

Subject temporality as a guideline for the psychoanalytic macro-process

*Fabio Rapisarda**

ABSTRACT. – The author proposes a personal reinterpretation of the psychoanalytic process, starting with subject temporality originating in early relationships with the caregiver within general complex non-linear dynamic systems. At each step (conscience - conscience of conscience - creativity) the author proposes, elaborating on the process previously expounded by Minolli (2015), the construction of subject temporality within *self-(geno-pheno)-organization* (Morin, 1980).

This interpretation of the macro-process (a lengthy process in analysis) must be linked eventually to that of the micro-process, which is concerned mainly, but not only, with what happens in individual sessions or a group of sessions.

To study the macroprocess, the object of this paper, the following points will be considered: i) temporal evolution of the *I-subject* over the course of its existence, with respect to both the surrounding environment and real life events that have taken place; ii) qualitative evaluation of patient-analyst self-awareness; iii) evaluation of the I-subject's self-awareness path, considering aspects of consciousness - consciousness of consciousness (or self-awareness) - creativity.

These points can play an important role in helping the I-subject take charge of its own path in a creative way, and direct it towards a new way of being, different to the previous one.

Key words: Complex non-linear dynamic systems; psychoanalytic process; agency; lifestyle.

Introduction

Infant research and the theory of non-linear complex dynamic systems represent a turning point in contemporary psychoanalytic thought. These new acquisitions, based on the direct observation of children in their natural environment with the caregiver, were theorized by Sander (2007) as being part of complex nonlinear dynamic systems within self-eco-organization, taking inspiration from the thought of Von Bertalanfy (1967), according to

*Psychiatrist, psychoanalyst (full member of SIPRe and IFPS), Adjunct professor at the University of Palermo. E-mail: fabrapis@hotmail.it

which ‘every organism is a system, that is, a dynamic order of mutually interacting parts and processes’ (page 317).

This concept was expanded by Edgar Morin (1980) into the concept of *self- (geno-pheno) -organization*, where you have one pole constituted by the genotype (genos) and another which relates to the phenotype (*phainon*), in other words, the expressiveness of the genotype and the mark of the constraints and stimuli of the environment, where the protagonist is the subject whose organisation is based ‘on ego-self-centeredness and ego-self-reference’ (Morin, 1980; page 190).

Michele Minolli (2015; p. 74) described the concept of subject further in his definition of I-subject, stressing that: i) the I-subject is one; ii) it has multiple parts which interact; iii) it is connected to the outside.

To summarise, in the first point ‘the I-subject is one because the parts are the I-subject, and the I-subject is the parts that compose it’ (page 75).

In the second point, ‘the functionality of one part cannot fail to be seen as separate from the unity of the concrete and single I-subject’ (page 83). In the third point, relating to the relationship with the outside, Minolli (2015) emphasises that ‘the geographical, cultural, social, economic, familial, parental and genetic context constitute the I-subject. External stimuli configure the I-subject’ (p. 83).

Agency and self-narration as functions of the I-subject’s parts

As we saw above, the I-subject, consistent with Minolli’s line of thought (2015), has several ‘functions of its parts which act as expressions of the organism and its unity’ (Minolli, 2015; p. 82) which corresponds to the self that Gallagher (2000) separated into two essential and distinct functions: the ‘minimal self’ and the ‘narrative self’. The ‘minimal self’ is the direct sensation of oneself and includes the sensation of the body (through belonging) and action (through agency); it involves immediate experience, not experience over time, and therefore expresses itself well in bodily consciousness, since the embodied self is, by definition, in the here and now (Arzy & Schacter, 2019).

In the ‘minimal self’, *Self-agency* is saying. ‘I am the one generating the experience represented on the cognitive map’ (Arzy & Schacter, 2019), which can be defined as ‘I am the one telling the story’ (Gallagher, 2000), and I am the one generating and evaluating interactions with ‘people around me (or social network)’ (Arzy & Schacter, 2019).

The agency process can introduce various precedents or beliefs concerning the represented environment (Arzy & Schacter, 2019).

This explains why self-agency tends to gradually interpret the external environment according to how the I-subject is configured, in line with what Minolli (2015) proposed.

For this reason, interaction with others affects identity formation in the child more than in the adult.

Self-ownership (belonging) is saying: ‘I am the one living the experience’, who has had or will have it, represented on a cognitive map (Arzy & Schacter, 2019).

It may be defined as ‘I am the protagonist of the story’ (Gallagher, 2000) and I am involved in a social network (Parkinson *et al.*, 2017).

This implies an ‘ownership model’ that processes recently acquired information about the world and the self, individually (Arzy & Schacter, 2019).

For this reason, *self-agency* and *self-ownership* are essential components of cognitive mapping in different domains (space, time and person) and of the egocentric-allocentric translation incorporated in the process (Arzy & Schacter, 2019).

An important property of the cognitive map is the interaction between the bodily view (egocentric) and the bird’s-eye view that characterises allocentric representations. Its localisation (egocentric) serves as the basis for its behaviour in the environment, while an allocentric strategy encodes information to form a reference point on the cognitive map (Vogeley & Fink, 2003; Bicanski & Burgess, 2018; Wallach *et al.*, 2018; Kaplan & Friston, 2019). According to Prosser and Recanati (2012), the self as subject always instantly processes and contains information about itself characterised by its immunity to error, while the self as object, on the other hand, implies a recognition and conceptualisation of the self that manifests itself, for example, as self-recognition in the mirror, something babies usually learn by age eighteen months (Newen, 2018). Therefore, if the self as subject corresponds to the egocentric view and the self as object corresponds to the allocentric view, we need continual egocentric-allocentric translation to gain information about ourselves (Arzy & Schacter, 2019).

