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## Georg Groddeck's Influence on Erich Fromm's Psychoanalysis

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### 1. Introduction

Georg Groddeck. (1866-1934) was one of the pioneers of psychoanalysis and, with his creative and original personality, he influenced its very foundation. His exchange of letters with Freud (1970) and Ferenczi (1982) shows how much his thought informed and encouraged the earliest and boldest psychoanalytic theories. Groddeck was a doctor, novelist and literary critic and his entire work was inspired by his belief in the force of symbols. He saw the diseases of the body as symbolic creations which he tried to cure not only through physiotherapy and massage, which he had been taught by Schweninger, but also through psychoanalysis.

It was because of this use of psychotherapy in the cure of organic diseases that Groddeck became known as „the father of psychosomatic medicine“, a title he himself objected to (Grotjahn, 1966) as he considered it limiting compared to his wider vision.

Groddeck's irony, his unconventional spontaneity and great imagination upset many psychoanalysts (Gay, 1988) who were already irritated by his definition of himself as a „wild analyst“ (Grossman & Grossman, 1965). Even Freud was forced to intervene on his behalf against the Swiss psychoanalyst and pastor Oskar Pfister, who criticized „Das Buch vom Es“ (1923). However, other eminent psychoanalysts from the Berlin Institute, which Groddeck joined in 1920, such as Otto Rank, Ernst Simmel, Heinrich Meng and Karl Landauer were fascinated by him.

Groddeck also enjoyed a close friendship with two of psychoanalysis's most important women: Karen Horney and Frieda Fromm-Reichmann. Meetings between Groddeck and other psychoanalysts often took place in Baden-Baden, where he had his clinic „Sanatorium“, jokingly called „Satanarium“.

Groddeck was also friend, preceptor and doctor to Erich Fromm (1900-1980) during the late twenties and early thirties (Funk, 1983, Burston, 1991). At that time Fromm was a Freudian analyst, trained at the Berlin Institute and a member of the „Frankfurt Institute for Social Research“ with a special interest in social character. In order to understand the relationship between Fromm and Groddeck it is necessary to consider Fromm's study of the works of Bachofen and the humanistic interpretation of the Hebrew tradition he received from his Talmud teacher, Salman Baruch Rabinkow (Funk, 1988).

Bacciagaluppi (1993) prints part of an unpublished letter from Fromm to Sylvia Grossman, dated November 12th 1957 and concerning Groddeck:

„In my opinion he was the only (German analyst) who was real, original, courageous and incredibly generous. (...) I have always been very grateful (...) for the privilege of having known him. (...) His teachings have influenced me more than those of any other of my teachers“. (Translation mine)

Fromm thus declared Groddeck's influence on him, but looking through the Complete Works



edited by Rainer Funk we find only two direct references (1935, 1976); a less interesting reference is to be found in an unpublished chapter of „To Have or to Be?“ (1992, p. 14), where Groddeck is remembered only for his massage technique aimed at liberating the body from tension. For this same reason, Fromm speaks of Groddeck, in association with Wilhelm Reich, twice during a seminar held in Zurich in 1974 (Fromm, 1994, p. 115 and p. 175).

The second reference (1976, p. 352) is also very limited as it refers to penis erection which, according to Groddeck, makes a man such only for a few seconds while it leaves him a child for most of the time. But here too Fromm does not miss the opportunity to define Groddeck as „one of the most outstanding, although relatively little known, psychoanalysts“.

In the first reference (1935, pp. 130-131), Fromm dedicates almost a page to Groddeck and gives an articulated evaluation of him. Next to expressions of admiration, Fromm does not hide Groddeck's limitations: contempt for science and reactionary positions on social issues. At the same time he lists his friend's qualities: ingenious psychological intuition, an attitude free from any form of moralism or sense of sin on sexual questions, sincere relationships with and total dedication to patients. According to Fromm, Groddeck is more important for the influence he had on psychoanalysts who were in contact with him personally than for his writings, which were half scientific and half fiction. Groddeck had a particularly strong influence on Ferenczi, contributing to the well-known fact of the latter's creative and painful differences with Freud. On this point Fromm (1935, p. 131) writes:

„His influence (Groddeck's) was above all individual, and Ferenczi's evolution (...) can only be explained by the strong influence Broddeck had on him. Ferenczi had an individual and creative temperament, he was very gifted but he was also very sensitive and shy, unlike Groddeck. His life was influenced by Freud and Groddeck and he didn't have the strength to chose between them“ (translation mine).

These differences between Ferenczi and Freud

did not result in open rebellion or separation, but they did open up an alternative trend in psychoanalysis which found expression „in two directions the British middle school and the American interpersonal-cultural school“ (Bacagaluppi, 1993).

Fromm also refers to Groddeck's cultural tradition which was that of Carus and Bachofen.

Groddeck's influence on Fromm also seems due more to their personal relationship than to the former's writings, which Fromm does not actually mention. A comparative study of their theories gives the idea that their personal relationship contributed to Fromm's clinical approach and to his familiarity with German Romantic thought.

