

The inner being, the self and the psychic disorders¹

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Abstract: The notion of an inner being is introduced into psychoanalysis aiming at both considering it a fundamental core and differentiating it from the self. In their relations, greater or lesser influence of the former (inner being) over the latter implies in different modalities of the self since the self tends to organize itself under the influence of the inner being. The distancing of this influence corresponds to the contact distancing of the person with himself. In this case, a factor responsible for psychic disorders is defined, and it is called contact distancing. When this happens, pathologies appear which are originated from the sensoriality and fragility of the self according to specific pathological “choices”. This corresponds to the occurrence of fundamental factors on the self. Based on these ideas, the author will be presenting a model designed to a better understanding of psychic disorders. According to this model, psychic disorders are methodologically organized and both classified and unified according to degrees of contact distancing, which establish correspondences with the degrees of sensoriality and fragility of the self.

Keywords: psychoanalysis/meta-psychology; psychoanalytical methodology; psychoanalytical theories; psychological theories; psychic instances.

O SER INTERIOR, O SELF E AS PERTURBAÇÕES PSÍQUICAS

Resumo: É introduzida a noção de *ser interior* na psicanálise com a finalidade de tomá-lo como núcleo essencial e diferenciá-lo do *self*. Nas relações entre ambos, maior ou menor influência do primeiro sobre o segundo implica modalidades diferentes de *self*, porque este tende a se organizar sob a influência daquele. O afastamento dessa influência corresponde a distanciamento de contato da pessoa consigo própria. Nesse caso, define-se um fator responsável por perturbações psíquicas, denominado distanciamento de contato. Quando ocorre, há patologias oriundas da sensorialidade e da fragilidade do *self*, em conformidade com determinadas “escolhas” patológicas. Isso corresponde à incidência de fatores básicos sobre o *self*. Com base nessas idéias, o autor apresenta um modelo destinado à compreensão das perturbações psíquicas. Nesse modelo, elas se tornam metodologicamente organizadas, sendo classificadas e unificadas por graus de distanciamento de contato, que estabelecem correspondências com graus de sensorialidade e de fragilidade do *self*.

Palavras-chave: psicanálise/metapsicologia; metodologia psicanalítica; teorias psicanalíticas; teorias psicológicas, instâncias psíquicas.

EL SER INTERIOR, EL SELF Y LAS PERTURBACIONES PSÍQUICAS

Resumen: Es introducida la noción de *ser interior* en el psicoanálisis con la finalidad de tomarlo como núcleo esencial y diferenciarlo del *self*. En las relaciones entre ellos, la mayor o menor influencia del primero sobre el segundo implica en modalidades diferentes de *self*, porque este tiende a organizarse bajo la influencia de aquel. La retirada de esta influencia corresponde al distanciamento de contato de la persona consigo propia. En este caso se define un factor responsable por perturbaciones psíquicas, denominado distanciamento de contacto. Cuando ocurre, hay patologías oriundas de la sensorialidad y de la fragilidad do *self*, en conformidad con determinadas “selecciones” patológicas. Esto corresponde a la incidencia de factores básicos sobre el *self*. Estribado en esta ideas, el autor presenta un modelo destinado a la comprensión de las perturbaciones psíquicas. En este modelo, ellas se tornan metodologicamente organizadas, siendo clasificadas y unificadas por grados de distanciamento de contacto, que establecem correspondencias con grados de sensorialidad y de fragilidad del *self*.

Palabras clave: psicoanálisis/metapsicología; metodología psicoanalítica; teorías psicoanalíticas; teorias psicológicas; instancias psíquicas.

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Introduction

In this work I would like to introduce a few ideas that I consider of great relevance when presenting an initial overview of psychoanalysis as a science which provides insight into mental life as a whole. It is an attempt to a psychoanalytical understanding based on the interrelation of some factors which are here considered in their macroscopic sense. It is an understanding of psychoanalysis that is much more than element-oriented. In the latter, the elements are isolated from each other and serve a multiplicity of uses while in the former case the elements are inserted into a coherent and comprehensive methodological context. A factor-oriented psychoanalysis is first and foremost a methodological organization of data rather than the restructuring of classic psychoanalytical concepts. The organization to be proposed is based on the notion of the inner being, which differs from the notion of self. I will be attempting to introduce some psychoanalytical constants, starting from the vertex of contact with this being from which a psychoanalytical knowledge derives leading to a better understanding of psychic disorders and establishing itself as a unifying process.

Theoretical discussion

The inner being

The most fundamental thing in me is the primary reality of being a person who is essentially constituted by a being that expresses who I am. This being – the inner being – is what I have intrinsically been from the beginning of my life. It accounts for and offers the notion of my existence. It also defines me as a person, establishing my deepest foundations. In addition, it gives the reality and the truth of my own experience of being, which is the experience of my being myself – this experience is fundamental and elementary.

The inner being is the focus that never ceases to exist throughout a person's life. In its existential condition, it is a unit acknowledged as being essentially the same from the very first moment a person establishes contact with himself/herself. By means of the inner being the person is a complete and indivisible whole because this comprises a person's way of being which is untransferable to others. It is therefore single, unique and specific. As the focus of existence and deep stream, it is from the inner being that both an existence matrix and a basic axis, as well as a fundamental root stand out. It is from this primordial root that some processes are developed; processes which account for the operativity of the fundamental constituents of life and living.

The inner being shows a constant tendency to be in movement and it works to organize, harmonize and unify the person's wholeness. In this way it differs from the conflictive, disordered and chaotic forces of the psychic. Its origins and processes are non-violent and constructive. A person's notions regarding the inner being depend on the contact established with it, and this contact has repercussions on both the organization and functioning of the psychic life. Not always is there a conscious contact but should there be, it is related to experiencing wholeness. There is no point talking about the inner being as a thing, as a concrete object because it is the core of existence. This inter-

pretation, however, does not bear any sign of materiality, any residue of becoming a thing-like. The inner being is non-sensorial in its constitution and manifestations. It is a non-sensorial aspect that expresses itself as existence, life and mobility. It is not a blind energy but rather an energy led by the determination of a living, movable and active being. It is the question of a notion that goes far beyond every concept of the classic science regarding objects of knowledge.

