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1] Name	DABROWSKI, Kazimierz	Academic rank Professor
Department or School	Department of Psychology	Telephone:
Institution	University of Alberta Edmonton, Alberta	office 432-5258 home 436-2612 area code 403

### APPENDIX 3

## A More Specific Picture of the Developmental Way - Neuroses and Psychoneuroses, the Philosophy of Psychoneuroses

### A. Meaning of Neuroses and Psychoneuroses

In the chapter concerning the process of positive disintegration, we presented a very brief and synthetic picture suggesting the background role of psychoneuroses in the entire process of positive disintegration. Presently, we shall concern ourselves with the most specific and intense elements or syndromes of the process of positive disintegration as they present themselves in the form of psychoneuroses.

As we know, psychoneuroses may be understood in terms of fairly well-defined and organized syndromes in the developmental process, the essence of which consists in internal conflicts between that which is "lower" and primitive, and that which is "higher" and more complex; between that which is "vulgar", rigid, narrow and that which is delicate, flexible and wide; between that which is creative and sincere, and that which is artificial and falsified. At which end of the continuum the conflict will be resolved depends, to a great extent, on the level of mental functioning present. In other words, we may differentiate certain inter-neurotic levels of conflicts and mental functioning.

This means, that psychoneuroses have their own "levels" as they combine with higher or lower levels of psychic functions. We would say then, that lower levels of neurotic expression are rigid, automatic, and stereotyped - serving to constrict and confine one's view of reality, rather than opening up new and expansive insights.

For instance, in certain forms of psychoneuroses where the developmental aspect is very weak and, as in the case of hypochondria, we observe very rigid, narrow dynamisms taking the form of continuous observation of oneself, "clinging" to narrow fields and problems, with tendencies to somatization and pathological rumination. We can also distinguish sexual psychoneuroses which concern a more or less distinct and limited sexual sphere of sexual life. We find symptoms of neurasthenia similar, in some extent, to those of hypochondria in which the somatic component - the component of vegetative disturbances - plays a fundamental role.

In the examples presented, the possibility for development, or increasing one's awareness of newer and higher realities, is very weak; hence, these were described as 'lower' forms of neuroses. In what we call 'higher' forms of neuroses, the potential for development is strong and such neuroses are usually described as multilevel - which means that they are not only 'higher' in terms of inter-neurotic differences; but that they also present what is called intra-neurotic differences. This means, that within a single neurosis, we may find various levels of expression, depending upon the extent to which the developmental potential has been reached. Certain psychoneurotic groups in which various mental functions of different levels take part are: anxiety neuroses, depressional and obsessional psychoneuroses, psychoneurosis of failure, infantile neurosis and psychasthenia.

In summary then, the psychoneuroses present many different inter- and intra-relations expressing different levels of conflicts, with a greater or lesser possibility of overcoming them in developmental achievement, with more or less possibilities of approaching personality. This hierarchization is based on criteria such as <sup>the</sup> degree of self-awareness, self-control, empathy, etc. If the level is low, then biological functions control the mental ones and the awareness is limited. The expression of a syndrome is either psychosomatic, or self-centered, or both. If the level is high then mental functions are predominant and the expression of a syndrome loses its psychosomatic counterpart, but gains in the intensity and awareness of an inner conflict, and has alterocentric components.

In the forms of psychoneuroses, which present intraneurotic levels of functioning, we observe the possibility for hierarchical or vertical movement; hence, the possibility of developing the highest expression of a philosophy of life and of development.

#### B. Kinds and Levels of Psychoneuroses

Let us think now of the different kinds and levels of psychoneuroses and their developmental philosophy.

##### 1. Anxiety psychoneuroses

If we take anxiety psychoneurosis on the lowest level, for instance, we shall observe that it is essentially the neurosis of fear. Its dynamisms and symptoms represent feeble developmental and strong vegetative components, a low level

reflectivity accompanied by highly primitive tensions, and a tendency to immovability and automatism.

For example, on this level we may observe fears of external situations, of assault, of threat to life, of accidents, or economic insufficiency bordering on conditions of hysteria, often with strong somatic components. Here belong such primitive phobias as the fear of being robbed shown by hiding money at home, searching for burglars under beds and in closets, etc.

In such anxieties, consciousness is virtually absent and no possibility for inner psychic transformation exists.

However, on the highest levels of anxiety psychoneuroses we find self-control of the vegetative fear, inhibition in relation to lower level dynamisms, growth of an existential attitude, of concern for the preservation of others, of empathy towards others, and growth of the personality.

Anxieties expressed here are closely related to a feeling of responsibility and we see great tension in concern for those who suffer, who are exposed to injustice, who are humiliated, as well as, for those who will suffer in the future and who will be victims of fate. Such psychological experiences provide for the elaboration of the attitude of "I and Thou."

As the anxiety before external phenomena clearly disappears, anxiety over the "unknown" increases, as does anxiety before the possibility of becoming anxious, and anxiety for something existential.