This lays the foundations for the ‘theory of mind’ (Frith & Frith, 2005) in which the mental states of others are modelled according to our own self-centred reflexes, as if we were in the other’s (allocentric) shoes (Arzy & Schacter, 2019). Consequently, each one of us builds a ‘theory of mind’ which is not always distinct from that of the other. In fact, we tend to universalise our own, and perceive the other as an object, following our allocentric reflexes, rather than perceive the other as a subjective whole distinct from ours.

The ‘narrative self’ is the memory that works in the background maintaining a sense of the self’s past and future, and includes autobiographical memory, personality and identity.

As I explained in a previous work (Rapisarda, 2022), agency and ownership help relate the movements we produce to the sensations of our bodily selves (or minimal-selves), and in the same way, are central to relating our movement in the environment which is being continually translated into a

form of cognitive map in the narrative (or experiential) self (Schwabe & Blanke, 2007; Gallagher, 2000; Kanitscheider & Fiete, 2016).

These operations are part of a mental orientation which relates the internal representation of the self to the external world, and they work to build our episodic memory (Arzy & Schacter, 2019).

It is clear from what we know that the two functions, even if they are distinct, work in correlation with each other. In this sense, the narrative of the self-intersects that of agency, a sense of subjective activity, which Sander (2007; p. 196) considers ‘at the basis of the origins of human identity’.

Consciousness

‘Consciousness (...) is a sensation or an action that can only be one’s own, and specific to an individual I-subject’ (Minolli, 2015; p. 158).

Studies show that an infant less than an hour old is able to imitate facial gestures in such a way as to rule out any possibility that it may be an automatic reflex mechanism; this suggests the ability to learn to imitate gestures (Meltzoff & Moore, 1977, 1983).

The findings might suggest that the ability, present in new-born babies, constitutes a primitive self-awareness, and that the human child is already endowed with an embodied, active ‘minimal self’ which is attuned to the environment (Gallagher, 2000). This ‘primitive self-awareness’ can be traced back to Minolli’s concept of consciousness (2015) in a subject who feels alive, and that he exists, but who, according to current neuroscientific knowledge, already has certain abilities at birth.

The constitution of identity within consciousness

Since ‘identity is based on consciousness’ (Minolli, 2015; p. 156) the author claims that its constitution is defined by various factors inherent in genetic (sex, somatic traits, *etc.*) and environmental variables (place of birth and growing up, family economic status, social and cultural climate) which include parent - child interaction, and the relationship of the latter with the rest of the *fratria*. In the course of one’s existence changes occur, in fact, there is a difference between a child, an adult and an elderly person. The I-subject undergoes physical changes, changes in cognitive functionality and in relational modalities, even if the ‘historical environmental configuration’ remains its distinctive feature (Minolli, 2015; p. 138).

Furthermore, since ‘the process of the I-subject is in reciprocal incidence’, in relation to the environment, ‘the investment can change with the passage of time’ (Minolli, 2015; page 109).

As discussed in a previous work (Rapisarda *et al.*, 2019), this means that the path of self-agency, also in line with Sander (2007), is marked by a distinctive temporal progression, where, I believe, the previous levels do not disappear. A mapping is drawn (Edelman & Tononi, 2000) based on the associative network that is created with the first relational experiences of the new-born and the caregiver (Solms *et al.*, 2002).

It all starts from ‘a theoretical zero point, the moment of birth’ (Minolli, 2015; page 105). I would argue that the theoretical zero point cannot be split up from the relationship with the caregiver.

In fact, we can say that the first interactions of the new-born with the caregiver constitute the starting point, the ‘zero point’, the ‘basic prototypical symbol’ around which emotional patterns (Solano, 2001; Bucci, 1997) and relationships with significant others (Stern, 2010) subsequently organise themselves to define the *I-subject* from which one’s specific *self-agency* (or lifestyle, citing Adler, 1933) develops. In other words, it is the fil rouge that assigns meaning to external experience, and it is precisely this external experience that will bring about the attribution of meaning in the interpretation of the constitution of one’s own cognitive map.

Moreover, in the first few months, there is an evolution in mother-baby interaction where increasingly, intentional elements enter (Sander, 2007). Therefore, not only is there an evolution in mother-child interaction as the child grows, but also the child becomes increasingly aware (thanks to *agency*) of how he contributes to the evolution of interaction.

In a harmonious developmental process, major parental interactions evolve over the years. The relationship a child has with a parent at the age of 6, for example, will obviously not be the same at age 14 or 25, because of the evolution of the relationship itself, and also because of the change in cognitive maturity that takes place from infant to adolescent and then to adult (but also subsequently), which affects how we relate emotionally to events and people, depending (but not only) on the age of the subject.

As the child grows, these first relationships intersect with those of significant others (*e.g.*, grandparents, then teachers, then friends, then emotional relationships, *etc.*). So, it seems to me as if categories are created which are based initially on the child’s relationship with the *caregiver* and subsequently, with their breakdown and recomposing, giving rise to new categorisations that form a *pyramid-shaped relational network* (Figure 1): the representation, that is, of a spatial, temporal and affective pattern based on the coordination of interaction between the child and his partners (Beebe & Stern, 1977; Stern, 1977).

This means that an interactional map is drawn consisting in the creation of specific categories, each of which will have in common, its own and others’ characteristics and they will hold some weight (some more, some less) in the formation of the relational modalities of an adult (Rapisarda et al., 2019).

