

“The Equivocation of Time”

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By participating in this round table, entitled «The equivocation of time», a number of equivocations immediately crossed my mind, which I will succinctly comment. As such, in first place, what I call – the equivocation of analytic time, in second place, I will speak about the equivocation of existential time, thirdly, about the equivocation of time in the biological-cultural co-evolution, and lastly about the equivocation of genetic time.

1 – Equivocation of Analytic Time – I refer to the subjective time experienced in transference. The illusion of elasticity of time, which, combined with our capacity of neoteny, unfolds the possibility to aspire towards change.

Neoteny – Is the process that delays the maturation of the human species, this is, by comparison with other primates (which, probably occurred through the mutations, that took place in the genes, that regulate development). Thus the human brain continues to grow at a steady, accelerated, pace during the first years of life, in such a way that only occurs during the foetal stage in other primates (Gould, 1977). This has allowed the development of the neopalium, and in consequence the memory and language, which leads to cultural evolution.

Past, Present and Future melt into in-temporality, or should I say, into an analytic temporality that is determined, not by real clocks but by the individual biological clocks. Our inner time is our memory. The groupanalytic space is converted into a place of equivocations.

In a time for transference, the implicit memories are acted-out, and by the repetition in a new context (I refer to the groupanalytic space), new circuits may be created, better adapted to present time, or to the binomial present time/biological time (Nava, 2001).

The implicit memories appear to correspond to that, which Arieti (1976) refers to, as endocepts (amorphous cognitions that lack representation), to moments that may

exist from the intra-uterine period up till the precocious moments of the fusional relationship with the mother and later. These procedural memories have an anatomic substrate, different to that of the capacity of the episodic memory (Solms, 2002) and conscience, with which we work at a genetic-evolutive level, and whose anatomical substrate is the hippocampus. The hippocampus isn't completely functional until two years of age. This implies that it's not possible to have episodic memories of this period. We can't then say – "I lived through this or that before I was two years old". The infant's knowledge is stored as a bodily memory, and as such, exists solely as a procedural memory, which means that it's impossible to make conscious (Solms, 2002). When it appears in groupanalysis, we must consider it to be a «reconstruction».

Through the implicit memory we have access to the unconscious.

From the unconscious to the conscious – the word towards the reflexive conscience, the words appear as the link that connects the concrete elements of perception and memory. This is the core of our groupanalytic work.

2 – The equivocation of existential time – the possible eternity in each present moment that becomes past.

I refer to – Time as the horizon of the understanding of being – Heidegger.

At this point we can cross the bridge towards concepts such as Cosmic Narcissism – Kohut, or the contemplative intuition – AT-ONE-MENT according to "O" (Bion).

But there's the biological equivocation – the body that betrays us, that gets old and worn. The more we know, the older we are, less remains for us to be able to take advantage, of this knowledge, that dies with us. I'm not referring to the accumulation of information, but to that, which Vergílio Ferreira so poetically reveals to us.

« Don't think that wisdom is made up of what has been accumulated. Because it is made solely of what remains after that, that has been thrown away».

The equivocation of the fountain of youth – As time goes by, the telomere (the structures on the extremities of the chromosomes) naturally become shorter in each new cellular division. When they reach a critical length, the cell stops dividing, and death surprises us. The fountain of youth could reside in an enzyme – telomerase. Its

dysfunction is the cause of tumours – I mean cancer. The tumoural cells multiply indefinitely, till the death of their host. Finitude and eternity would thus be integrated in the limit of the universe of our body. The perversion of eternity, in the cells, that forgot to die.

The equivocation of subjective time – the time of children, that elapses slower and in a more expandable way. The crudity of adult time. The nostalgia of the distance between each Christmas during childhood, the duration of past holidays, and of the completion of a mother's lap. This is the time that also enters in our groupanalysis.

The subjective, dilated time of infancy, that is now relived in an adult body, that may still be deluded and changed – neoteny. A session of analysis isn't merely an hour and a half, it may be a second, and it may be an eternity, the fascination of possible equivocation. The neuro-biological explanation for this discrepancy, that isn't merely subjective, appears to correspond, at least partially, to the relative immaturity of the hippocampus in children.