The self

The inner being notion does not mix itself with the notion of self (TRINCA, 2001). What is the nature of the self? One could say it is a type of support and globalizing organization whose sediments and compounds are variable and movable, being related in its origins and processes to the complexity of the concrete maintenance of a person's existence including adaptation and survival. The self is the mental organ necessary for the achievement of this existence and the means through which the existence is accomplished. It is capable of connecting itself in a greater or lesser degree to the inner being. But it is in its nature to be a field of conflicting forces where battles among several different tendencies of the psychism take place. The self is made up of several parts and countless components, and in the components multiplicity we can find the inherited and the acquired; the processing of primitive self-objects experiences; identifications and embodiment; the settling of educational, social, cultural, racial, religious, family background and other ingredients.

The self is made up of segments that can be either together or separated: some prevail and stand out, others become secondary and yet others are there for the sake of compositions and arrangements. There are parts which organize themselves separately, and others which dispute their prevalence in the group. A set of converging and diverging psychic instances rebound in the self, their courses being converging or diverging. The self gives rise to a context full of conflicts, turbulences, incoherencies and paradoxes (BUNEMER, 1993), and it is possible to mention multiple selves. On the other hand though, the self is interactive, receives energies and adapts itself to the external world, to inner objects, to the body, to pulsions, etc. It impels the dynamics of accumulations and continuities. It performs constant updates in relation to time, space and other psychic determinants. Therefore, the self is resultant from the processes and interplay of different factors and elements.

The self and the inner being relations

The inner being influences the self, and depending on the kind of influence it will determine both the nature and quality of those processes which occur in the self. A greater or lesser influence will imply in different modalities of the self. A considerable level of influence will enable the person to be himself by realizing the satisfactory presence of the inner being within the self: certain degrees of non-sensorial illumination of the self come into being through a person who spreads life, gives meaning to life and expresses himself as energy and easiness. Activities of fundamental psychic processes of

sustainability are from here on performed. Under the influence of the inner being, the self becomes the fundamental factor that works towards the effectiveness and organization of the person within the world, guiding the integration process. In this case, the equilibrium systems that go through the self start to work, and the self becomes an instance of achievements that are compatible with the inner truth. Thus the guiding centers organization is alive, movable and meaningful rather than something stereotyped or inanimate.

However, if the influence of the inner being on the self is insufficient or precarious, the self may become a field mined by fragility or a shelter for sensoriality. Hence, it becomes a self which obscures and conceals what the person really is instead of revealing him. It might function on totally different grounds from those which the person actually is. Therefore, we many times have a self full of sediments, seepages, residues, impressions, fragments, systems products, patterns, structures and sensorialized compounds, which impose their prisms and truths, their conditionings, their logic, theories and values, their lifestyle and view of the world. The person eventually gets mixed up, and truly believes that this self represents the real person, without having a clear notion of the contact distancing with his inner being. When this distancing increases, a self that is a relatively independent self from many viewpoints emerges and, in this case, it becomes full of conflicts and turbulences. As the influence of the inner being decreases, the self no longer becomes a representative instance of integration. It is then at the whim of conflicting, chaotic and obscure forces becoming more vulnerable to all sorts of psychic disorders.

The question of contact

The self tends to organize itself under the influence of the inner being. However, this tendency towards organization suffers some turbulence, disarticulations and structuring breakdown as this contact distancing occurs. The distance of the inner being influence on the self is related to contact distancing. The question of contact has therefore a primordial function: the contact expresses the inner being amount of influence on the self, and it is correlated to this influence. Therefore, practically everything in mental life depends on the state of contact that the person establishes with himself. The notion of oneself – which varies from person to person – depends on this contact. Consequently, it is not necessary to explicit “who” establishes contact with “what” as long as this very contact refers to the influence of the inner being on the self, in which the notion of oneself is inserted.

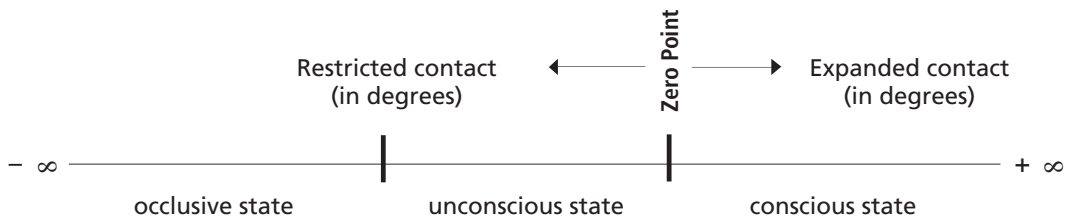
The greater the contact distancing, the more the self is filled with odd elements and with products that are alien to the inner being. The self tends to become more fragile and filled with sensoriality due to contact distancing. In other words, the self modifies itself along with the contact distancing. Because there are different degrees of distancing there might be in each one of them special formations related to both fragility and sensoriality. Psychic disorders concern these formations when the degrees of distancing increase.

Contact distancing is then a factor clearly defined and it is, along with other factors, responsible for psychic turbulences and disorders. The farther the person is from himself, the higher the rate of emotional turbulence, in which not only the self fragility but also

the sensorial settlement is included. In the same way, the more anchored the person is in himself, the higher the rate of harmonization and psychic integration tend to be.

Relations between the inner being and the self can be illustrated by the image of a cave with different degrees of light and shadow. The cave refers to the self, the light that falls upon refers to the inner being influence, and the shadows concern the contact distancing. The self lightens up or darkens itself according to contact degrees existing with the inner being. Despite having a relatively constant degree of contact that is unique to each person, we can talk about variations within a *continuum* of contact with reference to a group of individuals. Metaphorically speaking, the reach of light in the cave might be greater or lesser, and the areas of shadow might or might not be wider and more saturated. Such situation is very useful when thinking about a variation field that corresponds to the degrees of contact with the inner being. We may conceive a *continuum* of contact axis in a broad system. On this axis there are variations which range from a very restricted contact to a wider one. Hypothetically speaking, it is possible to determine at each point of this axis the particular organization, specific dynamics, the content qualities and the internal conditions of the self are. It is not difficult to verify each person's mental condition regarding a specific point of the *continuum* as long as each point represents a set of fundamental psychic conditions that prevail in the personality.