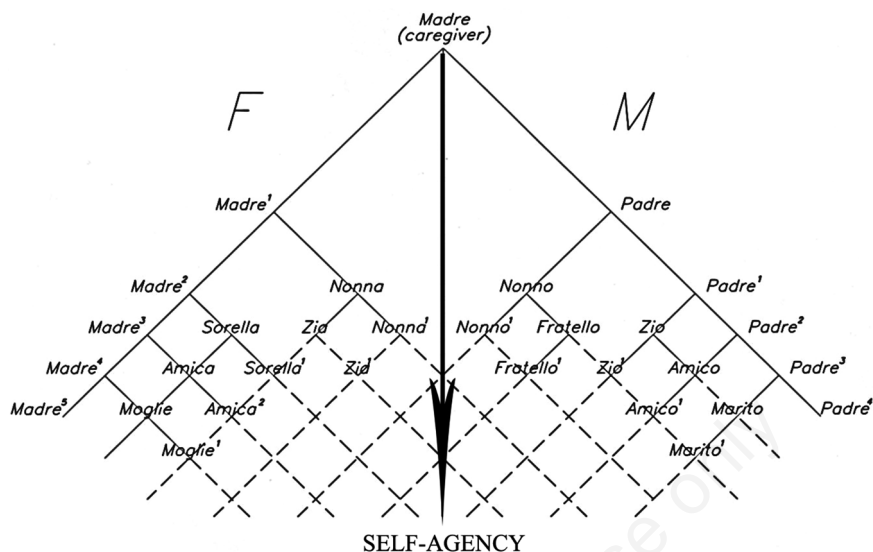


Figure 1. Pyramidal relational lattice. In this model, by M (male) and F (female) we mean those *bonding modalities* that are created respectively with male and female subjects in the various categories (mother, father, grandfather, etc.). The dotted lines indicate that *staging* (e.g. uncle, uncle1, etc.) continues with ageing and the development of individual relationships.

The constitution of a primitive interaction with the caregiver, which we can consider the major one (0), will depend on the child's genetic predisposition to interaction, and the mother's.

In this *pyramidal model*, the relationship with the caregiver (the mother) will evolve into mother (1), and mother (2), etc., whose bonding mode characteristic will have the same root as the mother (0), but at the same time will represent something new. The same will happen in the categories which will subsequently be formed, for example we will have wife (0), wife (1) etc. In addition, the same category wife will have something in common, a root of the mother category (0), but at the same time it will be a category with its own specific characteristics that will undergo its own evolution (wife 1, wife 2, etc.). This concept is in line with some studies that have shown how 'interaction between mother and child can affect interaction between father and child' and therefore 'model the interaction between father and child' (Howes, 1999, page 767).

As a consequence, interaction with the caregiver will have an impact on subsequent interactions, and each of us will develop specific categories, which will have their own and others' characteristics in common.

If, for example, the child has begun to develop a secure attachment to the mother, it will be easier to build similar relationships, with the same characteristics, first, with a teacher, and later, with a wife. Moreover, if the teacher and wife categories have *bonding modes* with characteristics in

common with that of the mother, there will be a clear distinction (at different ages) between their relationship with the teacher and with the mother. By *bonding mode* I mean, in accord with Kaes (2002), those unconscious strategies that are played out in order to remain close to the internalised attachment figure (see for example, the attempts of a baby to attract a mother's attention with looks and vocalisations).

The cognitive sciences express this concept particularly well; the subject constructs objectives (goals) whose function is to keep the attachment figure affectively close (Lorenzini & Sassaroli, 1995). So, if the IWMs (internal working models) have characteristics in common with the various types of attachment (safe, insecure, *etc.*), the strategies enacted (both unconscious and behavioural) to maintain the bond (based on closeness and deferring to the figure of attachment with respect to one's natural way of being) are strictly individual and constitute its modality.

The extension of the concept of bond to other categories suggests that the original bond established with the mother is, of course, important, but equally so are the bonds that are subsequently established, and especially the modality in which they occur.

For example, if in the life of a child who has an inadequate father (*e.g.*, a violent alcoholic) there is a grandfather with whom he establishes another bonding mode, this latter relationship could represent an alternative (though not a substitute) for the first and could be the basis for developing a secure attachment (and, therefore, a different way of bonding) with his father (if the latter subsequently modifies his behaviour, and, as a consequence, his interaction with the child). This has been verified in the relationship of a child with his grandmother, living with an adolescent mother (Spieker and Bensley, 1994).

This explains, for example, why it is easier to achieve more rapid therapeutic results with a child. In fact, since the child's *pyramid relational model* is being formed, a different relational mode with the therapist will lead to the questioning of previously established modes, leading the child to re-interpret his attitude towards his main affective figures.

Furthermore, the *staging* constituted in the *pyramidal relational lattice* corresponds not only to the evolution of the subjective *dynamic system* both interpersonally and with the surrounding environment, but also to the different *Temporal relational environments of states of mind* (also from a cognitive point of view), as well as the representations of the self and the other, which are created over the years (Figure 2). Each stage is based on the perception of the self and the other in that specific period and context and for this reason also contains its representations, that we must imagine as a photograph that immortalizes a particular moment. This means that *each staging will contain the impressions and memories of all the interactional modalities and representations of the self and the other in that given period.*

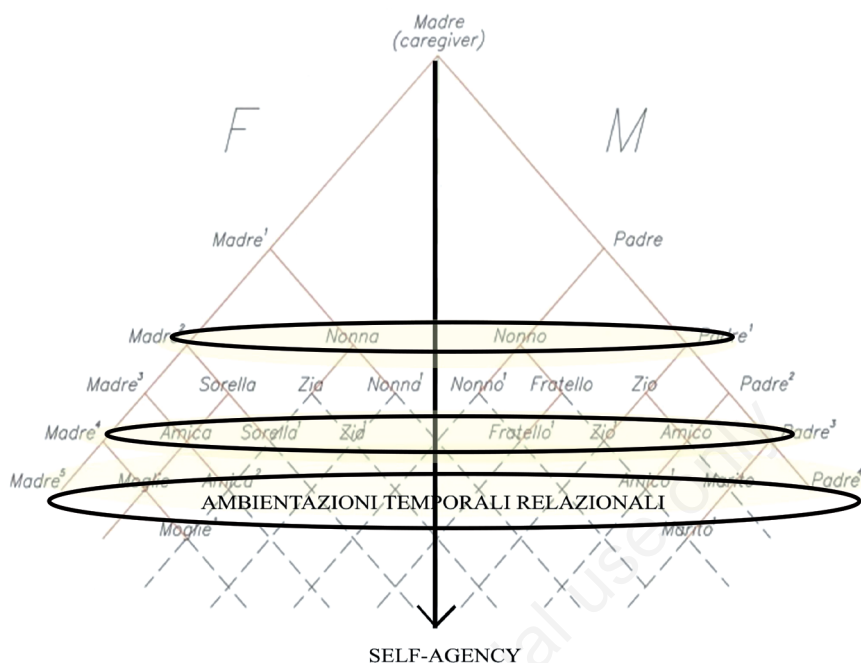


Figure 2. Temporal relational environments.

