

The psyche — Is a New Discovery Due?

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I . Concept and Overview

The healing of a mental disorder is generally undertaken by psychologists, doctors and sometimes specialists from other professions as well. In psychotherapy, there is a clear division of roles: a consciously acting psychotherapist faces a client who is seeking help. The common goal of both is either the psychological development of the person seeking help or the elimination or alleviation of the psychological problems causing his suffering. The therapist works on the basis of one or more psychotherapeutic theories. For a healing, the trust of those seeking help, good therapeutic contact, an interpretative model for both persons, an understanding of how the disorder arose and how it can be corrected are all important prerequisites.

First of all, I will go into twelve different psychological disorders and cite an example of each.

1) Developmental Disorders

Specifically age-related disorders. Example: anorexia nervosa in adolescence.

2) Behavioural Disorders

Socially conditioned and socially relevant disorders in the relationships with the human and objective environments. Example: aggressiveness.

3) Neuroses

Serious disorders beyond the control of the person affected, usually associated with continuous suffering. Example: phobias.

4) Performance Disorders

Impairment of the execution of necessary tasks. Example: loss of concentration.

5) Psychological Deviations

Excessive or deficient changes in normal experience and behaviour. Example: alcohol misuse.

6) Functional Disorders

Psychogenic and somatogenic impairments, with psychosocial effects. Example: sexual disorders.

7) Emotional Disorders

Disorders of the emotional life. Example: depression.

8) Mental Disorders

Disorders in the psychological confrontation with one's inner world and with the environment. Example: Alzheimer syndrome.

9) Language Disorders

Handicaps of language, speaking, writing and writing technique. Example: dyslexia.

10) Personality Disorders

Abnormal conditions or developments of personal characteristics. Example: self-alienation.

11) Psychoses

In the field of psychiatry, this is the most serious impairment. Example: schizophrenia.

12) Internal and External Consequences of Stress

Example: lack of motivation to live.

This enumeration is an attempt to acquire a general overview. It does not go into the origins of the types of psychological suffering and does not orientate itself around these. In Europe, the USA and other countries under European influence, there are several schools of therapy:

① **Depth psychology** / especially psychoanalysis (but also Adler's and C. G. Jung's methods).

② *Behaviour-orientated therap* / in particular behavioural therapy or cognitive-orientated therapies.

③ *Experience-orientated therapies* / Examples: logotherapy, client-centred therapy, neurolinguistic therapies.

④ **Systematic therapies** / such as family therapy or relationships analyses.

⑤ **Body therapies** / such as (among others) bioenergetic, autogenic training, rebirthing.

The choice is almost too vast. A 'psycho-boom' prevails, generally aiming at 'self-realisation'.

II . Psychotherapy in the Religious Context

Psychotherapy originally belongs to the healing rituals of all great religions. We are reminded of the *miracles of Jesus*, which are mostly rooted in psychosomatic experiences. In the Catholic Church, *exorcism* lives on until today. The driving out of the Devil and demons could be regarded as a kind of shock therapy in earlier centuries — or a catharsis (inner purification), or could have had a healing effect in the same way as magical rituals. Moreover, many medical practitioners and scientists of religion consider a neurological effect feasible.

In earlier times, an ancient profession combined the roles of priest and doctor as one person. When the medical system became distinct from the religious system and the psychotherapeutic system became distinct from general medicine in the 20th century, *the concepts of religious and worldly influences on psychological processes and illnesses became separated*. In the so-called nature religions, shamans (for example in Siberia) continue to play the roles of both healers and soul-healers. Parallels are to be found in some other African and Latin American regions that is, in countries which are mostly not regarded as belonging to the highly industrialised quadrant group of Canada, Europe, USA or Japan but also in the Philippines.

Nevertheless, in recent centuries, especially in protestant regions, *reversals are taking place, inasmuch as psychotherapeutic knowledge and practices are built into ecclesiastical institutions*. This has occurred, for example:

1) **In the pastoral therapy** of the 1950s and 60s. Example: prayer experiments; experiences with the 'Indian' four elements in psychotherapeutic clinics.

2) **In group dynamics** learning together in groups to analyse, to accept as critical experience the dynamic process of group life, to alter those processes, and to accept them as critical experience (in contrast to lack of personal skills). 50 to 60 years ago, group dynamics was

celebrated as the great achievement of psychological research and discovery in the 20th century. Group dynamics is practised, for example, in the Catholic Church in the election of Catholic leaders.