My overall proposal is to represent a *continuum* of contact axis that includes three states: occlusive state, unconscious state and conscious state (TRINCA, 1999). In all and all told, the occlusive state refers to psychosis, the unconscious state to neurosis, and the conscious state to normality and to the processes of consciousness expansion. The formulation of a *continuum* of contact axis is quite an interesting idea because once it is structured, psychic disorders may distribute themselves along the axis and make sense within it. In my model, the greater the contact distancing, the more serious the nature of the psychic disorder tends to be. Also, the greater the contact, the greater the consciousness expansion tends to be. The water divisor is the zero point – or origin – which lies between the unconscious state and conscious state. This point corresponds specifically to the mental experience of wholeness, meaning that there is contact distancing under it (in the unconscious state and occlusive state), and consciousness expansion above it (in the conscious state). We can, therefore, imagine a *continuum* of contact axis that ranges from a negative infinite to a positive infinite. Picture 1 provides us with a simplified idea of the model.



Picture 1. Representation of a *continuum* of contact axis, where the contact with the inner being – starting from the zero point – either increases or diminishes.

Factors that account for contact distancing

Among the major reasons for contact distancing, we find the constellation of the inner-enemy, a fundamental and central factor that does not belong to the nature of the inner being and performs a job which is totally opposed to its nature in mental life. Driven by the pulsions of death, the constellation of the inner-enemy is made up of elements whose action presents as common denominator the attack and destruction of the contact with the inner being, and whose objective is to unbalance, suppress and annihilate the individuality, as well as the ties with life and living. It is the question of a principle that goes against the internal order and the relations with the external order, intended to destroy every thing that is real, true, alive and creative. This active force definitely works to exterminate the ties with all forms of existence. Even if the attacks are basically against the person, they still provide support for triggering off other destructive actions.

The constellation comprises a set of psychic elements associated to self-destruction and hetero-destruction, to wit: a) attacks aimed at both the internal and external reality; b) ruptures, disarticulations and internal turbulence; c) pusillanimities, fears and anguishes; d) weakening or emptying of conditions and both internal and external ties; e) fomentation of a negative internal image; f) contact distancing with the inner being; g) obtaining of negative results and; h) system feedback. Regarding particularly to contact distancing, the role of constellation brings about effects directly related to distancing and it is one of distancing main factors. Even if it does not reveal itself, this constellation comprises conjunctions that are present in every human mind, acting at degrees, intensities and extent that vary from person to person.

Clinical observation allows for the description of several different constellation stages of the inner-enemy, which are structured based on the nature and type of attack. The stages occur in a one-after-another sequence due to increase of seriousness. Each stage shows its own characteristics even though it comprises parts of the preceding stages. Within each stage, however, the intensity of the attacks varies – it may be either stronger or weaker – according to the circumstance. That is to say that even though the nature of the phenomenon is invariable within each stage, its quality is variable. The observed stages are the following: 1) *doubts and distrusts*: consist of generalized commotion in self-confidence, trust and faith in oneself, which cause internal disarticulations and great emotional insecurities; 2) *self-depreciations*: are related to accusations and devastating criticism, to systematic annulments and denigrations that cause difficulties in maintaining their very references; 3) *amplified disqualifications*: accusations and sabotages are the greatest areas of self-annulments, turning the person into someone detestable, good-for-nothing and despicable before his very own eyes; 4) *self-invalidations*: because of repulse and hate towards the interiority, this is then seen as a bunch of bad, damaged, ruined and filthy “things”, essentially affecting the notion of oneself; 5) *system spread*: massive self-invalidations cause the intensification of psychic functions damage – the discharge of experience validity with the inner being and his having troubles feeling alive; 6) *going on to the enemy's side*: the constellation of the internal

enemy becomes the central focus and tries to impose itself as the exclusive representative of psychic processes, aiming at being prevailing in relation to the set of processes; 7) *black hole*: it refers to the strengthening of experiencing emptiness, loneliness and despair, which are related to the anguish of inexistence passage, and when there may be long, or short lasting contact ruptures with the inner being; 8) *dimension of endless possibilities*: it is the question of passing to the unreality level in which – as opposed to the imprisonment caused by the black hole – the person turns to a heavenly dimension of power, pleasure, greatness, etc., and to a level of indeterminations where all that is possible may pop up; 9) *anesthesia, breakdown and annihilation*: at this stage, we reach a high level of destruction, characterized by: loss of the elementary notions of reality; elimination of what is alive and constructive in the mind; a sharp rupture of contact and; loss of the notion of self-existence in detachment and anesthesia.

The mentioned stages are related among themselves at different degrees of contact distancing. The more serious and advanced the stages, the greater the distancing and the more serious the emotional damage tends to be. Therefore, the constellation of the inner-enemy is accountable for psychic disorders of different natures and qualities. The self is affected in different ways in that the progressively increase of control over the self – through successive stages – is one of the major factors of contact distancing. The main purpose of the constellation is to take control and subdue the self. It is therefore a byproduct of the pulsion for death (FREUD, 1948), which reveals itself in a particular way, being related to unconscious functions that are clearly opposed to those performed by the inner being. Thus, the deadly force can be observed in full activity and thoroughly described.