While for a child, the relationship modality with parents and significant others will differ, this specificity will gradually be lost over time becoming more varied and complex due to the arrival on the scene of other significant relationships.

This concept is in line with the theory of attachment styles in adults (Barone & Del Corno, 2007).

Therefore, thinking in terms of a *temporal relational environment* is useful because it includes an overall relational and representational modality of the self and the other which is typical of that particular period.

Temporal relational settings constitute a common thread for the narration of the self of that specific I-subject.

Only the current setting is visible to an adult; the previous ones, even if they are still present, will be for the most part unconscious and may be revealed in an analysis of the progression of *self-agency*, and in dreams where (especially in the latter case) elements pertaining to the different developmental stages (e.g. adult dreams have elements of the adolescent period) are easily recognisable, as well as memories of past periods in our lives (for example, an adult may recall events from childhood or adolescence) (Rapisarda *et al.*, 2019). These earlier stages (stratifications) of memory can suddenly return to our consciousness, for example, after a trauma. Pierdante Piccioni (2016), in his book ‘Minus twelve’, recounts his experience of not remembering anything that happened in the twelve years of his life before suffering a trauma

following a road accident. He no longer recognized his wife, who had aged, nor his children, who had grown up. His memories had stopped at the relational time setting of 12 years earlier. He remembered his children still as children and his wife younger. Even seeing himself in a mirror, he failed to recognize himself with white hair and rather too many wrinkles. No other memories remained of those twelve years of his life.

Keeping the stages in mind can also be useful in therapy, since, according to Seligman (2018), imagining the patient in his relational environment, with the affective modalities of that particular period of his existence, and confronting them with the present moment, can help the therapist understand the evolution of the patient's *self-agency*.

Consciousness of consciousness

This term had been described by Minolli, in a different theoretical context, as self-awareness (1993; 2009).

According to Morin (1986; p. 212), regarding the 'consciousness of consciousness', 'consciousness divides all the activities and things of the mind that it considers', which 'allows the subject to objectify and to deal objectively with (...) all his psychic activities and all his subjective behaviours, as well as allowing 'consciousness itself, for its part, to treat itself objectively'.

This distancing, according to the same author, 'will allow the analysis, examination and control of the various components of that complex unit which is the human act of knowledge (representation, perception, language, logic, thought). It will allow introspection and self-analysis, as well as integration of the observer/conceptor in observation and conception' (p. 135). This 'awareness (...) is a reflexive act that mobilizes self-awareness and engages the subject in a critical reorganization of his knowledge, even inducing him to question his fundamental points of view' (p. 214).

This can happen thanks to the allocentric perspective of being able to acknowledge oneself (as mentioned above) and, I would add, others. In fact, for a *presence to oneself*, it is essential to consider that just as we have an image of ourselves and of the other (combining an egocentric vision with an allocentric one), others will have their own image, which is different from ours, in line with a different 'theory of mind', outlined above. This allows us to acknowledge ourselves from an objective point of view (being the object of our own observation), and others.

The job of 'consciousness of consciousness', therefore, is to allow 'the I-subject to acknowledge and be aware, at least, implicitly, of its own existence' (Minolli, 2015; p. 167) and its own temporal path starting from the first stage of its existence. Consequently, the I-subject is made aware of its

modality of being historicized by the way ‘consciousness’ has shaped it, and questions the previously established relational modalities.

The questioning of one’s way of being historicized can be a sign of the I-subject’s maturity, a continual self-reflection. This phase is physiologically present in adolescence.

The ‘consciousness of consciousness’ is a flux of ‘consciousness’ and cannot be disconnected from the latter, since ‘they are linked to each other beyond time’ (Minolli, 2015; 176). This step is essential for the grafting on of ‘creativity’.

Creativity

Creativity is that quality inherent from birth in human beings which directs in a unique way our subjective interpretation of the world and starts with consciousness. If we take the case of identical twins growing up in the same family context and with the same school experience, we cannot be sure that in their subjective course of *self-agency* they will assign the same meaning to their experiences. In fact, ‘twins raised together, whilst having and nurturing a sense of common identity, tend to create and develop psychological differences as if to confirm their individuality, thus twins who live together would be less similar compared with twins raised separately’ (Morin, 1980; p. 193). This happens because the uniqueness of the *I-subject* configuration, with respect to its genetic (and environmental) component, causes them to interpret their environment in a unique and subjective way. The emergence of creativity represents an opportunity to develop awareness of the I-subject’s significance leading to an awareness of the historical solutions it adopted in a different interpretation and narration of self. Moreover, it means that the I-subject has the possibility, ‘thanks to consciousness of consciousness, to make pronouncements about its own being in existence, to free itself from its history (Minolli, 2015; p. 177) and bestow on itself a quality of life of its own’ (Minolli, 2015; p. 177).

‘Creativity enables the I-subject to acknowledge its organization and, through consciousness of consciousness, to work with a qualitative assumption of it’ (Minolli, 2015; p. 184).