In groupanalytic technique, if there were no equivocations – everything would be on time: not too early, nor too late. Be on time, for each one in the group context. Repetition in time is necessary to be able to reach each one's correct time. I refer to the timing of the interpretations, and also, to the waste, the equivocation of absences to sessions. The need for repetition exists, in a new illusion, in collision with our memory. In fact, our perception of reality is based on our memory. In a way, we see what we expect to see. Our expectations. The distortion of exterior reality may correspond to the perception we have through our implicit memories (concepts of *top-down*, *bottom-up*, etc, Solms, 2002). In other words, we project our expectations (that result from previous experiences) in the world around us, transforming it into a combination of perception and construction, through our previous memories and experiences. In children, reality depends much more on the concrete perception of reality (bottom-up), and in the infant, almost exclusively. It's just as adults, that we may be surprised by the contradiction between objective reality and the perception of it. Hence the importance of the quality of *maternage*, the vulnerability is far greater when reality is, as it exists, yet without register in the memory, and is still being internalized. In this case, many concepts of the analytic theory are involved, I refer to the concepts of *maternage*, good enough mother, adult's literacy, etc, etc, etc.

In the groupanalytic session, this confront is the basis of change, if integrated in an adequate emotional environment – we're focussing on the matter of transference and counter-transference.

Presently, there are new hypothesis that may correspond to the neuro-biological base of empathy, I refer to the *Neuron Mirror* (Rizolatti, 1999). If its existence can be proved in the child, as seems reasonable, the path of internalisation materializes. From passivity we pass to activity, as simultaneously action is transformed into thought (Solms, 2002). Concept adapted to the groupanalytic technique by Isaura Neto (2002).

The parents intervene in the relation between the needs communicated by the infant (Seeking system – Panksepp – basic emotions) and the outside world, as literates/educators in the trajectory between the internalisation of reality and the memory.

3 - Equivocation of time in the biological-cultural co-evolution

Biological evolution is Darwinian, and takes from thousands to millions of years. Minor mutations are selected along the generations, through natural selection. On the other hand, cultural evolution is Lamarckian (Cavalli-Sforza, 1981, cited by Marx e Silva et al, 2002). With this, I would like to say that the traits acquired by one generation, can now be transmitted and incorporated in the next generation at a dazzling rate when compared to the speed of biological evolution.

Tendencies (trends) of genetically induced behaviour, selected along evolution, and maintained through natural selection, have to be integrated in the environments that favoured their selection, and not in the actual modern conditions created by contemporary culture. An eloquent example of this is the one proposed by Jensen et al. (quoted by Marx e Silva et al., 2002), namely, of the Hyperactivity-Attention Disorder. A great number of these children could correspond to individuals located on one of the extremities of the Normal Distribution curve. That, which would have been useful in ancestral environments, is of no use in our classrooms today. The classroom environment is very recent in terms of biological evolution. Some of these individuals could be seen as subjects with a larger attention capacity, almost radar like, which in ancestral environments would have constituted an advantage in terms of survival. The

same theory can be applied to Obesity. The offer, of hyper caloric food supplies, doesn't accompany the evolutionary needs of the human species. We need little more calories than the pre-historic man.

4 – The equivocation of Genetic time

1% separates man from the other primates.

5% separates man from the monkeys.

1% corresponds to millions of years of evolution.

1 thousandth of a second in universal time

Millenniums of generations

We exist in a body that's a trans-generational legacy.

The objective, of each species, reduced to its greatest simplicity, is to compete, in order to transmit the largest number of genes to the forthcoming generations.

The illusion of an impossible eternity, that masquerades in the possible reality of biological time. That is, through sexuality, which is assumed to be the only remaining path to immortality. Whether, through the illusionary suspension of time that occurs, during orgasm, or through the eventual transmission of genes.

