

Traditionalism and Analytical Thinking: A Potential Incompatibility in Psychoanalysis

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ABSTRACT

Slight or uneven progression of psychoanalysis or other insight-oriented psychotherapies, in opposite to non-analytical methods, in developing societies or traditional cultures, during the first decades of present century, in spite of availability of main references or resources, may propose an exact intellectual basis, other than acknowledged socioeconomic explanations. Such indolence is debatable, because, chronologically, the same process was not so slow in developed civilizations during the comparable period in last century. Hence, disregard or in addition to evolutionary, sociobiological or cultural-historical justifications, some idiosyncrasy in cognition, among traditional persons in evolving societies, as comparable to conservative people in industrialized societies, may account for such kind of shortage or avoidance. So, such an eccentricity could have prevented thorough rehearsal of psychoanalytic techniques in traditional cultures. In present article we talk about different characteristics and components of this issue, including some of the interconnected elements or concepts, like 'individualism', 'liberalism', 'conservatism' and 'analytical thinking', which act directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, as cultural mediators in psychosocial interventions.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis, Analytical thinking, Traditionalism thinking, Incompatibility

PSYCHOANALYSIS AS A NEVER-ENDING AND ALL-EMBRACING ANALYSIS

As is known, psychoanalysis involves analysis of resistance, analysis of transference, analysis of counter-transference, analysis of dream (interpretation of dreams), analysis of slips, analysis of free association and so on [1-5]. So, analysis, as the main tool for probing unconscious realm, is the backbone of psychoanalysis and a management tool for self-analysis in future and after termination of therapeutic sessions along with analyst [6]. Principally, the major difference between psychoanalysis and other psychotherapeutic techniques is around induction or revelation of insight by thorough and deep analysis of unconscious byproducts by the first method and counseling, supporting, or reorganizing of consciousness or pre-consciousness by the other techniques. Therefore, analysis and analytical thinking, while is the most important tool in the first technique, is not crucial in the other ones. Accordingly, why, in opposite to non-analytic methods, progression of methodical psychoanalysis is so sluggish or uneven in developing societies during the first decades of present century, while, chronologically, it was not so in developed societies during the comparable period in last century. After publishing 'studies in hysteria' by Freud and

Breuer in 1985 [7] and during a few decades, psychoanalysis had occupied a great place in behavioral science as a systematic therapeutic method with its specific theories and techniques. At the same time, while a number of psychoanalytic writings were available in various developing countries, which could instigate extra curiosity or probing by scholars of those societies, in effect, no significant efforts were traceable in evolving cultures, tentatively or practically, up to recent decades [8]. But even now, in spite of sustainability of a lot of valued translations and texts, professional inclinations are clearly far from clinical and applied psychoanalysis [9-11]. Why the state of affairs is so? In the midst of a variety of sociocultural explanations [12,13], cognitive roots demand more

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meticulous review. According to data, cognitive operations are not always in harmony with intellectual abilities and different preferences, whether genetically based or environmental-based, may depend on various temperaments, which work intuitively. Therefore, professional inclinations in evolving cultures, with noticeable traditional indexes, toward non-analytical psychotherapeutic methods may have cognitive justifications, independent from habitual customs or values. If traditionalism in developing societies is roughly comparable to conservatism in developed societies [14], then a comparative review becomes possible. In this regard and for depicting a general outline with respect to the present debate, we should re-review some of the interconnected elements or concepts, like individualism, liberalism, conservatism and analytical thinking, which act directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, as mediators in psychosocial interventions.

INDIVIDUALISM

Individualism is the moral attitude, political philosophy, ideology, or social outlook that emphasizes the moral worth of the person. Individualists promote the exercise of one's goals and desires and so value independence and self-reliance and advocate that interests of the person should achieve precedence over the state or a social group, while opposing external interference upon one's own interests by society or institutions such as the government. Individualism is often defined in contrast to totalitarianism, collectivism and more corporate social forms. Individualism makes the person its focus and so starts with the fundamental premise that the human person is of primary importance in the struggle for liberation. Individualism thus involves the right of the person to freedom and self-realization. Individualism is thus also associated with artistic and Bohemian interests and lifestyles where there is a tendency towards self-creation and experimentation as opposed to tradition or popular mass opinions and behaviors, as with humanist philosophical positions and ethics. The individualist does not follow one particular philosophy, but usually integrates ideologies, based on personal interests. Independent thinking and opinion is a common trait of an individualist. Societies and groups can differ in the extent to which they are "self-regarding" (individualistic and/or self-interested) behaviors, not "other-regarding" (group-oriented and group or society-minded) behaviors. Individualism is often contrasted either with totalitarianism or with collectivism, but in fact, there is a spectrum of behaviors at the societal level ranging from highly individualistic societies through mixed societies to collectivist [15].