Therefore, in the subjective temporal path of *self-agency*, the emergence of creativity appears as a novelty, an emergence, and in line with Morin’s theory (1980), characterises the processual evolution of self-(geno -pheno)-organization. Although the emergence seems to come ‘out of the blue’, in reality it is facilitated by favourable environmental conditions (Minolli, 2015). In the analytic process we cannot always be aware of the entirety of the personal processing a patient is undergoing. Often, thanks to *a posteriori* processing, the analyst recognises that the signs were already there, in

the patient's interactions and in the material that was brought to the session, superficially seen as repetitive.

The onset of creativity creates an initial sense of bewilderment since a new goal and a new way of being can only be discovered after several attempts.

Evaluation of the psychoanalytic macro-process

In order to gauge the progression of *self-agency* and how it intersects with the narration of self during psychoanalytic therapy, we need to consider the temporal path followed by that specific I-subject before and during the course of analysis (macro-process). Whereas, to evaluate all the relational and transformative aspects that occur between the patient's specific I-subjects and the analyst, we need to focus on a sequence of sessions or on a single one (*micro-process*). An examination of the *macro-process* gives us a general idea of the environment a specific I-subject was born and brought up in, the historical solutions that were subsequently adopted, and the process undertaken in the course of therapy, from consciousness to consciousness of consciousness, arriving at new solutions thanks to creativity. It may be useful for the psychoanalytic process to consider the qualitative level of the self-conscious relationship between patient and analyst. The *micro-process*, on the other hand, gives us an idea of how all the interactional aspects of patient and analyst intersect, and how they impact on the transformations that occur within that specific interpersonal field (as well as evaluating possible *impasse*). These interactional modalities have their own particular importance in interpretative timing.

In this work I will focus on an analysis of the *macro-process*, since this is the way we can evaluate the temporal path of the I-subject, thanks to its functions, to the parts constituted by self-agency (and overall the 'minimal self'), and narration of self.

Therefore, if we wish to study the course of the patient's *self-agency* during psychoanalysis, we should consider the following points: i) the evolution of the temporality of the *I-subject* over the course of its existence, with respect to both the surrounding environment and real life events; ii) the qualitative evaluation of patient-analyst self-awareness; iii) the evaluation of the self-consciousness of the *I-subject*, taking into consideration aspects of consciousness - consciousness of consciousness (or self-awareness) - creativity.

Taking these points into consideration could certainly help the *I-subject* take charge of its own course in a creative manner and direct it towards a new way of being in the world - different to the direction taken in the past.

Evolution of the temporality of the I-subject over the course of its existence, with respect to the surrounding environment and the real life events occurring within its self- (geno-pheno) -organisation

This point supports Minolli's claim (2015), *i.e.* 'examine, by working with the individual I-subject, his history and his solutions' (page 104), considering that 'reality (..) is the sphere that man lives in and tries to understand as best he can' (p. 44). Therefore, for a precise interpretation of self- (geno-pheno) -organization we need to associate the *pyramidal relational lattice* described above to another network where the major events of an individual's personal life are taken into consideration, to better evaluate their impact on the *self-agency* path, and, following on from that, on the *I-subject's* identity formation, and how self-agency interprets the reality. A serious bereavement in adolescence could radically affect the evolution of *self-agency* and we cannot know what significance it assumed. In line with S.J. Gould's contingency principle (1989), events, even random ones, can drastically change the course of future life and therefore the path of the *I-subject*. Clearly, this point is to be interpreted bidirectionally. Therefore, it is not only a question of how the events affected the subject, but also of how the subject coped with the agency's (*self-agency*) progression with respect to the events.

In fact, every new activity (and every significant event) creates a perturbation that requires a 'reciprocal adjustment to a new level' (Sander, 2007; page 107), something that is not easy for patients, since *self-agency* exists within a rather rigid subjective organisation.

During the course of therapy, patients generally begin to make a distinction between the historicized early stages of their existence and the current one. Consequently, to evaluate the correct progression of *self-agency* real events cannot be excluded. Therefore, the transition from one layer to another will be conditioned not only by advancing age (adolescence, adulthood, old age), but also and above all, by life experiences (marriages, bereavements, *etc.*) (Figure 3).

Robinson (1986) has shown that we are predisposed to organise our autobiographical memory around certain episodes and circumstances where we order the events that we have been active or passive protagonists in (*e.g.* diploma, marriage, bereavement, *etc.*). This means that each of us organises our autobiographical memory into subjective temporal periods rather than into semantic categories (Conway & Bekerian, 1988).

There is, therefore, a 'temporal framework of life' which leads to a significant (and subjective) organisation of the succession of temporal events and 'whose final outcome is continuity, autobiography, identity' (Ferraro & Garella, 2000; page 131).

Therefore, we can consider identity representations as knowledge structures of a higher order, which order autobiographical memories according to one's personality and themes based on the role that each person has of himself

(i.e. the image and role that the subject has co-built into interaction with other representative figures over the years) (Grilli, 2017).

The *relational pyramidal network* model can help us to re-construct or hypothesise the progression of the subjective temporality of *self-agency* in identity formation. This may be evident in the transition from adolescence to adulthood as the *I-subject* evolves, with respect to one's maturity and the changes in significant affective interpersonal relationships, from family members onwards.

Consequently, in order to have a global vision of *self-agency* progression, as well as temporal progression, vis-a-vis events, it is necessary to integrate the *pyramidal relational lattice* with Figure 3.

We need to ask ourselves the following questions: i) What did that specific event mean and what impact did it have at that moment on the *I-subject* agency's course and on its self- (geno-pheno) -organisation? ii) How did the *I-subject* deal with the event and what meaning did it assign to it? iii)

How did the *temporal relational settings* evolve during the agency's course and how did the *I-subject* deal with the former?

