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IMMUNIZATION AGAINST PSYCHOSIS
THROUGH NEUROSIS AND PSYCHONEUROSIS

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1. Definition of neurosis and psychoneurosis

At the beginning of this paper it is necessary to give the definitions of nervousness and psychoneurosis from the point of view of the theory of positive disintegration.

We wish you to notice that there is a fundamental difference between our definition of neurosis and psychoneurosis and Hughlong Jackson's and Sargent and Slater's definition that nervousness and psychoneurosis are preliminary stages of psychosis.

It is our view that neuroses and psychoneuroses are not only necessary in accelerated and multilevel development but that they also immunize a man's psyche against serious mental disorders such as psychosis.

We call nervousness such forms of increased psychic excitability as: sensual, emotional, imaginal, psychomotor, and intellectual which contain positive basic developmental potential with nuclei for development of inner psychic milieu and of the creative instinct.

We call psychoneurosis those processes, syndromes and functions which express inner and external conflicts and positive maladjustment of an individual in the process of accelerated development.

2. "Pathological" and at the same time immunizing potentials in nervousness

The existence of different forms of psychic overexcitability results from this definition of neurosis. They usually appear together, some more useful for development and other less.

A common quality of all forms of psychic overexcitability is that such overexcitability is a basis for more sensitive, sympathetic, more universal and deeper attitude toward different forms of reality. It is,

on one hand, a basis for excitement, inner and external conflicts, tension, sadness, depression, anxiety, and so on, and - on the other hand - a basis for universal, and more complicated view of reality but in a different light: vital, full of contrasts and non-automatic.

This increased psychic excitability - tends to increased sensitivity toward the external and inner milieu - is a basis for disappointments, conflicts, difficulties in adjustment which often cause unpleasant emotional states, and on the other hand - are a basis for new and more complicated solutions.

Some forms of excitability cause difficulties in contact with the environment, incapacity to cope with various life problems and lack of resistance to mental stress.

Another quality of psychic excitability is the easy transference of psychic experiences to the autonomic nervous system. This quality causes such unpleasant symptoms as: trembling of hands and eyelids, flushing, acceleration and arrhythmia of heartbeat, tendencies to headaches and generally unpleasant states of tension, etc.

The above-mentioned dynamisms and the latter quality of easy psychosomatization causes nervous or psychoneurotic individuals to feel that "something is going on" in their inner milieu, something which interests them and at the same time bothers them, something which intravertizes them and at the same time awakens interest toward others who present the same symptoms.

This is the basis for authentic interest in oneself and in others, for empathy, for awareness of oneself and even for inner psychic transformation.

We can consider all these symptoms as potentially negative which - however - are necessary in the development of an individual and even act as forces of defense against serious disturbances.

As we mentioned, there are no pure forms of psychic excitability. Some forms are more useful for the development of an individual and his resistance to mental disturbances and some are less. According to the author, the most useful forms would be increased emotional, imaginal and intellectual excitability.

Increased emotional excitability is one of the sources of sympathy and empathy in the development of psychic multilevelness and in the control of lower level emotions by higher ones. Emotional increased excitability is a fundamental element in the development of social and moral feelings.

Increased imaginal excitability causes an excess of imagination, fantasy, dreams and on the other hand - is a basis for prospecting and retrospection, for elaboration of a hierarchy of values and even the ideal of personality which - again - has a defensive character, i.e. it protects against mental illness.

Increased intellectual excitability in connection with those mentioned above intensifies planning and insight and gives the basis for the development of a prospective attitude and brings in creative problems.

3. Some "pathological" and immunizing potentials in psychoneurosis

Psychoneuroses express themselves in such pathological syndromes as: anxiety states, depressions, obsessions, disturbances of reality function, frustration, etc.

They are the cause of such unpleasant experiences as sadness, tension, disaffection with life, resignation, suicidal tendencies. A psychoneurotic individual feels overwhelmed by the antinomies in himself and in the external environment, by his inhibitions, by his inability to make up his mind, and by his own strangeness.