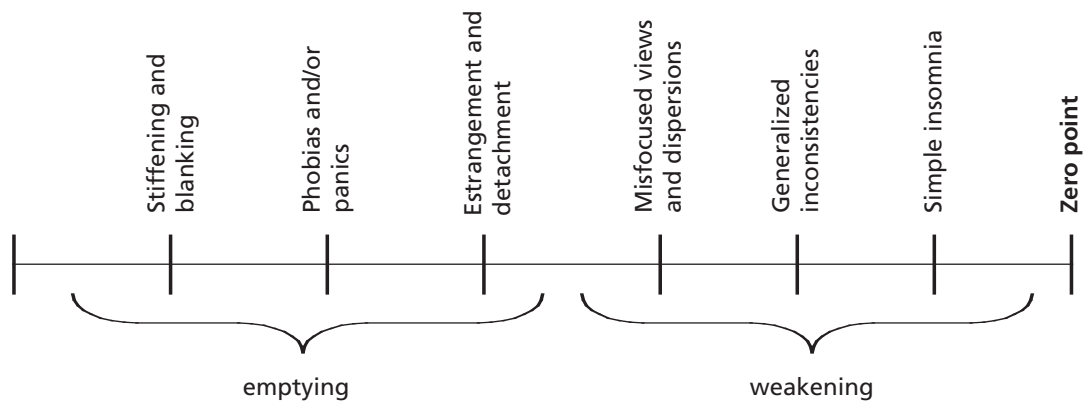
However important the constellation of the inner-enemy is, it is not the single factor in causing contact distancing. Many other factors may contribute for this in that the self either gets more fragile, or exceeds itself in sensoriality for different reasons. Among these reasons lie the psychic processes in which the person: a) compromises with himself, going on the wrong side of the street with respect to his life; b) distances from himself due to interests, attitudes and values that are essentially different from those that he really has; c) has no clear ideas about what really matters to him; d) is influenced by forces that are alien and strange to himself; e) avoids facing inevitable challenges and sufferings; f) finds interiorizing difficult; g) avoids knowing fundamental psychic aspects such as repressions; h) becomes fragile when having difficult object relations; i) excessively conforms to rules and family, cultural, religious and social conditioning and; j) exaggeratingly submits himself to real threats and injunctions of the external world.

Fragility and sensoriality

What are the consequences of the contact distancing on the self? Should there not be a contact reestablishment, the person faces at least two possible alternatives: a) the self fragility or b) the increase of sensoriality. This increase may occur due to the exacerbation of preexisting sensoriality or the emerging of a new mode, depending on the situation. Both fragility and sensoriality occur at degrees which correspond to contact distancing degrees and which are, therefore, variable factors that range in form from mild to highly saturated virulency. A different mode of pathological condition may be

related to each degree of distancing be it concerned either to fragility or to sensoriality. Degrees of contact distancing and of corresponding degrees of fragility or sensoriality fall upon the continuum of contact axis, ranging from the zero point to negative infinite, depending on each case. This means that the differentiation of psychic disorders refers to each one of these factors which are distributed along the *continuum* of contact according to contact distancing degrees.

When specifically taking into consideration this fragility, it presents itself in two different modalities: a) weakening of the self and; b) emptying of the self. Each one of these two varieties comprises a set of psychic disorders that range from the simplest and mildest ones to the most serious and complex forms of emotional damage. From the zero point and all along the continuum of contact axis, emptying is what follows weakening. The degrees in each variety correspond to degrees of distancing in an increasing level of pathological seriousness. Therefore, one could talk about the fragility of the self as a factor which, as gradually intensified produces in increasing degrees first the weakening of the self, and second the emptying of the self, should we consider the direction towards inferior extremes (negative infinite) of the continuum of contact with the inner being. Along this axis, we find examples of psychic disorders that are connected to weakening in an increasingly pathological seriousness sense: simple insomnia, generalized inconsistencies, misfocused views and dispersions. Likewise, there are examples of psychic disorders connected to emptying: estrangement and detachment, phobias and/or panics, stiffness and erasing. See Picture 2.



Picture 2. Examples of psychic disorders related to fragility of the self along the axis of *continuum* of contact with the inner being.

And what does sensoriality mean? It is related to elements that are either saturated with concreteness or those which present proprieties, qualities or characteristics of concreteness. These elements are either preexisting or settle themselves in the psychic apparatus determining emotional, cognitive, imagetic and other manifestations – both in their conscious or unconscious forms. Its existence corresponds to a tendency to objectify and to

turn factual the psychic and external realities data (BION, 1989). On one hand, it is obvious that we cannot do without sensoriality just because we live in the world. On the other hand, sensoriality reports to the immaturity and instability of psychic processes. Descriptively, sensoriality presents itself in at least four different modes: a) *basic sensoriality* – it refers to the very individual under normal conditions; b) *sensoriality of substitutive fulfillment* – it occupies the self with varied products in order to remove and substitute fragility; c) *sensoriality produced by attacks* – it both places and keeps in the self objects that are denigrated, ruined, deadly or dead, under attacks of death pulsion aimed at fighting internal objects; d) *sensoriality produced by cleave and exclusion* – it refers to processes of suppression, detachment, elimination and rupture of links, constituting areas of inertia, interruption or exclusion of relations that are alive and vital. When dealing with psychic disorders, one mode of sensoriality is usually dominant and prevails over the others.

Psychic disorders associated to sensoriality tend to introduce and settle themselves according to degrees of sensoriality, greatly diversifying both as to their nature and seriousness. Each mode of sensoriality comprises a specific process which unfolds itself into psychic disorders of different nature and seriousness, according to their degrees of distribution along the continuum of contact axis. As sensoriality distances itself from the zero point towards the inferior extremes of the continuum (negative infinite), it tends to be increasingly denser, heavier, and more virulent and primitive – whatever its mode is. Once a certain mode of sensoriality settles and intensifies itself, it occupies an outstanding position in the self, setting the mood to mental life. Therefore, there is a wide spectrum available for sensoriality and, if other factors do not counterbalance or overlap, their influence on the self will get stronger as the contact distancing increases. This results in different modalities of psychic disorders.

In relation to basic sensoriality, some emotional commitments come to the fore as it gets more intense. In a pathological seriousness *crescendo*, we name some examples such as jealousy, possessiveness, voracity and envy. Regarding sensoriality of substitutive fulfillment and also in an increasing seriousness direction, we can see the rise of narcissism, false self, drug addiction modalities and anti-social destructivity. In the same sense and with reference to sensoriality produced by attacks we find some simpler or more complex depression modalities, psychotic depression, depression in bipolarity and psychotic explosive behavior. Finally, as examples of sensoriality produced by cleave and exclusion, we find schizoid states, white psychosis, and mania in bipolarity, schizophrenia and catatonia. All these examples are related to psychic disorders that present sensorial characteristics in common for each mode of sensoriality, and precisely for this reason they fall under the same category. In addition, depending on the mode of sensoriality, they may be classified according to the degree of pathological seriousness along the continuum of contact axis, ranging from the zero point to the negative infinite. As we are aware, this happens because the greater the contact distancing with the inner being, the more serious the psychic disorders are. And there are no limits established in the mind for both distancing and sensoriality, as well as for fragility. My purpose is to demonstrate that methodologically speaking it is possible to classify all modes of sensoriality along the continuum of contact axis, and yet demonstrate that it is possible to combine either sensoriality or fragility of the self along the same axis.