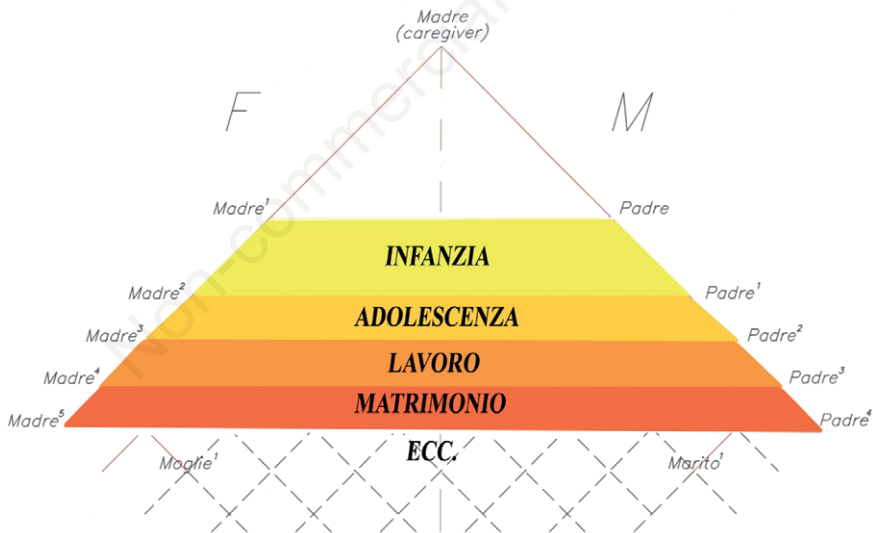


Figure 3. 'Layered' staging. In this model the different coloured areas (childhood, adolescence, work, marriage, etc.) indicate 'hypothetical' *staging* layers. Each layer contains all the relational modalities (mother, father, etc.), and all the experiences that have taken place within a layer. A layer is not delimited only by age, but also by the fundamental experiences in the growth and evolution of the personality.

Quality of patient-analyst self-awareness

At this level, on studying a patient's analytical path, we need to ask ourselves why the patient's consciousness of consciousness, which is vital for

starting on a journey into creativity that could lead to a new way of being, is not being triggered.

The questions that need to be asked at this point are: i) How are patient and analyst relating to each other? ii) Are they at a level which facilitates the patient's progress towards self-awareness?

It is clear that the motives behind this point should be investigated at a micro-process level mainly; whereas at a macro-process level we might hazard a guess.

As we mentioned above, to get the creative process started there must be a discussion on the ways of being historicized, and this can be done using the *consciousness of consciousness* function. If this level is inaccessible then we should find out why.

Since, as Minolli states, 'the quality of relationships puts the I-subject and its process in first place' (Minolli, 2015; page 238), I believe that understanding the positions of patient and analyst on a self-conscious level during the course of analysis, is essential.

With respect to the relational configuration dictated by axis II (relations) of the OPD, interweaving the self-other model of the patient with what the analyst perceives of the same, which generally does not correspond, the result will be a *basic relational configuration* of the patient's 'consciousness' phase, regardless of the content, *i.e.*, the material brought to the session. It is the evolution of this configuration to one which is less rigid that identifies access to 'consciousness of consciousness'. Its non-evolution cannot help the patient to access a different, more qualitative self-reflection, since it does not lead him to question his historicised self-other model.

A *self-conscious* relationship exists when 'the *I-subject* consents, via his relationship with the analyst, to the questioning of his own constitution and how it impacts on his relations with the other'. This can happen because 'the perceptions and the memories processed, the representations and the emotions produced exist as the object of simple consciousness (and) can subsequently be the object of *consciousness* in the sense of awareness or *self-awareness*' (Minolli, 2001).

The capacity for self-reflection, the *reflexivity index*, can be a useful parameter for judging the effectiveness of the analytic path. If the latter is progressing productively, the patient should gradually move from a first phase aimed principally at 'real aspects' external to himself, to a new phase with an increasing capacity for self-reflection - the basis of the development of self-awareness (consciousness of consciousness).

In particular, we should assess whether the patient is able to marry aspects of implicit memory with those of explicit memory - the distinction into two types of memory is put forward by Squire and Kandel (2009) (Figure 4) - and then integrate them with reality. We should point out here that while interactional modalities belong to implicit memory, because they

go back to the first mother-child interactions (prior to the hippocampal depositary formation of episodic memory), the self-other representations, *i.e.* the self-other idea that we create from the interactional modalities mentioned above, belong to semantic memory and therefore the explicit one. It is important to try to connect them during therapy.

NON-DECLARATIVE MEMORY (implicit)	DECLARATIVE MEMORY (explicit)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motor skills • Perceptive skills (including perceptive learning) • Emotional learning • Priming (the ability to identify and process a recent stimulus) • Mother-child interaction in the pre-verbal period • Facial expressions and direction of the gaze (other non-verbal aspects) • Transfert (see Mancia, 2004) • Defense mechanisms (they also lie between the two systems, in line with Bucci, 1997) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Episodic memory ii) Semantic memory <p style="text-align: center;">(both contribute to developing priming autobiographical memory)</p>

Figure 4. Implicit and explicit memory (in line with Squire & Kandel, 2009).

With regard to this point, the question is: i) Is the patient able to relate implicit memory to explicit memory - this is necessary in order to initiate a qualitative self-reflection based on the *consciousness of consciousness* function; ii) Can he relate these aspects to reality?

Furthermore, it is quite common, usually at the beginning of psychotherapy, for a patient to constantly be asking how he can put an end to the problematic situation (a characteristic of the 'consciousness' phase).

For this reason, especially in the event of an *impasse*, it is important to understand why a patient gets stuck in the real aspects and is unable to access the aspects of implicit and explicit memory and integrate them, thus hampering the path to self-awareness, vital for the success of any analytical treatment (Rapisarda, 2018).

The evaluation of the self-conscious path of the I-subject, taking into consideration the aspects of consciousness-consciousness of consciousness (or self-awareness) - creativity and the connection with self- (gen-pheno) -organization, keeping in mind the evolution of the patient's relational modalities

For this point is useful to evaluate the changes that have occurred with respect to the representation of self and other, and how to process emotions during the consciousness-consciousness of consciousness path, as well as the new representations adopted through the process of creativity.