LIBERALISM

A liberal attitude toward anything means more tolerance for change. There are many meanings for liberal, but they mostly have to do with freedom and openness to change. Liberalism involves belief in personal freedom. Liberalism

comes in many forms. Basis of liberalism is toleration of different beliefs and of different ideas about what is a good life. Liberalism—both as a political current and an intellectual tradition—is mostly a modern phenomenon that started in the 17th century, although some liberal philosophical ideas had precursors in classical antiquity. Besides liberty, liberals have developed several other principals that are important for construction of their philosophical structure, such as equality, pluralism and toleration. In maintaining that people are naturally equal, liberals assume that they all have the same right to liberty. In other words, no one is inherently entitled to enjoy the benefits of liberal society more than anyone else and all people are legally equal [16].

CONSERVATISM

Conservatism is a political and social philosophy promoting traditional social institutions in the context of culture and civilization. The central tenets of conservatism include tradition, human imperfection, organic society, hierarchy, authority and property rights. Conservatives seek to keep a range of institutions with the aim of emphasizing social stability and continuity. It usually opposes modernism and seeks a return to the way things were. There is no single set of policies regarded as conservative because the meaning of conservatism depends on what is traditional in a given place and time. Thus conservatives from different parts of the world—each upholding their beloved traditions—may disagree on a range of issues. Cultural conservatives hold fast to traditional ways of thinking even in the face of monumental change. They believe strongly in traditional values and traditional politics and often have a strong sense of nationalism. In most democracies, political conservatism seeks to uphold traditional family structures and social values. In some cases, conservative values drive from religious beliefs and conservatives seek to increase the role of religion in public life. Following the Second World War, psychologists conducted research into the different motives and tendencies that account for ideological differences between left and right. A meta-analysis of research literature found that many factors, such as intolerance of ambiguity contribute to the degree of one's political conservatism. A study by Maclay stated these traits "might be associated with such generally valued characteristics as personal commitment and unwavering loyalty". The research also suggested that while most people are resistant to change, liberals are more tolerant of it [17].

ANALYTICAL THINKING

Analytical thinking is a powerful thinking tool for understanding the parts of situation and as the ability to scrutinize and break down facts and thoughts into their strengths and weaknesses or developing the capacity to think in a thoughtful, discerning way, to solve problems, analyze data and recall and use information. While analytical thinking enables us to understand the parts of the situation

and breaks things down into their parts and identifying differences, synthetic thinking enables us to understand how they work together and finds the pattern across those parts and finding similarities. We need both analysis and synthesis. Each is of only limited value without the other in a systemic world. Systemic thinking is nothing more than combining analytical thinking and synthetic thinking. Systemic thinking, as well, is a simple thinking technique for gaining systemic insights into complex situations and problems. Systemic thinking enables us to deal with the elements of a situation in concert rather than in isolation. Its power lies in its simplicity and effectiveness. It offers the potential to find system focus in any situation. Systemic thinking is the reverse of analytical thinking. Analytical thinking breaks things apart in stages - systemic thinking group's things together in stages. Synthesis needs analysis - how can you find the similarities across different things, if you have not listed the different things first? Analysis needs synthesis - understanding how things behave in isolation is pointless. Moreover, analytical thinking is a part of critical thinking. The critical thinking is the ability to analyze facts, generate and organize ideas, defend opinions, make comparisons, draw inferences, evaluate arguments and solve problems. It is intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. It involves analytical thinking for the purpose of evaluating what is ready. Critical thinking allows us to listen to our emotions, without being controlled by them. Finally, creative thinking is relating/creating of things or ideas which were previously unrelated. Analytical thinking assists creativity. Analytical thinking is logical and leads to unique or few answers. Creative thinking requires imagination and leads to many possible answers or ideas. While the two sorts of thinking are different, they may associate each other because one sort complements the other. Analytical thinking is convergent, narrowing down to unique answers or a small number of ideas which may further analyzed and implemented. Creative thinking is divergent, starting from description of the problem and diverging to give many ideas for solving it, or possible answer to it. In effect, analytical thinking produces solutions and solutions are selectable [18].

DISCUSSION

Biology and political orientation is a concept based on a number of studies that have found that, maybe, biology links with political orientation. This means that biology is a possible reason in political orientation. Recent research points at real differences in the cognitive styles of liberals and conservatives on psychological measures [19]. For example, conservatives respond to threatening situations with more aggression than do liberals. Similarly, conservatives are more sensitive to threatening facial expressions. According to some scholars, political