If the individual possesses appropriate developmental potential and the above-mentioned qualities - he hardens himself emotionally against his difficulties, gets used to them, and after seeing them as forces which allow him a variety and richness of aspects of life and creativity - he starts to treat them not only as enemies but also as his friends. They become necessary in development because they make experiences richer, expand the experiencing of life and introduce new richness of content. They testify that something is going on and developing in a psychoneurotic's inner milieu.

The essence of psychoneurosis is inner conflict which can be unilevel or hierarchical. The hierarchical or multilevel conflict appears between that which is "lower", primitive and that which is "higher" and more complicated.

From increased excitability, from the nuclei of the inner environment, from conflict within oneself and with the environment there arise such dynamisms as: "subject-object" in oneself, third factor, self-awareness and self-control, autonomy and authenticity.

And now we will proceed to more concrete examples of psychoneurosis.

Depression beside morbid potentials contains positive potentials, i.e. developmental and prophylactic. It evokes inferiority feeling, dissatisfaction with oneself, feelings of shame and guilt which are necessary especially in accelerated development; it also takes part in the creation of a hierarchy of values, compassion, empathy, understanding of others and identification with others. An individual who does not experience

depression cannot understand sadness and depression in others, and consequently cannot develop hierarchization, that is to say, multilevel disintegration. Only these experiences make us sensitive to the pain of others. Creative depression takes part in the diversion of our attention away from our own problems and draws our attention to the problems of other people. In this way depression becomes a defensive and prophylactic force.

Anxiety psychoneurosis - with its developmental potential, that is to say, with a higher level of psychoneurotic functions - makes us sensitive to the anxiety of others, to existential anxiety, gives a basis for objectivization in relation to oneself, makes us sensitive to one of the most serious emotional states - anxiety (or fear).

Psychasthenia on its highest level promotes the development of the reality function on a higher level, gives the basis for creative systematization of imagination and dreams, and creative ideas which - along with the impossibility of adjustment to a low level reality - creates from the reality of a higher level - the rich experience and prophylaxis against psychotic diseases.

Obsessive psychoneurosis with positive potential is the basis of alterocentric development, obsession with "good works", obsession with self-perfection and with the realization of the ideal, obsession about important decisions which cause the realization of creative undertakings. Obsessive qualities were definitely present in the heroes of Shakespeare's drama "Romeo and Juliet", Kierkegaard surely had obsessive elements in his aspirations to realization of the absolute, Korczak surely expressed them in his realization of absolute responsibility for his pupils when he decided to go with them - of his own free - to the gas chamber.

4. On the depathologization of psychoneurotic dynamisms and their use in prophylaxis

How can we depathologize these dynamisms and turn them into defensive forces?

We answered this partly before. The potentials of neurosis and psychoneurosis - most often connected with creative potentials, that is to say, with the nuclei of inner psychic milieu and often with special abilities - are the reason for the seeing and experiencing of the complexity of phenomena, determine deep insight into oneself and others and determine the development of new, creative, and multilevel problems.

All these elements express something like saturation, like hardening by deep experiences through the growth of awareness of alterocentrism and of empathy; they determine - in the majority of cases - "knowing the enemy in oneself", that is to say, knowing these tensions, phenomena and disturbances which could become psychoses.

Understanding and creative experiencing of complicated and even pathological experiences widens and deepens the psyche, accustoms an individual to the complexity of phenomena, develops also resistance to difficult experiences and hardens him emotionally. Besides this it allows insight into psychic states from two sides: creative and pathological, developmental and adevelopmental. It allows understanding of others and transposing of others experiences onto ourselves and vice versa.

Here are a few examples taken from clinical practice and from the biographies of eminent people:

1. An individual with intravertive qualities, an altruistic attitude and tragic experiences turned to a doctor whom he trusted and knew that he would diagnose his case correctly and accurately. This person was experiencing such unbearable inner tension that only possibility of relief appeared either in death or an experience almost as extreme as death. He suspected schizophrenia and he expected a confirmation because this would allow him to transpose his tension onto a different reality.

2. An individual with depression and anxiety states, with a very high level of global development writes about the feeling of fear: "Now I ask what would happen to me if I was not afraid... It seems to me that I would cease all my activities: I would not have any initiative. I would categorize everyone, I would not pay attention to events and persons; I would be authoritative, hard, and I would not be capable of searching. I would not be interested in peace, reflection or solitude..."