Pathological “choices”

In view of contact distancing, the self tends to become fragile. What is observed in this self? There are two sorts of possible “choices”: a) maintenance of the fragility condition or b) use of sensoriality as a measure destined to dealing with fragility. This means that the person might indefinitely remain in the state of fragility or – as fragility brings about anguishes – he can make use of sensoriality to substitute fragility for something else, eliminate anguish provoking elements, and turn sensoriality into a concealing factor of psychic suffering. The person might yet make use of sensoriality in innumerable different ways. The fact to be taken into consideration however, is that the person makes unconscious pathological “choices”. The prevailing orientation of these “choices” will make possible to both define and separate pathological directions to be followed, what is essential for the definition and understanding of psychic disorders.

Degrees of contact distancing present themselves as fundamental pathological “choices” which are in turn, related to fragility or sensoriality. Should the solution lie in the continuity of fragility and one of the modalities will tend to prevail. The same happens with sensoriality in which one of the modes tends to prevail over the others. These “choices” depend on several factors such as anguish conditions, state of unconscious structuring, unconscious mechanisms and dynamisms, and the person’s background. They highlight the fact that there is the establishment of a hierarchy of facts in the following sequence: contact distancing triggers off fragility or sensoriality but not reciprocally. That is to say that I work with the hypothesis that for the establishment and settlement of psychic disorders, factors exert a “contained influence” one upon the other, and this influence is established according to a specific order and hierarchy where fragility and sensoriality are mutually exclusive. This is explained by the fact that psychic disorders tend to subordinate themselves to some essential guidelines in their organizational systems.

Whatever the “choices” are, they have direct repercussions on the self. A huge array of effects, disfunctions and damages can be described on account of fragility and sensoriality. The self becomes full of contents, products and functioning modes that do not effectively represent the action of the inner being. These “choices” tend to fix themselves in structures that are relatively constant, and to correspond to certain mental patterns that stabilize and then originate determinant mental systems. These systems are generated by characteristic patterns that are formed and settle themselves depending on the contact distancing conditions, and also on the “choices” made for a specific modality of fragility or for a specific mode of sensoriality. They are made up of unconscious emotional patterns that organize themselves with nodal focuses on the self, having as substratum the psychic elements gathered in both forces and in a set of forces, which play a central role tending for repetition. Anchored on the hypothesis that the “choices” are characterized by either fragility or sensoriality, it is possible to verify that determinant mental systems are resultant from each one of these configurations at the corresponding degree they are. Each “choice” separately offers the opportunity of studying the system adopted by the person who expresses himself/herself in terms of pathological seriousness according to degrees of contact distancing. In other words, each degree of contact distancing that expresses itself either as fragility or sensoriality may have a repercussion on the self as a determinant mental system. This system defines the fundamental charac-

teristics of the psychic disorder to which it refers. Such characteristics comprise both the nature and seriousness of the illness but neither its intensity nor extension in the personality. Some examples of determinant mental systems are: voracity, a false self, psychotic depression and schizoid states.

On the route to unification

Determinant mental systems allow for the understanding of psychic disorders in their essential components once they basically diversify themselves according to both degrees of contact distancing and fragility of the self, as well as to sensoriality. By means of these two elementary bases, my purpose is to check the possibility of having a methodological classification of determinant mental systems along the continuum of contact axis and the inner being. Should this action be accomplishable, we will be able to try and formulate a model designed to unify psychic disorders in line with degrees of contact distancing. The realm of these disorders has so far been studied in an elemental manner. Would it be possible to find a globalistic and unifying context for these disorders?

Factors correspondence

Each one of the cited factors can be studied in relation to the others. The “chosen” factor – either fragility or sensoriality – corresponds in degrees to contact distancing degrees. That is, the degrees of this factor determine, term by term, what the corresponding degrees of the “chosen” factor are. If the degree of distancing is “x”, and if the “chosen” factor is the sensoriality of a specific mode, the degree of sensoriality will necessarily correspond to “x”. This will then imply in a specific pathological configuration that refers to the degree of this sensoriality mode. Should fragility be the “chosen” factor, an identical reasoning is applicable to it and to its corresponding modality, presenting another pathological configuration though. Whatever the sensoriality mode or fragility modality is, it will always correspond to contact distancing. The farther the contact distancing the higher the corresponding degrees of sensoriality or fragility. In order to establish and maintain determinant mental systems there is a *quantum* of contact distancing which is in turn, equivalent to a similar *quantum* of sensoriality or fragility of the self. In addition, if the degrees of contact distancing are equivalent to the degrees of either sensoriality or fragility, then the degrees of these factors will also show equivalence among themselves. Sensoriality modes and fragility modalities not only establish intra-class correspondences according to distancing degrees among themselves but they also present inter-class equivalences according to those very same distancing degrees in relation to each other. In term to term relations with contact distancing the existing sensoriality corresponds to a fragility that could exist should sensoriality not be the prevailing orientation.

The model logic

If we take a model in order to unify psychic disorders, the starting point will precisely lie in the notions that first, the determinant mental systems are made up of three fundamental factors, already mentioned according to their sequence and hierarchy (contact

distancing, sensoriality, fragility of the self) – and second, that these factors present degrees of equivalence among themselves. If we intend to organize these systems along the continuum of contact axis from this point on, these factors must then be transformed into variables. Thus each factor represents a continuous variable that bears values ranging from the zero point to the negative infinite. To the contact distancing variable the zero point represents the experience of wholeness; to the fragility of the self variable it corresponds to the state of strengthening of the self and; to the sensoriality variable it means the mere existence of the basic sensoriality. Likewise, variables are compatible among themselves in terms of degrees – that is to say that each variable degree establishes correspondence with all the others. Therefore, the distancing degrees of the first variable in relation to the zero point determine similar distancing in degrees from the other variables, taking into account the respective “choices”. Considering that the degrees of each variable are similar among themselves, we can state that these variables are homothetic (SANGIORGI, 1967). Because the contact distancing is considered to be a variable that triggers off the others – not reciprocally though; the correspondence among them are also univocal.