## 2. Groddeck and late Romanticism

Romanticism, and German Romanticism in particular, offered a cultural climate that lent itself to the study of myths and symbols. Vitalism and the philosophy of nature favoured the idea of the unconscious as the root and genesis of all manifestations of universal life (Ellenberger, 1970). Thinkers and philosophers such as Friedrich Schlegel, Creuzer, Schelling, Carus, Von Schubert and the poet Novalis created the premises for the Romantic psychology of Gustav Theodor Fechner, cited many times by Freud (1895, 1905, 1915-17, 1920, 1922, 1924, 1925) and for the appreciation of the symbols of ancient art and mythology which allowed Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815-87) to give an original interpretation of the history of humanity.

Bachofen, in the „Preamble and Introduction“ to his „Das Mutterrecht“ (1861), polemized with those historians who followed the historicist-positivist method, because of their limited vision which was only interested in facts, personalities and institutions, neglecting mythology. Bachofen maintained that it was necessary to consider not only history, but also myth in order to have a profound and global vision of antiquity. The beginning of all development lies in myth. The most powerful call of all civilizations is religion. Using myths and symbols as documents, Bachofen drew up a clear and coherent vision of matriarchy as the universal state of



human history. This forgotten state preceded the current patriarchy and followed a previous situation of sexual promiscuity, heterism, the symbols of which were the marsh and Aphrodite. Amazonism favoured the passage to matriarchy which founded the family based on matrilineal rights and led to the beginnings of agriculture. Values were given by love for the mother, absolute condemnation of matricide, freedom, equality and peace. Demeter was the divinity and among the most important symbols were a preference for the night, the moon, the earth, the cult of the dead, a preference for sisters rather than brothers, for the youngest child rather than the older ones, for left rather than right. Following terrible struggles, patriarchy replaced female power and imposed its values, which Bachofen felt to be superior: individual independence, love for the father, patrilineal rights and spiritual procreation, of which adoption was an expression. The symbols changed too: day prevailed over night, the sun over the moon, the sky over the earth, right over left. Apollo was the divinity, god of light and fine arts. The struggle of the losing matriarchy against male power found a degenerated re-expression of Amazonism in the profession of the cult of Dionysus.

The young Nietzsche picked up the distinction between Apollonian and Dionysian, presenting a changed and re-elaborated version in his first book on philosophy, published in 1886, „Die Geburt der Tragödie“. Nietzsche was a student of Professor Koberstein, Groddeck's father's father-in-law (Prasse, 1980). A network of cultural relations and ideas was forming, within which Groddeck was beginning to move. In his first book „Ein Frauenproblem“, published in 1902“ Groddeck imitated Nietzsche's style but with a Bachofenian content, namely an interest and admiration for all things female. Groddeck also got from Nietzsche the use of the word „Es“, which Freud would later adopt, although with a different content, explicitly acknowledging that he got it from Groddeck.

After years of clinical experience in which he worked on the symbolic aspect of symptoms, Groddeck wrote to Freud for the first time on 27th May 1917, explaining the results of his meditations and asking whether he could be

considered a psychoanalyst. The two men were very different, but Freud replied affirmatively and showed a certain liking for Groddeck, going as far as to publish „Der Seelensucher“, a whimsical and amusing „psychoanalytical novel“, with the Psychoanalytischer Verlag in 1919. During those years Groddeck published various works: „Von der Sprache“ in 1912 (1964); „Psychische Bedingtheit Leiden“ in 1917 (1966); „Eine Symptomanalyse“ in 1920 (1966); „Der Symbolisierungszwang in 1922 (1966). After the publication of his most famous work, „Das Buch vom Es“ in 1923 (1961), Groddeck wrote many more books and papers among which: „Traumarbeit und Arbeit des organischen Symptoms“ in 1926 (1966); „Vom Sehen, von der Welt des Auges und vom Sehen ohne Augen“ in 1932 (1966); „Vom Menschenbauch und dessen Seele“ in 1932 (1966); „Der Mensch als Symbol“ in 1933 (1973).

In all these works Groddeck proves to be a late representative of Romanticism and Vitalism (Burston, 1991) with the inevitable ambiguity of this position: as a clinical psychoanalyst and as a person he was creative, innovative and generous, courageous in developing and upholding his ideas; on the other hand, in his ideas on social and political issues and on scientific knowledge he was a man of the right who did not understand his epoch. In 1934 he misguidedly wrote to Hitler (Tagliaferri, 1773) to try to make him change his mind. As a result, he was wanted by the German police and had to escape to Switzerland where he died soon after in Zurich.

While Groddeck was applying his fertile imagination and intuition to the study of symbols, other right-wing thinkers were also looking at symbols and myths, giving rise to the „Bachofen-Renaissance“, which started in the 1920s (Jesi, 1973). Writers such as Klages, Bäumler and Evola proposed an interpretation of Bachofen in which myth became substance, an entity outside human beings (Schiavoni, 1988). Fromm (1934) polemized with these theories and defended a humanistic interpretation of Bachofen, who had inspired several socialist writers, attracted by the egalitarianism of matriarchy.



