises the necessity to differentiate the internal stimulus (Real primitive Ego) from the outer one that brings her to consider the maternal dyad; this concept is present in other authors with different expressions:

- TUSTIN: speaks of external placental function and empathic reciprocity that maintains the momentary bodily continuity;
- WINNICOT: speaks of *sufficiently good mother* that goes generating conditions to contain, modify and procure satisfactions;
- DOLTO: speaks of mother as unconscious continuation of the child;
- BION: underlines a maternal reverie;

We can also add that:

R. LUCIONI: taking up Freudian concepts, he speaks of “*primordial dyadic object*“ (founded on the adhesion of a *perceived-almighty-Self* with an *introjected-almighty-breast*) that will allow the formation of a “*parental object*“ that will result in a model for the introjection and the formation of a conscience of objects.

From this we can deduce that the affective level is not reached simply by finding a way of discharging tension: the psychic apparatus complicates and organises after “superior modalities”, “human”, through the experience and living again moments of satisfaction that repeat in a context that gradually becomes foreseeable, also through the use of mnesic traces and, above all, through the language that allows definitely the symbolical structuring of thought.

We can say that the path that goes from tension to discharge, then, to the registration of a “satisfactory object” can be the beginning of structuring of a rudimentary-Ego that will gradually enrich and structure in the complexity.

One can see therefore how it’s the link with the good-object (satisfactory) that creates the *drive* that will be coercion to repeat: the pulsion does not form in vacuum, but on the repeated experiences (Freud’s “fort-da”) and experiences presume an Other because they are relational.

It is in the relation that the function “belongs” and therefore it comes to structure the “representational system” and to move *desire* and will.

- ?? Experience
- ?? Representation
- ?? Revision of experiences
- ?? Desire
- ?? Will

They seem different stages of pulsional order that can not be covered if not through the help of the Other.

With much lucidity Adriana Orquigil explains how necessary the existence of two essential elements is for the pulsion to be possible:

- ?? The entire excitement that demands satisfaction;
- ?? The existence of the Other that allows and goes preparing the conditions of facility, of interpretation and decoding.

Here A. Orquigil insists on the *maternal empathy* and gets to recognise how the presence of the parents is, to a certain extent, determinant for the psychic functioning of the child.

Eugenio Gaddini too centralises the function of the mother and these conclusions coincide with those of Tustin Winnicot, Dolto and Bion, but, in our opinion, they give too much emphasis and responsibility to the parents, and at the same time they limit the intrinsic possibilities of self-identification and self-determination just for the child.

Even if the parents’ psychomental structure and psychic functioning, characterised by desires, prohibitions, narcissism, ideals, norms and libidinations, structuring a “sphere”, can influence the formation of “symptoms” or of “trouble” in their children, who nurses a child must take into account to be in front of a psychic apparatus in formation and that, therefore, presents continuous and deep transformations. We take into account the child’s psychism:

- ?? It forms and/or structures with one’s own internal drive (intrinsic abilities of self-modelling) together with the enrichments brought by the experiences and the background;

?? Can be conformed with the help or the action of the parents and of those who live and act in concomitance and in community.

It would be very important being able to settle this question, but, for the complexity of the picture, one gets the impression that still many plugs are missing to complete the puzzle.

When Eugenio Gaddini says "... there is a mother distinct from oneself that satisfies the needs ..., but the child does not know that the breast is not his ... imagines to produce everything on his own ... product of a magic almightiness...", puts into the newborn a functional ability, maybe paramental, but active, creative and structuring although illusory.

Considerations and Comments

A particular mention should be made of the inner tension that, as we saw, needs to be discharged not to risk to trigger aggressive and destructive behaviours. Pichon-Riviere justifies, with this hyper-tension, also criminal discharges.

It is a daily experience the one with psychiatric patients that do not manage to contain what is called "*libidinal tension*" (smoking a cigarette; asking for a coffee or money; wanting to go out; disturbing somewhere; etc.) that can not be contained neither through the use of pharmaceuticals, nor with the delivery of what was requested. When these situations happen, it is better to leave the guest alone, letting him relax all by himself because the containment provokes violent reactions which they may regret, but that they say they do not know how to stop.

It is interesting to underline that these "crisis" can be more easily prevented than arrested: if they start they can not be stopped. Adequate pharmaceuticals slow down their start but are not able to extinguish them. As an example we remember Giovanni that tries to escape when he does not resist to the desire to go "... go for a walk", facing this way reproaches and "punishments" of the educators.

This behaviour has a strong meaning of not only opposition, but of desire of being "... managing one's own sensations and experiences: creator of oneself to dissolve the fear of the *loss* of the sense of oneself". Continuing these initiatives leads to true crises of anguish that are close to those registered with children that never had the contact with the breast and present the so-called "rumination" (mericism). This syndrome can be considered both as expression of a missed evolution, and a psycho-affective regression.