3. And here are fragments of a letter from a great poet to an eminent painter. Both were pessimists suffering from depression. The first tried through his letters to treat his friend's depression. "Your illness is your bursting talent whose explosion is inhibited by nerves; these nerves are the source of your talent but also they are a source of all your grief. You are a kind of lost Van Gogh or Gauguin who is tormented by the nightmare of his imagination." "Physicians know nothing and there is no use obeying them. Go to sages, to sorcerers, that is to poets." "You have the rare quality of your picture disturbing you which does not now invade our intellectuals; and you have this splendid bitterness which is the drink of the poets of the past whom we adore; this is the bitterness we need."

4. Following is the example of Dr. Janusz Korczak we mentioned before. He was conscious of his strange and sometimes sick behavior as when he thought of committing suicide and attempted to persuade his sister to do the same. He had certain hereditary load from his father who was a

psychotic. In his diary he writes that in his difficulties he would never turn to someone who would want to treat him because it would be the loss of something intimate, beloved, close; something contained in his so-called morbid experiences.

5. The eminent English poet Keats wrote that he never was so creative as when he was severely ill with tuberculosis as a consequence experienced the worst tensions and psychic difficulties.

6. We know that Kierkegaard experienced states of psychoneurotic depression on the borderline of depressive psychosis. He underlined many times that without depression he would not live in the creative sense. He affirmed that he "tamed" these depressions and that he needed them but at the same time maintained a negative attitude toward them.

7. Kafka from childhood manifested emotional and imaginal over-excitability. He had inclinations to silence and isolation. His family environment greatly influenced the development of these qualities. Kafka became aware that his father's influence on him was psychologically harmful. His father ridiculed him and offended him with his primitive behavior. He was conscious of his weakness, sensitivity and abnormality. In order to be isolated from his father he looked for other worlds and another reality which would be accessible only to him. He became more and more isolated. His only joy was his writing which carried out as in a condition of trance. The characters in his books express the mental states of Kafka himself. They suffer, hesitate, doubt, express fear and trembling. But all these painful experiences allow them insight into those matters which are hidden from others. Even Kafka's dreams became so clear that in this regard they outgrew the real reality and became the source of his creative ideas. We can say that mental disintegration and Kafka's fear and trembling were the basis for the growth of his consciousness and therefore played a creative role.

His loneliness and anxieties were the basis for him of seeing the world in a prophetic light, They helped to overlook the dynamisms of adjustment and to understand the world in its most real aspect, that is to say, bad, indifferent and even nightmarish. This seeing and understanding was possible only from a creative distance and from the world of dreams. Kafka was a genius of the absurd who aspired to grasp only the most essential. He knew that this was possible only through tearing away from the real world, through disruption, suffering and the world of dreams. He knew the value of "assimilation" of these experiences; he knew that they collaborated positively with the creative dynamisms and that they protected him from falling into involutive psychosis.

In conclusion:

1. Neurosis contains developmental, that is to say, prophylactic elements through sensitivity to different kinds and levels of reality. This causes difficulties and traumas and on the other hand it acquaints the individual with these problems and even allows penetration of these problems which immunize against unexpected and hard stimuli.
2. Gradual increase of difficult experiences - on the basis of increased excitability - cause emotional hardening through the growth of understanding of oneself and of others.
3. Psychoneurotic states, if they concern the higher psychic functions - transform fears of a lower level into existential fears; egocentric depressions into a developmental depression; narrow and impulsive obsessions into obsessions of a higher level of emotional life connected with alterocentric attitudes.
4. Psychoneurotic states - through their multilevel and multidimensional qualities - are the basis for the development of creativity in the direction of higher levels of reality and deepen the abilities for inner psychic transformation and empathy.

5. Psychoneurotic states allow the deeper treating of oneself as an object and of others as subjects.

6. Psychoneurotics with positive developmental potential (a higher level of psychic functions) - with development of external and internal difficulties, have greater possibility of seeing the antinomies in the world - and therefore have greater possibility of developmental adjustment than the so-called normal people.