We see this evidenced quite clearly in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, who embarked upon an endless search to rebuild the hidden sources of philosophy. Care and consciousness, in his view, lead to the highest problems in philosophy - the most perturbing, being man's consciousness and fear of the state of nothingness. Even with the nothingness of life, that which creates human beings in consciousness of this fear. This consciousness and anxiety become the instruments of true human knowledge and understanding.

This form of anxiety is close to Kierkegaard's "fear and trembling" expressing an ambivalent attitude of attraction and repulsion towards the unknown, and an increasing empathy towards people who experience such states. Often we see agony over the terrifying conditions existing in the world (eg. wars, hatred, cruelty, etc.), over the sense and meaning of life and creation - usually things which have little to do with ones personal problems.

These states of anxiety are developmentally positive and introduce a pure existential atmosphere culminating in the aspiration to transgress the limitations of anxiety and "flow" into the vast waters beyond the unknown, separate from the automatic things of everyday life.

The philosophical implications are clear. This is similar in expression to the "touch of the unknown" - full of repulsion, attraction and horror, while at the same time, stimulating an attitude of courage. From this it follows that the dynamisms of anxiety psychoneuroses are not only those basic to existential thinking; but are also expressive of a high need for entering into the unknown and the subsequent realization of personality as a result of this.

The passage through inner conflicts, inhibitions and, in general, conditions revealing a danger to one's life instincts, opens one's eyes to the existential problems of others; hence, to the development of common essence, where his sense of responsibility is based, not on a contract, but on a universal sensibility. We may think, for instance, of the moment when Christ left his friends, not forgetting or aban-

doning them, but accepting his crucifixion out of deep concern for the existential crises of humanity. This is the highest expression of both common and individual essence, or personality.

Through the development of altruistic anxieties, anxieties about others, and control over anxieties about oneself - courage and heroism are born, which allows an individual to arrive at great decisions under great tension. This is the way towards conscious heroism and, hence, towards a philosophy of heroism.

We may experience the philosophy of heroism in the Greek tragedies - all of which contain the elements of agony and suffering propelling acts of great courage and heroism.

We are witnessing then, a developmental philosophy of joy and sadness, of tragedy and obligation. Christ told us, "Where the sheep die, the shepherd should also die."

During more recent times we have witnessed acts of heroism based on such a philosophy as in the case of the sinking Titanic, where the captain refused to leave his crew and his ship - choosing death instead, and where the musicians continued to play to maintain the morale of the remaining passengers as the ship sank.

Since the philosophical germs are more clearly developed and expressed at the higher levels, we shall concern ourselves only with the remaining psychoneuroses as they are expressed at the higher levels.

## 2. Depressive and psychasthenic psychoneuroses

Depressive and psychasthenic states are often combined to indicate to us the states of "terror" or "immobilization" and sadness bound with a too sensitive and multisided touch of the lower levels of reality.

On the highest level, psychasthenia represents a weakening of lower level mental functions (i.e., weakness and deficiencies in handling affairs concerning ordinary living), while creatively searching for and functioning well at higher levels of reality. Accompanying this is a deep experience of sadness and depression, in response to the necessary existence of and often imprisonment by the lower levels of reality, which activates powers affirming the existence of a higher reality and the powers necessary to come to its realization.

In the individual with a rich nuclei for development, depression occurs in response to the cruelties and sorrows experienced by people at lower forms of reality with an understanding of the necessity of passing through these realities; but also, the feeling of "diminishing of oneself", of being lost in this seemingly "pointless" reality.

We know fairly clearly of such experiences as, for instance, the ones of Saint Exupery, described by Dr. Paul Abely, Neyrac and others. His type of depression presented a disillusionment towards the lower level of reality; while also, expressing a way of touching another reality, hoping to arise to the higher level of reality through "joyful



sadness" empathy, and a developing aspiration towards the "feeble touches" of this very attractive reality.

We observe the same phenomena in Marcel Proust. During his states of depression he presented very strong movements towards the "unknown" and very strong contemplative states towards nature, as an expression of defense in relation to the reality of a lower level. For example, in his work, In Search of the Time We Lost, he attempts to "bring to life" close persons resting in immortality, through imagination, and by emotional and intellectual concentration. Such a leap into the unknown cannot be sufficiently realized, and so, was a cause for depression.

We observe similar phenomena in other persons such as, Gerard de Nerval.

These are expressions of powerful tension created by needs for the realization of a developmental philosophy - a philosophy of freedom from the lower level and access to the higher level of reality.

### 3. Obsessive psychoneuroses

Even at lower levels, the obsessive psychoneuroses, very often, give witness to a concentration on "important" or "most important things" which are clear in the obsession, but sometimes hidden by other contents. These other contents are more formulated giving relief through a less painful concentration, in comparison with the one that arises when faced with the impossibility of resolving the more important hidden contents which, in themselves, are much more difficult to

annihilate than the more formulated and less creative camouflaging contents.