On account of the correspondence among the factors, it is possible to directly change the sensoriality and fragility variables degrees into degrees of contact distancing. Regardless of what “choice” is made, we can transform the degrees of those variables into contact distancing degrees. This then becomes a reference-variable whose distribution is representative of the others. In the same way, we can inversely infer the “chosen” variable positions from the reference-variable positions. Because the contact distancing is a continuous variable, its different degrees represent a field suitable for the *continuum* of contact axis, varying from the zero point to the negative infinite. Both sensoriality and fragility – whatever their mode or modality – can be classified into degrees along this axis according to the degrees of contact distancing. As the variables correspond to each other in degrees, classification according to distancing degrees maintains the real position of each one of them in relation to the *continuum* axis, whatever the modality of “choice”. For the sake of methodological organization, there must be the possibility of a logic of classification along the very same axis, of all the fragility modalities and sensoriality modes that might be presented, and according to contact distancing degrees. Thus the *continuum* axis becomes the common base line whose function is to make the factors classification possible – factors that are now transformed into variables. On this axis, the determinant mental systems that correspond to the effects of these variables can be classified in function of the degrees of contact distancing. Therefore, it is also possible to classify the very variables that the contact distancing refers to – whatever variables they might be. Consequently, we have a single axis that presents itself as adequate for classifications that are common to all variables considered, where we can apply the single distribution criteria – which is representative of the variables diversity.

Actually, contact distancing degrees do not represent anything else but degrees of pathological seriousness. The greater the distancing degree is, the greater the degree of pathological seriousness on the determinant mental system. Thus, whatever the degree of distancing might be, the pathological seriousness remains always the same at the point where it falls – whether related to either sensoriality or fragility. The pathologic

seriousness would remain the same at this point of the *continuum* even if the “choice” made were different. That is, whatever the sensoriality mode or the fragility modality, the “choice” at a specific degree of distancing does not change the seriousness of the illness, which theoretically would be the same even if the “choice” were different. What would actually change is the nature of the illness. This enormously simplifies the purpose for developing a unified model of psychic disorders.

Because determinant mental systems are closely related to the fundamental variables of sensoriality and fragility, they can be classified along the *continuum* of contact axis by means of these variables. Whether they are dependable on one or another variable, what really matters is the degrees of contact distancing that are within them as long as the classification is done according to these degrees which are equivalent to the pathological seriousness degrees. In this way, when assessing the pathological seriousness we can obtain the degrees of contact distancing – degrees which, in turn, enable the classification along the *continuum* of contact axis. As long as the contact distancing functions as the reference-variable – which is representative of all other variables – it can be used in an overall classification to all variables taken into consideration. Therefore, the psychic disorders classification along the *continuum* of contact axis with the inner being is, accomplished through classifying the variables comprised in determinant mental systems. This classification then makes possible to unify psychic disorders.

Evaluation

In order to know the degrees of contact distancing, an evaluation must be performed so that variables are given their respective weights. During this evaluation variables take upon certain values that are obtained by means of clinical observation and clinical experience, as well as the use of other resources. Clinically speaking, one of the possible ways of performing an evaluation is to verify the nature of the psychic disorder present in the determinant mental system. As one identifies a distinct factor that takes part in the system, one finds the specific mode of sensoriality or fragility. What is basically evaluated is the pathological seriousness present in the distinctive factor, which may be expressed in either qualitative or quantitative terms. By means of pathological seriousness, the variable which attributes the nature of a psychic disorder is object of classification. Because there are correspondences among the variables, the attribution of values to both sensoriality and fragility of the self defines the values that are expressed in degrees of contact distancing, in that this variable is classified along the *continuum* of contact axis. A specific psychic disorder related to variables values can be expressed at each point along the axis.

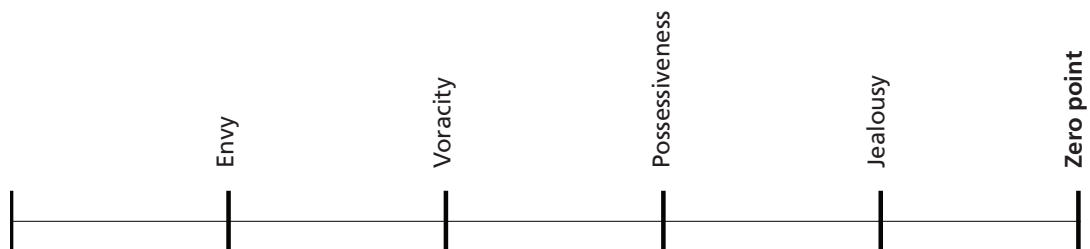
Classifying psychic disorders

If – at a specific point along the *continuum* of contact axis – determinant mental systems related to either fragility or sensoriality present degrees that are equivalent in terms of contact distancing, then they can be classified along this axis according to degrees of distancing – whatever sensoriality modes or fragility modalities are concerned. Since values attributed to each of these variables are comparable among themselves at the very same point of the *continuum*, determinant mental systems made up by these variables can be

classified according to pathological seriousness regardless their nature. In other words, distancing degrees remain the same for the same pathological seriousness, whether it is expressed in terms of sensoriality or fragility. As the pathological seriousness can always be referred to distancing degrees, it is then possible to classify systems according to their pathological seriousness by distancing degrees. Whatever the systems are, they can be related to each other and classified along the *continuum* of contact axis where the positions related to each one of them organize themselves in scales of pathological seriousness. Thus a set of variables becomes internally comparable and organizable by means of elements that are common to all of them within an established field. When talking about psychic disorders, a crucial question refers to contact distancing from which a series of subsequent events and diversifications arise. Methodologically speaking though, it deals with a fundamental variable that makes systematic studies possible, among other aspects.