Furthermore, in line with point 2, and thanks to the analysis of the *basic*

relational configuration, it is worth considering the changes in the relational modalities (based on self-other representations) of the patient over the course of the psychotherapeutic process. According to the OPD 'relational behaviour is an expression of the dynamics between more or less conscious relational desires, the anxieties that these activate in the patient on an intrapsychic level, and fears about how the other might react to their desires' (OPD, 2002; page 26).

At this level, we also have the *naive psychological theories* which constitute 'a very large part of our theories about the world and guide social relations and one's relationship with oneself' (Lorenzini & Sassaroli, 2000; page 63). These obviously affect the significance we attribute to ourselves and to what happens around us.

In addition, this self-conscious process brings an awareness, not only of one's image of self and other, but also that others can have an image of themselves and others which is different from ours, in the egocentric-allo-centric perspective set out above. At this point, within the *consciousness of consciousness*, the *presence to oneself* (which as I mentioned above, in my opinion is based on the conjunction of the egocentric perspective with the allocentric one) can lead the patient to creatively steer his own path, and his lifestyle, and change direction towards a new goal, and not automatically repeating historicised configurations of modalities of being.

I believe that this is the point that attests to *creativity* (discussed previously) as a process that can enable the *I-subject* to acquire a new mode of being, different to the previous one, thanks also to the process of *consciousness of consciousness (or self-awareness)*.

Therefore, we must ask: i) how the *I-subject* has represented and represents the self and other, and how this combines with the self-narrative the progression of *temporal relational environments*; ii) how this representation has changed in the process that goes from consciousness to creativity, and how the patient's relational modalities have changed, even towards the analyst, keeping account of the egocentric and allocentric perspectives; iii) how and whether the modalities for processing emotions changed during the *consciousness - consciousness of consciousness - creativity* process.

Conclusions

A rethinking of the auto-(geno-pheno) organised *I-subject* in motion and evaluating its constitution and the path it is taking through *self-agency*, has an undoubted impact both in practical terms and especially in evaluating the psychoanalytic path.

From a subject point of view, it seems to me that the cornerstones of psychoanalytic therapy are *self-agency*, because of the way it formed and how it

is evolving (Rapisarda, 2018), and the evolution of the analytic process whose goal is self-awareness by analysing the passage from ‘consciousness’ to ‘creativity’ through ‘consciousness of consciousness’ (Minolli, 2015).

This is achieved when patients begin to recognise ‘the connection between their symptoms, their way of being in the world, and their contribution to the conflicting patterns of their lives’, and when this causes them ‘to feel that they have more choices in life and they are agents’ (Safran, 2012; p. 101), which happens when they acquire a greater self-awareness of how their own agency was constituted and is progressing, thanks to the ‘consciousness’-‘consciousness of consciousness’-‘creativity path. Weiss (1988) claims that since human beings behave, towards others and their representations, according to the meaning they have for him, it is imperative that the patient should be able to attribute a different meaning to his relational experiences, compared to his previous direction.

Results will not be achieved instantly as ‘change in psychoanalysis is often incremental and non-uniform and only becomes evident over an extended period of time’ (Seligman, 2018; p. 240).

Therefore, it is important to consider that in order to effect change, the *I-subject* must initiate a creative process which will necessarily be ‘long and tortuous’ (Minolli, 2015; page 185), since ‘creativity is a slow and painful process that moves from one stage to the next all through life’ (Minolli, 2015; page 198).

For the *I-subject* to be in a position to ‘take charge of his life in a creative manner’ (Minolli, 2015; p. 206), it is necessary, in my opinion, to view it as being in motion in order to help him see possible alternative ways of being in the world with respect to a direction that must seem irredeemably delineated, since ‘when a patient requests analysis he is markedly moving in the direction he has taken’ (Minolli, 2009; page 208).

REFERENCES

- Adler, A. (1933). *Il senso della vita*. Roma: Newton Compton, 1994.
- Arzy, S., & Schacter, D.L. (2019). Self-agency and self-ownership in cognitive mapping. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 23, 6.
- Barone, L., & Del Corno, F. (a cura di) (2007). *La valutazione dell'attaccamento adulto. I questionari autosomministrati*. Milano: Cortina.
- Beebe, B., & Stern, D.N. (1977). Comportamenti di impegno-disimpegno e prime relazioni oggettuali. In Stern, D.N. (a cura di), *Le interazioni madre-bambino nello sviluppo e nella clinica*. Milano: Cortina editore, 1998.
- Bicanski, A., & Burgess, N. (2018). A neural-level model of spatial memory and imagery. *eLife* 7, e33752.
- Bucci, W. (1997). *Psicoanalisi e scienza cognitiva*. Roma: Fioriti.
- Conway, M.A., & Bekerian, D.A. (1988). Characteristics of vivid memories. In Grunenberg, M.M., Morris, P.E., Sykes, R.N. *Practical aspects of memory: current research and issues*. Chichester, Wiley and Sons, pp. 519-524.

