

DIAGNOSIS IN REICHIAN ANALYSIS

Dr. Genovino Ferri

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“ Dia – gnosis ”

**through consciousness. cognition and knowledge, the
diagnosis makes specific therapeutic planning possible.**

*“A given situation to be analysed can only have one optimal solution
and, in a specific case, there can only be one correct way to employ the
right technique”*

(Reich, 1933)

I am a clinician and thus partly a philosopher in the etymological sense – I am on the side of knowledge

Philos-philosophy = friend- love of knowledge

Diagnosis = through knowledge

You can't know without feeling or "sensing"

The etymology of sapience (from the Latin *sapere*, meaning both know and taste) indicates the connection between the mouth's sense of taste to the nose's sense of smell and the brain is even endowed with common sense. There is an element of "sensing" in moving from knowledge to diagnosis, a hint of sensing something to be realised and a suggestion of sensing through the precise bodily expression of our feelings.

This is why four continuously-intersecting diagnoses are formulated in Reichian Analysis:

1 psychopathological

2 analytical

3 bodily

4 relational

The four diagnoses must be consistent, equivalent and compatible so as to permit three-dimensional observations, leading to appropriately planned intervention, modelled by the specific life-story of that individual.

1

Psychopathological Diagnosis

Any discipline wishing to be considered a science, may not completely disregard the fundamental methodological principles upon which the natural sciences are based: classification and ordering of phenomena according to what may be verified and predicted. First of all psychopathological phenomena should be studied and recognised bearing in mind that:

- a) there are typical, recurring psychopathological configurations, which may, though, vary in degree of complexity
- b) their defining criteria must be formulated in terms of what is observed and, as such, must be based on behaviour
- c) some psychopathological configurations may be considered to be base models, which are useful to identify more complex and variable structures.

In Reichian Analysis the following psychopathological distinctions are made:

- a) **More or less elementary phenomena:**
anxiety (expressed mentally and or physically), panic attacks, obsession, delusion, hallucinations
- b) **More or less elementary phenomena:**
syndromes*: neurotic, paranoid, depressive, borderline and psychotic

* **syndromes** *or rather multiple indications and symptoms*

It should be made clear that the diagnostic criteria DSM IV TR is well-known as a numerical-cognitive international reference code representing a descriptive approach to psychopathological disturbances – an attempt to communicate between “those responsible” – making for a more-widely shared conceptually-based analysis. However, this knowledge also leads us to seek a deeper reading of psychopathology, braver etiopathogenetic criteria and stronger structural concepts. The elimination of DSM IV TR from basic phenomena such as hysteria, neurosis and psychosis does not mean they cease to exist.

It is, above all the absence of time which flattens out their depth to reveal only an unreal two-dimensional view.

“Unreality is being in reality without recognising the difference”

(Sartre)

To be real and to be able to recognise the difference, time – the arrow of evolutionary time – must be introduced, giving a vertical axis and thus analytical depth.

2

Analytical Diagnosis

In this paradigm, for the reasons already expressed, symptoms, syndromes and crises only represent a clinically-expressed threshold of a character-structure which is currently unsustainable “functionally – energetically – relationally” in the here and now.

This interpretation sits comfortably with W. Reich’s assertion

“The only difference between a neurotic character and symptomatic neurosis is that in the latter case the neurotic character also produces symptoms”

“Time and Character”

or

Organisation of form for the future

Time

is in life, it is in living forms and it indicates the passage of the arrow of vital movement within the living form. However, time also defines the history of a form in its relation with the world it encounters, which, in turn, leaves its “mark” characterising its structure.

Character,

etymologically “incised mark”, is a way to be specific about a person, expressing their past, their biological-biographical story and the story of their relationships; it has its own temporal stratification, its own relational rationale.

The sum of these marks constitutes “the unconscious” for Reichian analysis, *“the story that has been laid down and of which we are unaware can be manifested in various languages – in spoken language, in oneiric form or in body language, from the intrauterine existence to the here and now”.*

Time

has different rhythms in the various evolutionary stages it goes through. The stages are defined by intervals of time, which are evolutionary phases and are laid out filontogenetically, in strata, on the negentropic arrow of time. This arrow, or rather the “internal time” of each of us, is in contrast with “external time” for which the arrow of entropic time is in exactly the opposite direction.