Very often, these obsessions express the pressure felt from the side of the durable, essential and intangible things even if the contents of such obsessions are not expressing this phenomenon in a direct way. There is, as was mentioned above, a tendency to arrest the most important contents. For instance, the obsession to wash one's hands, to go away from long walls, the anxious oppression before the possible spasmodic appearance of unknown contents - all these are very often expressive of a protest against psychic imprisoning, against the "impurity of this world", against slavery, etc.

In a more conscious level we observe obsessions of heroism and self-sacrifice, of responsibility and love, of existential, empathic tension over the suffering of others and actual readiness to help them. We may be reminded of the obsessive love between Romeo and Juliette which they believed would continue in the after-life. Socrates was known to have <sup>“</sup>sit immobilized for hours in obsessive thought over problems in education and philosophy. St. Exupery expressed great concern with the unknown, believing that the more one developed knowledge of the unknown, the closer one would be to death or a state of higher existence.

Obsessions such as these then, express, from a philosophical point of view, the need for a philosophy of freedom, of going away from the lower level of reality in order to transgress the "unknowable." The philosophical implications

clearly indicate the existential way, the way to transcend the, until now, existing reality through the process of disintegration.

#### 4. Hysterical and infantile psychoneuroses

Let us now turn to the characterization of higher levels of hysterical and infantile psychoneuroses. Although they are fairly different unities, they present many similarities; but due to lack of space, we shall present only the common philosophical implications.

We know that both of them present emotional and imaginal overexcitability, a tendency to fantasy and fabulous tales, originality of concepts, magical and animistic thinking, suggestibility in relation to higher level stimuli, and a tendency towards contemplation and even ecstasy.

With such characteristics is bound the capability for prospection, empathy, strong developmental movement, an idealistic attitude, and a readiness for sacrifice.

For instance, many of the saints present both characteristics on a high level. From the side of hysteria we have emotional overexcitability resulting in an overactive playing of a role with empathy, with universal and deep identification, and with a tendency to contemplation and ecstasy - more specifically in the experience of immobilized separation of the spirit from the body. From the side of infantilism we see qualities of sincerity, impulsiveness, openness, and courage combined with tendencies toward idealization and animistic or magical thinking. We see clearly these charac-

teristics in Joan of Arc, Keats, Chopin, St. Exupery, etc.

The philosophical implications here are also clear. In these forms of psychoneuroses we observe an aspiration towards the unknown, for the transgression of oneself, for maladjustment and withdrawal from lower levels of reality and aspiration to higher ones, and for withdrawal from egoistic attitudes in favor of the realization of altruistic and empathic ones.

As we have already mentioned, we observe here very high suggestibility towards original stimuli from higher levels of reality; a readiness of enthusiasm only in relation to original and creative things; magic and animism are present on a relatively high level of development. Here, then, appears the aspiration for development and for transgression of lower levels - such attitudes contain the nuclei for philosophical development or an attitude expressing "love for development."

### C. General Conclusions *Philosophical Implications*

The characteristics of the various levels of psychoneuroses are typified in the philosophical attitudes they represent. Philosophical attitudes stimulating development are associated with creativity, an association whose strength increases the higher the level of development.

A philosophy featuring creative dynamisms is represented by a search for "otherness"; for non-stereotyped components of reality; inclinations to be astonished and anxious about actual reality and, in consequence, positive maladjustment; empathy combined with strong emotions; rich conceptions, plans and programs with a discernable multilevel character.

A philosophy which is not the product of inner conflicts and positive maladjustment is reflective of stereotypy, rigidity, lack of attempts toward developmental solutions - all of which are a manifestation of the lack of creative coping with life and of "psychic dwarfism."

And so, the least creative and developmental tendencies are found in hypochondria, neurasthenia, sexual, and lower forms of hysterical neuroses; whereas, greater creative tendencies are exhibited in the developmentally higher psychoneuroses like: obsessive, anxiety, infantile, depressive, and psychasthenic types.

This is due to the fact that in the higher psychoneuroses we have a preoccupation with general or existential problems frequently of an alterocentric character, full of inner conflicts and attempts at their resolution; as well as, a preoccupation with the fundamental moral and transcendental philosophical question. In contrast, the lower psychoneuroses such as hypochondria, hysterical conversion, sexual neurosis and the like, do not show this type of preoccupation, awareness and striving for resolution.

The higher psychoneuroses present us with a picture of obsessions of heroism, self-sacrifice and responsibility, fears for the future of mankind or excessive universal sensitivity of the infantile type. Again, this is not observed in the lower psychoneuroses because perceptions are narrow, experiences are limited, and the general orientation is egocentric. Hence, we see the philosophical orientations

arising out of the different levels of awareness and sensitivity expressed in the types of psychoneuroses.

In the more highly developed philosophies we have a separation into levels and the "seeing" of new things, a search for the "new and other" answers to the meaning of life and tensions accompanying the search; while in the lower ones we have stereotyped tendencies and perceptions.