orientation is associated with psychological processes for managing fear and uncertainty. A neuroimaging study, found a correlation between differences in political views and differences in brain structures in a convenience sample of students. Students who reported more conservative political views tended to have larger amygdalae, a structure in the temporal lobes that performs a primary role in the processing and memory of emotions [20]. In addition, they found clusters in which gray matter volume was meaningfully associated with conservatism in the left insula and the right entorhinal cortex. There is evidence that conservatives are more sensitive to disgust and the insula is involved in the feeling of disgust. On the other hand, more liberal students tended to have a larger volume of grey matter in the anterior cingulate cortex, a structure of the brain associated with monitoring and handling conflicting information [20]. It is consistent with previous research suggesting that individuals with a larger anterior cingulate cortex have a higher capacity to tolerate uncertainty and conflicts, allowing them to accept more liberal views [20]. According to another examination, liberals were significantly more likely than conservatives to show activity in the brain circuits that deal with conflicts during the experiment and this correlated with their greater accuracy in the test [21]. Also, in an fMRI study, three different patterns of brain activation were found to correlate with individualism, conservatism and radicalism. In addition, another study has identified several genes potentially connected with political ideology. Moreover, conservative persons had greater skin conductance response, indicating greater sympathetic nervous system response, to threatening images than liberals in one study. There was no difference for positive or neutral images. Holding conservative views was also associated with a stronger startle reflex as measured by strength of eye-blink in response to unexpected noise. A study of subjects' reported level of disgust linked to various scenarios showed that people who scored highly on the 'disgust sensitivity scale' held more politically conservative views [21]. Also, there are new perspectives like, Genopolitics [the study of the genetic basis of political behavior and attitudes, which combines behavior genetics, psychology and political science and closely related to the emerging field of political physiology (the study of bio-physical correlates of political attitudes and behavior)] [22], neuro-politics [which investigates the interplay between the brain and politics and combines work from a variety of scientific fields including neuroscience, political science, psychology, behavioral genetics, primatology and ethology] [23] and Biological determinism [also known as genetic determinism, as the belief that human behavior is controllable by individual's genes or some part of their physiology, generally at the cost of the role of the environment, whether in embryonic development or in learning] [24]. Genetic reductionism is a similar concept, but it is distinct from genetic determinism in that the former refers to the level of understanding, while the latter refers to the supposedly causal role of genes [24]. In

summary, all these perspectives emphasize that state of mind is not independent from tough organic considerations, which in turn is not free from evolutionary or sociobiological [25] conjectures, though, perhaps according to Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical theory [26], it is not static or refractory to working out, too. Likewise, as said by Talhelm et al. [27], while thought styles - whether analytical or holistic - can be changed through training, liberals and conservatives in the same developed society think as if they are from completely different cultures - almost as different as East vs. West [27]. Liberals and conservatives categorize and perceive things differently and while political conservatives are intuitive or holistic thinkers, liberals are more analytical thinkers. Also according to them, while liberals tend to view scenes, explain behavior and categorize objects analytically, most people around the world - about 85 percent - more often think intuitively - what psychologists call holistic thought. Holistic thought more often uses the intention and whole objects or situations and not breaking them down into their parts [27]. Analytic thinking styles tend to look at the parts of a situation and how they work together. This involves slicing up the world and analyzing objects individually, divorced from context. Studies show that analytical thinkers predominate in Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic societies (termed "WEIRD" societies in 2010 by a team of cultural psychologists at the University of British Columbia). But they make up only about 15 percent of the world's population. Intuitive thinking likely is the default style most people are born with, while analytical thinking generally must be learned, usually through training. In summary, liberals tended to be analytic thinkers and the conservatives' holistic thinkers [27]. But cultural psychologists further found that political thought was somewhat malleable. They discovered that if they trained holistic thinkers to think analytically, they would later start viewing the world more liberally. Likewise, liberals, if trained to think holistically, would come to form more conservative opinions. According to Talhelm et al. [27] liberals in the West tend to live in urban or suburban areas and often have fairly weak social and community ties, move more often and are less traditionally religious. They are more individualistic than conservatives and very unlike most people in Eastern cultures. Conservatives, however, tend to be more connected to their communities and may live in the same areas throughout their lives, maintaining strong social and familial bonds and commitments and are more traditionally religious. This puts them more in line with the holistic-thinking majority of the world [26].

CONCLUSION

In line with the above-mentioned suggestions, psychoanalysis depends on, first, analytical thinking, as the ability to scrutinize and break down facts and thoughts into their strengths and weaknesses and the capacity to think in a thoughtful, discerning way, to solve problems, analyze data and recall and use information, and, as well, as the first stage

in syntactical, systemic, critical and creative thinking for acquisition or induction of insight. Secondly, it depends on Individualism, as a philosophy, which involves the right of the person to freedom, self-realization, self-creation and experimentation; and, lastly, on Liberalism, as belief in personal freedom and toleration of different beliefs and ideas. Regrettably, all the said components are not the principal style of thinking, philosophy or conviction in traditional or conservative societies. While, liberal thinking, in comparison with conservative thinking, is not a main style of philosophy, as well, in technologically advanced civilizations, but the social and political circumstances in developed and democratic societies let its manifestation and operation more stress-free and comprehensive in comparison with the most developing and autocratic societies. Technologic advancements and increasing influx of data may change the upcoming generations' frame of mind and reverse the present situation more constructively in future [28].

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