Many people assume that the study of biophysics started in 1944. This was when E. Schroedinger, who won the Nobel prize for physics and was the founding father of quantum mechanics, published his Dublin lectures on biological problems in “What is life?”

Negentropy

is a negative variation in entropy from an original value (the birth of an individual, the origin of life, the start of biological evolution). It is not a negative form of entropy since the third law of thermodynamics precludes an entropy value of less than zero.

This is valid both for open thermodynamic systems (living organisms), which can exchange both energy and matter, and for closed thermodynamic systems (the planet Earth), which can exchange energy but not matter. This is, however, not valid for isolated thermodynamic systems (destined to die a thermal death due to the increase in entropy) because they cannot exchange energy or matter with their so-called surrounding environment. A city or an organism are open systems and it is fundamental to calculate their entropy and negentropy. It can thus be seen that the increase in negentropy is compensated for by a loss of external order and that overall the disorder increases.

The second law of thermodynamics has not been violated because the entropy in the universe has increased. Schroedinger's affirmation contains the secret of the origin of life on Earth, the story of biological evolution. This is a story with one leading player – photosynthesis.

It is the story of a special, intelligent planet, which has learnt to capture solar energy and to live on the universe's negentropy, creating dissipative, ordered structures. These structures are the living organisms and the biosphere is the geometric space the negentropy exists in.

Character

represents the rhythms and stages “fixed” over time by various evolutionary phases by and the passages between these phases.

Fixations, which may or may not be predominant, combine together to determine patterns of behaviour. These are present in all living forms with a recurring functional identity and are expressed in the various sub-systems (from the striated muscle sub-system to the neuroendocrine sub-system and from the neurovegetative to the psyche sub-systems).

These are the indicators of character traits.

“ Each one of us is therefore a collection of traits – a special combination unique in the diversity of its container and content”

In Reichian analysis the proto-typical groups of traits go as far as to include the intrauterine existence, because the only possible relevant perspective in terms of the negentropic arrow of time is the entire existence of the person “from conception onwards”.

5 fundamental character traits are identified:

intrauterine	(intrauterine phase)
oral	(orolabial phase)
forced	(muscular phase)
phallic	(genital-ocular phase)
hysterical	(genital-ocular phase)

There are numerous derived “sub-types” according to the way the character has been marked, the part of the phase in which it happened, the relational depth in that evolutionary phase, the existing architecture encountered and previously fixed imprinting.

3

Bodily Diagnosis

There is a place, the “body” and there are places in each of our bodies which carry previously imprinted fixations: they are the “Reichian levels”. Reich identified seven bodily levels and defined them as being “*groups of those organs and muscles in functional contact, which are reciprocally capable of provoking emotionally expressive movement*”.

In this way he made an elementary, two-dimensional distinction:

1st level	–	eyes, ears, nose
2nd level	–	mouth
3rd level	–	neck
4th level	–	chest, hands
5th level	–	diaphragm
6th level	–	abdomen
7th level	–	pelvis, legs

I would suggest a different gestalt of these levels, putting them in the order they appear on the arrow of time, making use of a theorem which makes the bodily level the interface with the evolutionary phase experienced. The bodily level is also the first to experience a relationship with something other than self in time:

Thus there is a sequence which begins

**from the 6th – abdomen,
goes to the 2nd – mouth,
to the 4th – chest and hands,
to the 3rd – neck,
to the 5th – diaphragm,
to the 7th – pelvis and legs,
to the 1st – eyes, ears and nose.**

“Bodily level” is, then, functionally dominant at the appropriate time and corresponds to the dominant phase at that evolutionary moment in the life-story of the person

The Reichian levels are apparent and tell our stratified life-story, which is “*marked*” on and in our body “*three-dimensionally*”. Similarly psychopathological history is apparent, not only through psychic phenomena but also through its physical expression.

By including time and the equation bodily level = peripheral phase interface, we introduce a fundamental correlation between:

**specific evolutionary phase
corresponding character trait
corresponding bodily level
corresponding psychopathological disturbances**

“The first three diagnoses as stated at the beginning – psychopathological, analytical and bodily”

4

Relational Diagnosis

Reichian levels, character traits, evolutionary stages, the arrow of time and the life story of a person provide a guiding line, which is epistemologically highly consistent, to move around inside an infinitely complex world with a thousand possible representations. It is on this guiding line that the countertransference for us cannot be anything but a countertransference of character trait as well as a countertransference on a bodily level. This countertransference is an extraordinary diagnostic and therapeutic tool for us. An analyst must be aware of the structure of their own energy states, their own specific evolutionary phases, their own bodily levels and their own character traits, as well as knowing how to move between these various states and layers.