If we return to this "need for growing" we must remember that it approaches to a "terror of separation" and, therefore, of anguish in front of "loss". Taking into consideration this worrying crossroads, it becomes clear how growth is always and however an active and volitive act that the subject must operate to reach the "growth" of the sense of oneself.

In reality operating an act (showing to oneself and others a behaviour, adequate or not does not matter) has a defined meaning of being and being able and therefore every child or every subject (normal and/or disabled) reaches with this ones own dimension of existing, of self-determination and self-satisfaction.

The detachment from the mother, from this optic, is a wished act and, therefore, not passive-suffered, but active, looked for and desired.

In these terms the detachment is evident also as an act of rebellion, of "deicide" an insubordination that the subject lives with fear and retaliation of vengeance.

In a work on autism R. Lucioni clarifies how these children “can not” throw a ball against the wall that sends it back inexorably as destructive answer to a gesture as much destructive.

Trying to resume we can think that an action generates always a change and with this:

- ?? Anguish for the “quiet” (stade-state) situation that is lost;
- ?? Anguish in front of “mystery” that stands out in front of an insurmountable obstacle or black hole;
- ?? Satisfaction for what one managed to do;
- ?? Anguish for the insistencies of the others (parents, educators) to continue;
- ?? Anguish for the loss of a situation of symbiosis and of help that the Other had given;
- ?? Rage if one was contradicted and/or obstructed.

The “*psychological birth*”, as E. Gaddini calls it, is therefore a difficult and traumatic process, not different, for this, from “*biological birth*”, but unlike this one, it is never unique. The subject must “be born” every time it questions the sense of oneself both in the path of growing (in childhood) and in the one of loss (of old age).

Moreover the psychological birth leads always to being able to face two possibilities of resolution:

- ?? The maniacal negation (creation of a false Self);
- ?? The depression that brings to nihilism and to renunciation.

Unfortunately both these choices bring to the loss of Oneself that, on the contrary, for his imposition requests a complex and delicate process. It is for this reason that one speaks of “vulnerability of the mind” and “fragility of psychism”. The overcoming of the archaic problems of the fusion-separation happens through the setting up of the “triangular situation” that founds the development of Oedipus.

This three-legged process develops around the age of two (we remember the 15-25 months of frontalisation) and it can not happen earlier because the child has not yet reached a conscience of Oneself and the objects.

R. Lucioni has put in evidence the formation of the parental object, putting it as the definite base to reach the conscience of objects and for self-identification.

The triangular model (developed by Lacan and well remembered by G. Andreis) is the definite base for the organisation of affectivity intended as valorisation of the Other to oneself and the love.

This way the “*sense of the other-father*” is born and, like the “name of the father” is not only loved, but represents the accomplished sense of the individualisation and of the capacity not only of *existing* (more linked to the breast and, therefore to the mother), but of becoming.

It is in the *name of the father* that the child acquires the ability to *internalise mentally the admired model*, and accept one’s own growth, to free from anguish of separation, to integrate the “own” representational system, reaching secondary narcissism and then structuring as Oneself (Lacan) free, independent, self-referred, autonomous and confident.

Being Oneself (having overcome, therefore the limits of Ego) means to have reached the sense of the own bodily-self, being placed in a “psychic skin” capable of containing the parts and preventing the shattering, leaving the archaic mental mechanisms of negation and projection, developing sense of reality, opening to

the knowledge to develop one's own intellectual and deductive-associational abilities.

Name of the Father

Introjection of the models

Sense of Oneself

Own representational system

Affective and cognitive mental organisation

are the stages to reach those functional psychic and mental abilities that make an individual a person and represent the specific completeness of every human being.

Having an *own representational system* means overcoming that phase in which the perception creates the thought, in which one must *imitate to perceive* (that was imitate to be). Reaching the own Self therefore is not only feeling as a person, unique and inimitable, but being able to accept as real one's own representations and thoughts, reaching the *sense of truth* and the true path towards individualisation.

The perception-representation does not destroy like imitation and furthermore individualises in the sense that it puts the Self as distinct, different from the world and, therefore, allows that the *desire of the other* arises in the mind, the external object that is no more a competitor to hate, but an object to love.

This at the beginning will appear as part of oneself outside oneself, experienced as *other inside oneself*, process that allows to abandon incorporation and introjection that remain only as overcome archaic mechanisms.

The detachment and the separation represent the true *psychological birth*, but also and definitely the acquisition of that part of oneself that is the *affective functioning*, second lap of the acquisition of the intellectual capacities and intelligence.

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