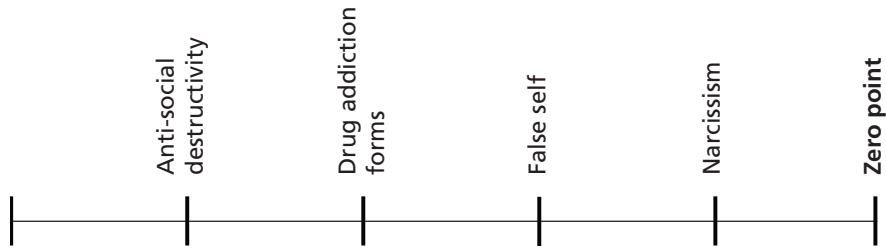
Since it has been theoretically verified that it is possible to classify psychic disorders along a unifying axis we could propose the carrying out of a systematic study. In this study, for example, we would systematically place psychic disorders along the continuum of contact axis after attributing weights to the corresponding variables. In practice however, this is a hard work that would require the analysis of each disorder to be taken into consideration, as well as the determination of its relative position along the axis, and the determining of the positions of the sets of variables in relation to one another. Having here neither space nor conditions available to carry out this study, it is suffice for me to report the results of an organization draft which is given as an example. By attributing values to variables, I was able to classify psychic disorders by means of their fundamental components. These fundamental components are the determinant mental systems in increasing pathological seriousness scales starting from the zero point. The results achieved were the following:

1. In relation to basic (intensified) sensoriality, classification of the following determinant mental systems: jealousy, possessiveness, voracity and envy (see Picture 3);



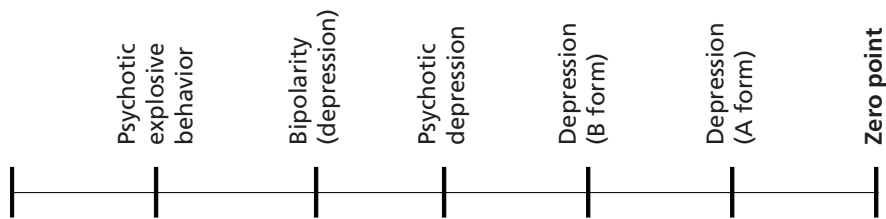
Picture 3. Examples of determinant mental systems related to basic sensoriality (intensified), distributed in an increasingly pathological seriousness scale, starting from the zero point.

2. In relation to sensoriality of substitutive fulfillment, classification of the following determinant mental systems: narcissism, false self, modalities of drug addiction and anti-social destructivity (see Picture 4);



Picture 4. Examples of determinant mental systems related to substitutive fulfillment sensoriality, distributed in an increasingly pathological seriousness scale, starting from the zero point.

3. In relation to sensoriality produced by attacks, classification of the following determinant mental systems: simple depression (A form), B form depression, psychotic depression, bipolarity (depression) and psychotic explosive behavior (see Picture 5);



Picture 5. Examples of determinant mental systems related to sensoriality produced by attacks, distributed in an increasingly pathological seriousness scale, starting from the zero point.

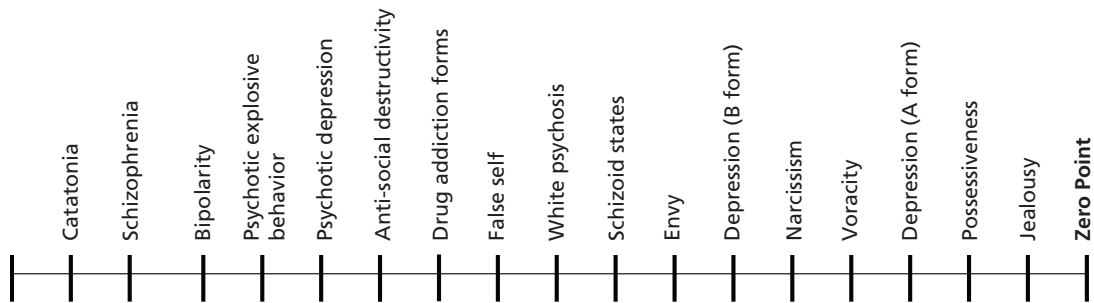
4. In relation to sensoriality produced by cleave and exclusion, classification of the following determinant mental systems: schizoid states, white psychosis, bipolarity (mania), schizophrenia and catatonia (see Picture 6);



Picture 6. Examples of determinant mental systems related to sensoriality produced by cleave and exclusion, distributed in an increasingly pathological seriousness scale, starting from the zero point.

At this point, every determinant mental system related to variables connected to the four sensoriality modes was organized in a single increasing scale of pathological seriousness. Their positions follow the relativeness of previous positions and the overall context in which they are inserted.

5. Joint classification of previous determinant mental systems that are associated to the four sensoriality modes (see Picture 7);



Picture 7. Set of examples of determinant mental systems related to the four modes of sensoriality, classified in a single increasingly pathological seriousness scale, starting from the zero point.

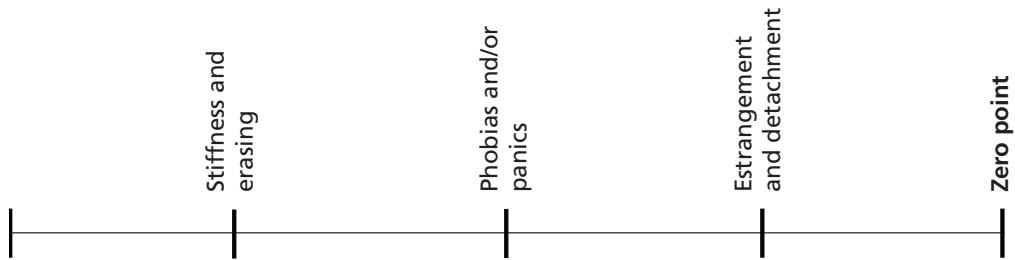
An identical procedure was performed regarding the fragility of the self.