- **What level of the analyst's body resonates when they meet a person in a particular setting?**
- **Do we touch our chests? Do we touch our diaphragms? Does the pelvis resonate? Is there eye-contact? Are our necks extended, our mouths tightened or our shoulders hunched?**
- **More specifically, in psychopathology, what level of our body is involved when encountering a psychotic state?**
- **Where is the psychotic's "emptiness"?**
- **Is it only in the head or also in the 6th level - the first great mouth?**
- **When encountering a pronounced depressive state, what level of our body is involved?**
- **Where is the withdrawal of the seriously depressed?**
- **Is it only in the head or also in the flattened chest of an unbearable Atlantis complex?**

- **When encountering a paranoid state what level of our bodies resonates?**
- **Where is the paranoid person's persecution complex?**
- **Is it only in the head or is the fear of persecution also in their shoulders?**
- **When encountering an obsessive state what level of the body is involved?**
- **Where is the obsessive person's fixation?**
- **Is it only in his head or is it also in his eyes?**
- **Even when simply meeting a phallic narcissist, what level of the body is involved?**
- **Where is the narcissistic tendency?**
- **Is it only in the head or is it also in the hardening and erection of their neck?**

There are "my own subjective" empathic and psychological bodily indicators which, in the context of the relationship with the Other, permit me to "know" where they are – in which trait-phase and on which bodily level.

Comparing and adding these indicators to the other three "objective" diagnoses completes the diagnosis in body psychotherapy. In particular, the fourth diagnosis forms the basis on which to realise a specifically planned intervention. It permits me to know the "*Ubi sum? Ubi est? Ubi sumus?*" – "Where am I? Where is it? Where are we?"

This knowledge allows me to move to the “right part” of my body trait-level of my personality and to position myself correctly to establish:

- **contact with person being analysed**
- **a therapeutic alliance**
- **a transference of their trait and corresponding bodily level**
- **a relationship with the disturbance**
- **a relationship with the architecture of their personality**
- **how to move them away from their “fixations” in a sustainable evolution**
- **and a complex setting.**

What is establishing a complex setting?

It is to create privileged space-time where the relationship to be interpreted as a living form increases its own negentropy.

The relationship in Reichian analysis is a living form which is created from the first contact between the analyst and the person being analysed and can progressively develop a negative variation in entropy from the original value.

The relationship develops its own character and is the meeting between the analyst’s character traits and those of the person analysed so as to make possible a new complex system, its own self-organisation, its own self-poiesis, its development and its stages.

This will have consequences on the energetic economy and negentropy of the self of the person being analysed, of the self of the analyst and on the complex system of their interrelationship.

The co-evolution must be underlined and validated in three forms:

It is not enough that there is only negentropic evolution of the person analysed, as it is not enough that there is also evolution on the part of the analyst. It is fundamental that there is an evolution of the relationship between the analyst and the person being analysed.

Analysis of the scene of the setting as previously described, necessitates re-examination of the transference and countertransference.

This can be imagined as flows which originate from the personality structure and from the traits of the analyst and the person analysed; flows of state and of traits which can meet, interact and settle into states of the new form of the relationship.

The interaction between repeated transferences and countertransferences of trait / bodily level within the same relationship is similar to the concept of “structural coupling”. This is defined as recurring interaction leading to structural modification of the system.

Accepting that a coupled structural system is an intelligent system which can learn, then an analytical setting has the capacity for intelligent negentropic development and has the potential for intelligent structural coupling through the articulation of the analyst’s “baggage” and that of the person being analysed.

The extraordinary intelligent responsibility of the analyst for this relationship is not to be underestimated. It is not a simple relationship but an analytical-therapeutic relationship.

The analyst must have a quality and a clear requisite: The knowledge of themselves expanded to include not only someone else, but also the relationship between themselves and the other person. This is in addition to gauging negentropic states far-removed from the entropic equilibrium, requiring a dash of creativity that can surround the form and constantly protect it.