3) **In V. E. Frankl's logotherapy** in which the client himself is instructed to go in search of meaning. A religious meaning does not necessarily need to be found. (Paradigm: "I ought to be more humble", or "Learning to suffer with Christ")

4) **In Bible-drama** which involves the fathoming of biblical texts through theatre, and through which the connections between religious experience and personal life history come to be comprehended. This can have a liberating effect and infuse biblical verses with life. (Paradigm: acting out of the Zachaeus story)

5) **In body therapy** This is generally understood as the learning of meditative walking. It is associated with an ancient church rule instructing Catholic clerics to practise their daily Bible readings at specified times while walking to and fro. In psychotherapy, no one is forced to practise prayer and Bible lessons in such a way. However, it is recommended that one take a slow and meditative crucifix walk while concentrating on a particular text.

Yet the most important contribution of body therapy for psychological healing consists in the increasing practice of the simple laying-on of hands, whether accompanied by words or without verbal contact. (Paradigm: Reiki)

III . The Source of Various Teachings Of the Psyche

The origin of belief in a 'soul' is above all connected with the concept that *soul and breath* are related to one another (Brahmanism; Old Testament). This ancient belief, which is presumed to have predominated 40,000 years ago, does not exclude the belief that one can also eat a soul. In tribal religions, for which belief in magic is the norm, the basic conviction could be that whoever eats the heart of an enemy multiplies the substance of his own soul.'

For prehistoric man, *the blood, or the head, or the shadow, etc. can also be regarded as the bearer of the soul*. The shape of the soul was seen as being that of an image of a person or a thing. This image was at the same time the power and being of that which it represented. Even a name could be the form of a soul. Some naming rituals have the meaning of the soul being given to the child. For example, in the case of the Germanic tribes, the name is given through the father.

Gradually, *belief in a soul came to be differentiated in two ways*. On the one hand, the soul was represented in a substantial and bodily way, taking on the form, among other things, of a guardian angel or a soul bird. More decisive and momentous for our so-called Christian West, however, is the *contrast between the soul and the material world*, as formulated by Plato (427-347 BC). Classical dualism came about: the body here and the soul there, becoming separated from each other only at death. And the debasement of the material and bodily eventually led to the concept that the body is to be abhorred. Ascetic monks regarded the body as nothing but a 'prison' and 'grave of the soul'. Yet Aristotle corrected this *dungeon theory*, subsequently having a lasting influence on the Christian faith: the soul is from the start aligned with the organically living; it can only be unfolded as an existence working through the physical body. Augustine (AD 354-430), building on this, discovered the human being as a being with soul, and created in the image of God. As such, man is able to gain knowledge of God through self-knowledge.

For centuries, *three basic abilities* have been attributed to the soul: thinking, feeling and willing. From the 18th century, the Enlightenment brought about a *dramatic psychological turning-point* in the understanding of the soul which had predominated until then. The substance of 'soul' as consciousness evaporated into a system of mechanical 'laws of association', carried out by acts based on feelings. We could call this development a 'psychology without soul' or even a 'psychology without psyche'. The soul had now become merely the 'psychological functions', with sensation, cognition, imagination, thinking, feeling and willing as the central themes of this scientific psychology.

It ought to be regarded as a stroke of luck that Sigmund Freud re-assembled these psychic parts of men or women such that they inter-related with one another in a unified theory of man, thus providing psychiatry with an indispensable framework. Meanwhile, *some aspects of this psychoanalytical model may have become dated* - through such developments as humanistic psychology, behavioural psychology, transpersonal or (soon perhaps?) 'gene psychology'.

IV. The Healing of The Psyche Through Familial Bonds

During recent decades, family therapy has matured into a distinct branch of psychotherapy. The field is frankly booming. And this develop-

ment is justifiable. Earlier, psychotherapeutic treatment involved a constellation consisting of the patient or client (who still often reclined on the obligatory couch) and the note-taking psychiatrist seated at his side. Meanwhile, this has changed decisively. The reason is not due to the individual approach to psychoanalysis at the beginning of the 20th century. After all, it was on the psychiatrists couch that psychological disorders were shown to arise from *psychological damage inflicted on people in the first six years of their lives*.

Nonetheless, I would like to show how confusedly broad the field of family therapy has meanwhile become. At present there are about 36 *methods* and 'schools' of family therapy, seeking recognition and application, and known in the 'quadrant group' (EU, USA, Canada, Japan). By the way, the most recent one to appear on the 'psycho-market' calls itself 'feminist family therapy', which fears that psychotherapist's place the male members of the family too much at the centre of their efforts. The short history of family therapy has been through radical changes in terms of goals and methods. In the beginning, it was mainly occupied with the 'dirty washing' that had not quite been eliminated in families, in other words: psychological repair. Irrational prejudices in the relationships among man, woman, child and grandparent had crept in. Thus arose problems of alienation between the parents, possibly leading to divorce, so that potential for change must be found in order to fundamentally ease the climate in the family.