6. In relation to the weakening of the self, classification of the following determinant mental systems: simple insomnia, generalized inconsistencies, misfocusings and dispersions (see Picture 8);



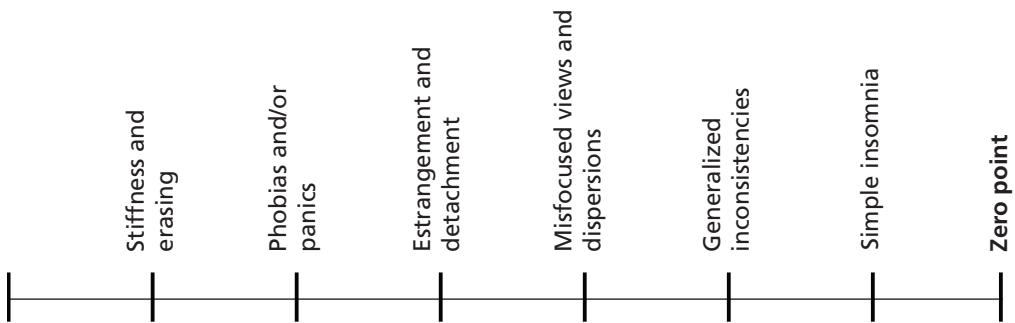
Picture 8. Examples of determinant mental systems related to the weakening of the self, distributed in an increasingly pathological seriousness scale, starting from the zero point.

7. In relation to the emptying of the self, classification of the following determinant mental systems: estrangement and detachment, phobias and/or panics, stiffnesses and erasing (see Picture 9);



Picture 9. Examples of determinant mental systems related to the emptying of the self, distributed in an increasingly pathological seriousness scale, starting from the zero point.

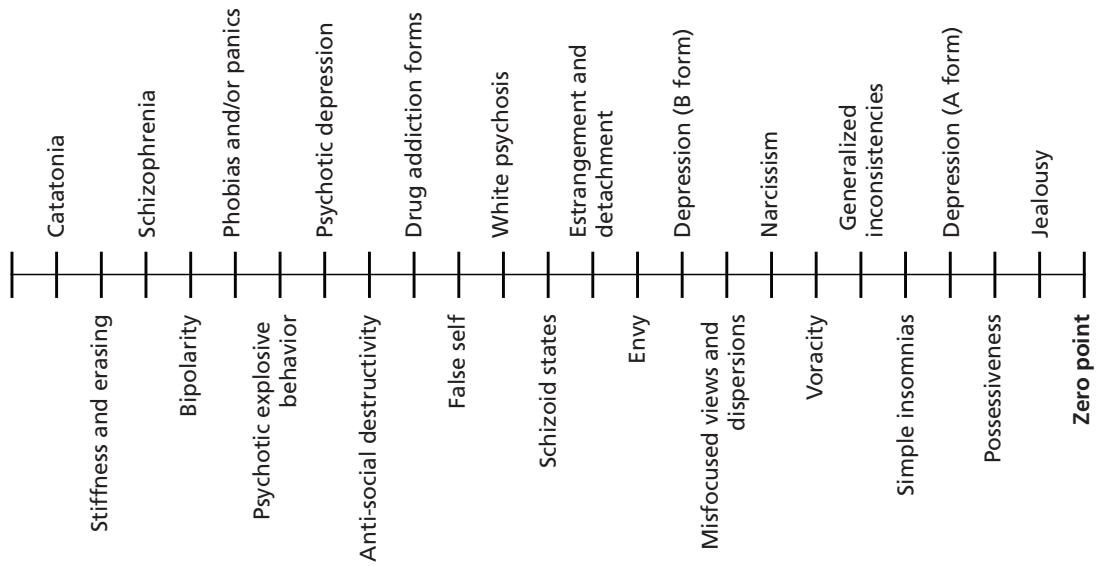
8. Joint classification of determinant mental systems that are associated to both modalities of the self fragility (see Picture 10);



Picture 10. Set of examples of determinant mental systems related to the two modalities of fragility of the self, classified in a single increasingly pathological seriousness scale, starting from the zero point.

The next step was to gather all previous examples of determinant mental systems associated either to sensoriality or fragility of the self in an increasing scale of pathological seriousness starting from the zero point. Because these systems distinctive variables are compatible among themselves, they could be jointly classified within an overall model.

9. Joint classification of all previous determinants mental systems (see Picture 11).
In this way, even though it is not possible to introduce details at present, we can realize that if we attribute weights to the corresponding variables, the practical accomplishment of this proposal for a model of psychic disorders will be feasible. Let's bear in mind that such model proposal is based on contact distancing with the inner being.



Picture 11. Examples of determinant mental systems related to sensoriality and fragility of the self, jointly classified and distributed in an increasingly pathological seriousness scale, starting from the zero point.

Comments and conclusions

Despite the methodological difficulties that characterize a groundbreaking study, I do believe I have differentiated the fundamental factors to a further development of a psychoanalysis targeted at the inner being, and its results. It is a question of a metapsychological notion that clearly distinguishes itself from the notion of self. Dynamically, the influence levels of the former on the latter are expressed by contact degrees, which offer to the individuals' different notions about themselves. Degrees of contact distancing determine, in turn, different natures of psychic disorders. Because contact distancing is a common factor to all modalities of psychic disorders, it is through it that organizing data regarding these disorders is made possible. Considering the factors called sensoriality and fragility of the self, we can verify that it is possible to classify psychic disorders by means of their determinant mental systems along a *continuum* of contact axis with the inner being.

In this actual presentation, I suggested two versions for a deeper study that – unfortunately and because of space – could not be delivered. The first version refers to the development of ideas related to contact with the inner being in both the occlusive and unconscious states. Such development would imply in the approach of distinguishing psychotic personalities from non-psychotics personalities as Bion (1972) suggested, and which would be helpful in expanding the application of the model presented here. The second version refers to the conscious state of contact with the inner being that falls upon the continuum of contact axis between the zero point and the positive infinite. To examine the conscious state, it would be necessary to introduce a new relevant variable

which I call consciousness expansion. The existence of this variable brings light to the reasons why I have performed operations along the *continuum* contact axis only between the zero point and the negative infinite – a range that corresponds to the psychic disorders variation field. Actually, the zero point is nothing but a methodological landmark that lies between the morbid processes and expansion processes. However, taking into consideration the field as a whole – ranging from the negative infinite to positive infinite – this issue could be useful to a study about an overall system, which would comprehend a wide array of mental activities. The reader will find support regarding this subject in my book *O ser interior na psicanálise: fundamentos, modelos e processos* (The inner being in psychoanalysis: fundamentals, models and processes) (TRINCA, 2007).

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