Direct inferences to aggressiveness, and namely to the differences between genders, were analysed at the 3rd meeting of Neuro-Psychoanalysis, held in Stockholm in the year 2002. For the male, all that matters is the fertilization of the largest number of females as possible. In the biological point of view, the semen is poor, yet abundant – millions of spermatozoa, in each ejaculation, may be wasted. For the female, each ovule is valuable, rich and nutritious, in biological terms, and as such, she searches for the best male to transmit her genes. In this case we have quality in detriment of quantity.

According to Jaak Panksepp, the male brain (in mice) is more sensitive to image, and as such the male reaches orgasm more rapidly, as well as sexual climax. The female pays more attention, and responds better to youthful stimulus. Could it be that in paedophilia (where 98 % are men) there's a biological alteration in the brain, almost like a brain with female characteristics in a man's body? – A proposed hypothesis.

I ask myself, how many of these archaic behaviours are still implicitly, and archaically, manifested by man, and how can it be comprehended in the light of evolution, biology and psychism.

We exist in a body, live abandoned in time, in our time, we treat people that suffer, within a body, and it's with that body, that they seek us. Ignoring the biological dimension, and not accompanying the comprehension of the Neuro-Sciences, is the greatest equivocation.

There is nothing, which is more real and biological than emotions (Damasio, 1994). Further, they are an advantage in terms of evolution. Suffering, may actually begin to have a neuro-biological representation through neuronal circuits. Ignoring this can no longer be an excuse. We are closer to becoming holistic, and abandon the fragmentation of knowledge, that has been reinforced since the Renaissance.

The subject of mind-body, that exists since antiquity is presently closer to being understood and integrated.

We may, in due time, put forward new hypothesis, and new models as well as reformulate aspects of our groupanalytic technique.

We have to take a look at, those minor mutations, which make the evolution of the species possible, and that, in themselves, constitute an advantage. Those, that each one of us carries, indelible, subtle, within each cell of our body, and without knowing. And which are our singularity.

Presently, through imaging techniques, we can see the representation of emotions. New possibilities and potentialities are unveiled. We are still in the intermediate phase of finding the neuro-biological correlates of the meta-psychological concepts, after which, the hypothesis will be tested.

We know today that the brain's functional activity is altered during psychotherapy, that numerous changes occur during the therapeutic process, and that these changes take place, predominantly, in the pre-frontal lobes (Bakker, Van Balkom and Van Dyck, 2001; Baxtel et al., 1992; Brody et al, 1998; Ferng et al., 1992; Schwartz et al., 1996).

All this will have implications in, the indications and counter-indications for groupanalysis, the theory of the analytic technique, and in the evaluation of the efficacy of groupanalysis, amongst other implications. We are still in time to adapt, and to accept the reformulation of some of the paradigms. It may be a new vertex of observation.

We can't be allowed to live in autistic isolation, dwelling in the illusionary equivocation, of being capable of treating «souls» or spirits.

The environment is inextricable from the genetic influences, the *maternage* is now performed by the group-analyst, neoteny allows us to change for a long period of time, and the adversity of the outer world is now cushioned by a *good enough* group-analyst. Concepts such as Primitive cruelty (all infants have genetic traits that contain a certain amount of aggressiveness – Winnicott quoted by Zimmermann, 1999) take on new interpretations.

The theory of the analytic technique is enhanced, strengthened.

As Freud said, in 1920:

Biology is truly a field of unlimited possibilities.

We can expect it to reveal the most surprising information, but can't predict the answers that will be revealed, within a few dozen years, from now...

Perhaps part of the resistance towards the integration of this thought may be, because of the implicit threat underlying the equivocation of accepting the body, mind and brain, as spirituality or religiousness, in a monist and reductive perspective.

If we separate the body from the mind, only the first dies – Delusion

We are nothing and yet, everything.

One of the properties of the conscience, that is easily accepted, is that of unified experience. Each one of us has the impression of being a unique entity, experiencing the perceptual world, integrated in a set moment in time – It is I, whom is seeing you, here and now, in front of me. Everything exists on a unified level of space and time.

Each one of us is the sole representative of a species, in this infamous and lost point of the universe, in a fragment of a second, of infinite cosmic time.

Couldn't this be our greatest equivocation?

Thank you.

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