Too much weight was often placed on the preliminary decision of exactly who should face each other in family therapeutic sessions: the couple and the children, only the partners, or the grandparents as well? Or should one perhaps extend the family therapy concept even to include several families at the same time, conducting therapy through dialogue with one another?

Gradually it became clear that the family constellation itself must once again be thoroughly thought through and evaluated before considering crisis-intervention in the form of a therapy. It came to be recognised that *a familial matrix was at the root of almost all forms of human relations*. Man, as a social being, throughout his life never loses the orientation toward father and mother figures and to persons and institutions which determined his existence in the first years of his life.

I would like to demonstrate how important and valuable such realisations are through the *example of my own life*. I am the last of five children and have only had brothers. It was not until a long time after the completion of my psychology studies that I became aware of

how decisive my particular start in life was to influence my path as an adult. I always got on excellently with older colleagues, had difficulty in relating to women colleagues, and it took me a very long time to adjust to younger colleagues. Furthermore, I never much enjoyed playing the role of leader, yet I could always quickly fit into a circle of friends. These are all qualities making up the role of the youngest male child among brothers. It is often the case that we learn best from ourselves and then from our family fate. I suspect that family therapy has every reason to continue to boom. And the strict orientation toward the family emphasised by the Unification Movement is therefore appropriate.

V. The Healing of the Psyche Through The Rooting in a Universalising Faith

"Under the term 'religion', we understand the sum of the phenomena through which human beings express *their consciousness of the radical limitation of their existence and their actual overcoming of that limitation.*" Only 15% of the world's population lives in a state of unconsidered irreligiosity, according to conservative estimates of religious science today.

'Religion' mostly consists of two sorts of things: Certain religious traditions; or the embedding of a personal faith in a religious system (for example, in one of the five dominant world religions). The word 'religion' stems from the Latin and can be traced back either to 'relegere' (observance of the world of the gods), or 'religari' (to bond oneself with the gods). Where faith in a personal God (or gods) is absent, in terms of one's religion, one talks of an 'ultimate concern'.

The origins of religion are primarily:

1) **Of a cognitive nature:** Attempts to explain experiences, dreams, existential contradictions (modern: Kontingenzbewältigungspraxis ("contingency-coping practice"))

2) **Emotion-orientated:** The search for ecstatic, effusive experience; for joyful community; for relief from social pressure; as a resistance against fear.

3) **Drive-orientated:** Acquisition of power, control (for example, through magic), and new knowledge of the hereafter.

4) **Archetypal:** Dealing with universal symbolic patterns (for example, as systematised by C. G. Jung in his concept of the collective

sub-consciousness')

In the western world, *the wide current of religious critics* remains unbroken: religion and God are human projections in a non-existent heaven; religion is the expression of insurmountable human (self-)alienation; religion is the escape of an adult into a world of childish wishes ...

Yet the pressing, *unsatisfied need to acquire reliable information through religious traditions on the deep ambivalences surrounding love, fear, sexuality, death and mortality is still unbroken.* And that wish goes beyond only theoretical or rational argumentation, reaching out for rituals handed down through the generations. Added to this is often the tortuous problem of an unsuccessful life and the existence of an unresolved guilt threatening to break the spirit.

The goal of a religious psychotherapy is, in general, *the model of personal religiosity*, whereby assistance is deployed for the extrinsic orientation toward the everyday religiosity of a familiar religious group. Personal religiosity is then to extend beyond the level of 'observance-piety' (the practice of religious customs, respect for religious institutions, observance of prayer times, etc.), to an intrinsic motivation, ultimately leading to religious autonomy. Religious autonomy is understood and practised by religion as the way and the means of seeking, as the unification of individualism and humaneness. Religious autonomy, as a universalising faith, moves away from the focus on one's own self. For Erich Fromm, one of the protagonists of such religious development, Buddha, Abraham, Moses and Jesus are enlightening religious and historic examples.

Accordingly, a mature religiosity is to meet the following qualifications:

- ① *Self-acceptance* and gratitude to be alive
- ② *Love of neighbour* and radical humaneness
- ③ *Hope* and unconditional trust

Epilogue

Have we re-discovered the soul when, in light of our modern anthropological knowledge, we realise — far more than we ever suspected — that the soul acquires its indelible character through familial values and structures? And that — equally more than we ever suspected — the human being, as a unified whole, is

unbreakably bonded to God (the ultimate concern)?

We surely do not need to answer this question conclusively and to formulate the answer in words. But we ought to remain conscious of its explosive potential. (This preliminary translation from the German by Mark Bramwell)

SESSION II

A Search for the Mind (2)

Chairman : Andrew Wilson

Presentation:

- Spirit and Soul from the Point of View of Linguistics and Theology
Marcellina Spannraft