

## Commentary to the Paper: *Psychoanalysis in Form and Action*

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A lot has been written and said about training in psychoanalysis but the topic will always be of current interest since both the identity and destiny of psychoanalysis depend on that training.

Among the many voices one hears, it is rare to hear those of young people, who are not mere users but the real protagonists of the training process, as well as of the future of our discipline.

It is therefore a pleasure to read their testimonies and to encounter, along with their hopes, fears and difficulties, their desire to question themselves, to pose questions and stimulate reflections involving all the actors in the field.

The Authors raise many points in this paper, each of which would deserve an in-depth study on its own. For reasons of space, I will dwell on what seems to be one of the core issues in their analysis: the complexity of the training experience, which encompasses School, internship, supervision (and, I would add, personal analysis), and the difficulties arising from the lack of transversality and convergence among the various training agents: each is immersed in its own universe of discourse and little attention is paid to the need of young people to be accompanied along a consistent, unitary path.

The times are long gone when psychotherapy was considered a craft learned in the workshop, where craftsman and apprentice, side by side, shared the mastery and the art of making. The professionalization of psychotherapy has entailed a radical transformation of the referents, the devices and the contexts within which the training process takes place, which has changed from a personal, free and essentially autonomous enterprise into an official act enforced and guaranteed by State law in Italy (L 56/89).

A very articulated scenario has thus emerged, from which contingent problems transpire, affecting all Schools of psychotherapy, problems that I

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would define of a structural nature, and which specifically concern psychoanalytic training.

Contingent problems include, for instance, the excessive number of applications for internships, and therefore the impossibility of choosing the place where they are to be carried out; ensuring that the quality of the course is up to standard, as well as the quantity of hours to be worked; the inequality of the intern's classification compared to other specialisations, where an economic remuneration is guaranteed, and, more generally, the scarce valorisation of the contribution that young colleagues give to the services where they work (it is estimated that most of the psychotherapy provided by the health service is in the hands of interns); the setting of the relationship between the Schools and the internship agencies, which is purely administrative-bureaucratic, and leaves the sharing of a meaningful project to the discretion and free initiative of individual tutors.

Institutional round tables have been set up on these issues, also in the presence of the organisations of the Order of Psychologists, and various initiatives are under way to ensure that the Schools overcome the parcelling-out logic and divisions (unfortunately also reinforced by market competition), and unite their efforts to pursue the common goal of recognition and protection of our profession. This objective always seems to be in the balance between normative and ethical demands, that is, between the need to systemise the objective requirements and parameters that qualify training in psychotherapy on the one hand, and on the other the risk of flattening the issue of training on a purely technical-disciplinary level, which blurs the cultural and identity peculiarities of the individual Schools. Although it was not the explicit object of the students' reflections, I believe that all these elements together generate that feeling of distance between the ideal expectations that animate the desire to become psychoanalysts, and the realities which the young colleague is actually facing.

The structural problems, on the other hand, directly involve psychoanalytic training and the place of psychoanalysis in the services, as well as, I would add, in a rapidly changing world that is less and less inclined to dwell on the meaning and value of the subject.

In particular, the Authors discuss the difficulty of performing psychoanalytic praxis in areas in which the conditions of the private setting cannot be replicated, and that generate narratives that are difficult to reconcile with the psychoanalytic discourse. However, the theme is even wider because it is not only the institutional context of care that is in question, but also the more general social and cultural scenario, in the so-called hyper-modern era, where pragmatist and efficient models increasingly pervade the ways of thinking and living of human beings, modifying their lifestyles, habits, relationships and, consequently, the demands and expectations for solutions to the discomforts and sufferings of today.

Thus, although the Authors' criticism of the self-referentiality of the training that does not know how to prepare psychoanalysts to go into the field and adapt themselves, without changing their nature, to the various contexts in which the psychotherapist operates, underscores how urgent and desirable it is to have a more global rethinking of psychoanalysis which, taking into account these critical points, can take the opportunity to recover its original spirit of research, the spirit that risks being lost when it closes itself within an institutionalised system of thought.

The great evolutions of psychoanalysis have occurred precisely when it has measured itself against unprecedented realities and has tried to extend its range of action beyond the canonical boundaries, addressing patients previously considered unanalysable, and adapting its approach to settings other than the classical one.

These passages show us that the specificity of psychoanalysis cannot be identified in the parameters of a setting, or in the application of technical rules, but in the perspective and purpose of its action, which ultimately consists in becoming witnesses and promoters of the subject's existence, wherever and whatever condition he or she may be in.

For this reason, a psychoanalytic training that is critical of any form of dogmatism or ideology, even theoretical is needed; training that has people's real needs in mind, that does not seek legitimacy in its devotion to the fathers and subservience to the past, but looks to the future, and for this reason is willing to exchange views with the other sciences and reinterpret itself in the light of modern epistemological awareness.

At the same time, we should think of the School of Specialisation in a perspective that recovers and updates the dimension of '*workshop*' which cannot be identified in the didactic component: a place of transmission of knowledge and verification of the application of clinical procedures, to be cultivated side by side with the students, stimulating and supporting in them a process of personal development having at its centre the growth, the training to autonomy and self-assumption of the young therapist.

Against this background, then, the questions, doubts and insecurities encountered by the young person are not experienced as gaps to be filled or evidence of the limits of the training system, but valued as necessary dimensions to discover and experience their own way of becoming and being a therapist.

The training process, like the care process, should be available to the subject not to conform him to an adequate or ideal way of being, but to support him in recognising himself, accepting himself and taking charge of the situations starting from where he is, in realities that are often far from ideal, always unpredictable, that he will encounter along the path of life.

Therefore, it becomes essential to work together, learners and teachers, to overcome the collusion of dependence and delegation constantly under-

lying the training relationship; instead of being reinforced, as the psychoanalytic system has occasionally done in the name of orthodoxy and self-confirmation of the psychoanalysts, it should be discouraged, in order to make room for the Students' ability to develop their own curious, humble and creative thinking.

A condition which undoubtedly makes one feel more lonely and disoriented, but which is the most fertile, and ethically respectful, premise for taking care of the other and his/her request for help.

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