- Edelman, G.M., & Tononi, G. (2000). *Un universo di coscienza*. Torino: Einaudi.
- Ferraro, F., & Garella, A. (2000). *In-fine. Saggio sulla conclusione dell'analisi*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Gallagher, S. (2000). Philosophical conceptions of the self: implications for cognitive science. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 4, 14-21.
- Frith, C. & Frith, U. (2005). Theory of mind. *Current Biology*, 15, R644-R646.
- Gould, S.J. (1989). *La vita meravigliosa. I fossili di Burgess e la natura della storia*. Milano: Universale Economica Feltrinelli, 1990, 2018.
- Grilli, M.D. (2017). The association of personal semantic memory to identity representations: insight into higher-order networks of autobiographical contents. *Memory*, 17, 1-9.
- Gruppo di lavoro OPD (ed. it. a cura di A. De Coro) (2002). *Diagnosi psicodinamica operazionalizzata*. Milano: Masson.
- Howes, C. (1999). La relazione di attaccamento nel contesto di caregiver multipli. In Cassidy, J., Shaker, P.R. (a cura di), *Manuale dell'attaccamento*. Roma: Fioriti, 2002.
- Kanitscheider, I. & Fiete, I. (2016). Training recurrent networks to generate hypotheses about how the brain solves hard navigation problems. *Proceedings from Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*, pp. 4529-4538.
- Kaplan, R., & Friston, K.J. (2019). Entorhinal transformations in abstract frames of reference. *PLoS Biology*, 2, 2019.
- Lorenzini, R., & Sassaroli, S. (2000). *La mente prigioniera*. Milano: Cortina.
- Kaes, R. (2002). *La polifonia del sogno*. Roma: Borla.
- Mancia, M. (2004). *Sentire le parole. Archivi sonori della memoria implicita e musicalità del transfert*. Torino: Boringhieri.
- Meltzoff, A., & Moore, M.K. (1977). Imitation of facial and manual gestures by human neonates. *Science* 198, 75-78.
- Meltzoff, A., & Moore, M.K. (1983). Newborn infants imitate adult facial gestures. *Child Development* 54, 702-709.
- Minolli, M. (1993). *Studi di psicoterapia psicoanalitica*. Genova: Centro Diffusione Psicologia.
- Minolli, M. (2001). *La relazione come interazione (parte seconda). La relazione inconscia. La relazione reale. La relazione autocosciente. La relazione analitica*. (Comunicazioni personali).
- Minolli, M. (2009). *Psicoanalisi della relazione*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Minolli, M. (2015). *Essere e divenire. La sofferenza dell'individualismo*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Morin, E. (1980). *Il metodo 2. La vita della vita*. Milano: Cortina, 2004.
- Morin, E. (1986). *Il metodo 3. La conoscenza della conoscenza*. Milano: Cortina, 2007.
- Newen, A. (2018) The embodied self, the pattern theory of self, and the predictive mind. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, Article 2270.
- Parkinson, C., Kleinbaum, A. M., & Wheatley, T. (2017). Spontaneous neural encoding of social network position. *Nature Human Behaviour* 1, Article number: 0072. Doi:10.1038/s41562-017-0072
- Piccioni, P.D., & Sapegno, P. (2016). *Meno dodici*. Milano: Oscar Mondadori, 2020.
- Prosser S., & Recanati, F. (2012). Immunity to error through misidentification: new essays. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Rapisarda, F. (2018). Quando le cose vanno bene: analisi 'terminabile' o 'interminabile'? Le interruzioni e le conclusioni in psicoanalisi. *Ricerca Psicoanalitica*, XXIX(3), 69-87.
- Rapisarda, F., Merenda, A., & Mezzatesta, C. (2019). Environmental stimulus perception as an incidence factor in social interaction and personality development. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 8(2).
- Rapisarda, F. (2022). *L'apporto delle neuroscienze alla visione soggettuale complessa*. Relazione presentata al Convegno online *La transizione del soggetto in psicoanalisi...*

- verso il futuro organizzato dal Centro SIPRe di Parma nell'ambito del *Festival della Complessità 2022* in data 4 Maggio 2022.
- Robinson, J.A. (1986). Temporal reference systems and autobiographical memory. In D. C. Rubin (Ed.), *Autobiographical memory* (pp. 159-188). New York, NY, US: Cambridge University Press.
- Safran, J.D. (2012). *Psicoanalisi e terapie psicodinamiche*. Milano: Cortina, 2013.
- Sander, L. (2007). *Sistemi viventi*. Milano: Cortina editore.
- Schwabe, L. & Blanke, O. (2007). Cognitive neuroscience of ownership and agency. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 16, 661-666.
- Seligman, S. (2018). *Lo sviluppo delle relazioni. Infanzia, intersoggettività, attaccamento*. Milano: Cortina editore.
- Solano, L. (2001). *Tra mente e corpo. Come si costruisce la mente*. Milano: Cortina.
- Solms, M., & Turnbull, O. (2002). *Il cervello ed il mondo interno (Introduzione alle neuroscienze dell'esperienza soggettiva)*. Milano: Cortina editore, 2004
- Spieker, S.J., & Bensley, L. (1994). *Roles of living arrangements and grandmother social support in adolescent mothering and infant attachment*. *Developmental Psychology*, 30, 102-111.
- Squire, L., & Kandel, E. (2009). *Come funziona la memoria. Meccanismi molecolari e cognitivi*. Milano: Zanichelli, 2010.
- Stern, D.N. (1977). *Le prime relazioni sociali: il bambino e la madre*. Roma: Armando, 1982.
- Vogele, K., & Fink, G.R. (2003). Neural correlates of the firstperson-perspective. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 7, 38-42.
- Von Bertalanffy, L. (1967). *Teoria generale dei sistemi*. Milano: Oscar saggi Mondadori, 1969, 2009.
- Wallach, A., Harvey-Girard, E., Jun, J. J., Longtin, A., & Maler L. (2018). A time-stamp mechanism may provide temporal information necessary for egocentric to allocentric spatial transformations. *eLife* 7, e36769.
- Weiss, E. (1988). Symbolischer interaktionismus und psychoanalyse. Zugeschichte und bedeutungihres theoretischen verhältnisses. *Psyche*, 42, 795-830.

Conflict of interests: the author declares no potential conflict of interests.

Ethics approval and consent to participate: not required.

Received for publication: 22 November 2020.

Accepted for publication: 15 May 2022.

Editor's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, editors and reviewers, or any third party mentioned. Any materials (and their original source) used to support the authors' opinions are not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

©Copyright: the Author(s), 2022
Licensee PAGEPress, Italy
Ricerca Psicoanalitica 2022; XXXIII:497
doi:10.4081/rp.2022.497

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits any noncommercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and source are credited.