### 3. Radical humanism and Fromm's anti-authoritarianism

Fromm received his initial religious upbringing in his family, in terms of a strictly orthodox Jewish way of life. Introduced to the Talmud by a maternal great-uncle, his teachers were the orthodox rabbin Nehemia Nobel and the rabbin Salman Baruch Rabinkow, a chabad-hassid. Nobel was a humanist mystic influenced by Herman Cohen and, therefore, an Enlightenment thinker in the Goetheian and neo-Kantian sense. Rabinkow was a socialist and gave a humanist interpretation to Jewish law, believing that the greatest value lay in the autonomy of the individual (Funk, 1988). His relationship with Rabinkow was very important to Fromm and opened the door to the subsequent development of his humanist vision of psychoanalysis.

„In Rabinkow's view the autonomy of man is deeply rooted in Judaism. (...) What Rabinkow states about a Judaist is what Fromm later on in life tried to verify with the help of his psychoanalytic and socio-psychoanalytic investigation. The options, however, such as seeing man in his ability for biophilia, love, autonomy, productive orientation, humanity, freedom (...) these anthropological options were taken over by Fromm from Rabinkow's humanistic view of Judaism“ (Ibid.).

In 1922 Fromm graduated from the University of Heidelberg with a thesis entitled „Das jüdische Gesetz“, prepared with Alfred Weber. He subsequently studied Marx and Bachofen and dedicated himself to psychoanalysis: he was analyzed by Frieda Reichmann, Wittenberg and Sachs, while his supervisors were Landauer and Theodor Reik. Thus Fromm was in no way a „wild analyst“; he later practiced self-analysis like Freud and Groddeck.

So Fromm's cultural background was very different from that of Groddeck and presents some fundamental distinctions: Judaism, which later became the basis of a non-theist religiousness; humanism; anti-authoritarianism; Marxism, with an interest in the psychoanalysis of society. These themes are present in the writings of the

young Fromm, some of which are already very important: „Die Entwicklung des Christusdogmas“ (1930); „Über Methode und Aufgabe einer Analytischen Sozialpsychologie“ (1932a); „Die psychoanalytische Charakterologie und ihre Bedeutung für die Sozialpsychologie“ (1932b).

With his study of Bachofen's works and his personal relationship with Groddeck, Fromm had direct contact with Romanticism but from Enlightenment position. Romantic vitalism and irrationality belong to the totality of human experience and help to understand human potential, providing human beings are seen as the root of all their expressions, and thus of dreams, symbols, myths, religions and rites too. When it is believed that these human products are inspired by a source outside human beings, as Jung (1938, 1957, 1961) and in particular the mythologers of the so-called „traditional right“ believed (Jesi, 1979), than theories may develop which are non-humanist or openly anti-humanist and which, in their extreme form, become enemies of man and legitimize Fascist and Nazi violence (Fromm, 1973; Jesi, 1979).

Authoritarianism knows how to justify itself with all sorts of rationalizations and ideologies and it knows how to seduce with the fascinating aura of romantic irrationalism, against the interests of human beings. A liking for human beings, as shown by Groddeck in his life and works, is not enough to fight the sinister and worrying prospects offered by the authoritarian visions of symbol and myth. What is necessary are the explicit options of radical humanism and anti-authoritarianism in all their theoretical and practical clarity. Fromm is inspired by these two principles when he applies psychoanalysis to the human faculty for symbolizing.

### 4. A comparison between the two authors on some basic concepts of psychoanalysis

What links Fromm to Groddeck is the love of truth and freedom; a passion for research; their autonomy of thought and the courage of their convictions; a fascination for life's processes, which never cease to amaze. Both have a deep respect for man and nature. These important conditions for fruitful dialogue cannot be can-





celled out by differences of conceptualization. But they do not help in the comparison of texts, already made difficult by the lack of references to Groddeck in Fromm's work. Both, however, offer themes which lend themselves to comparison and hint at Groddeck's influence on Fromm. In some basic contents we can, in fact, find significant affinities.

*a) The concept of the unconscious*

Groddeck calls the unconscious „Es“. As „Es“ is the impersonal singular pronoun in German, the first connotation of Groddeck's unconscious is that of impersonality. Human beings are lived by the „Es“, which is ageless and in continuous movement; it holds life and leads to death, it causes illness and recovery. The „Es“ is the fast-flowing river of life which generates everything; it is useless to oppose it and the idea of governing it is a self-deception (1923). The Ego does not exist, it is a lie, a linguistic artifact. The consciousness that the Ego has of itself is an illusion (1912).

Human life is a symbolic representation of the „Es“, which leads finally to death as a return to the maternal womb. Because the difference between subjective and personal aspects and the objective aspects of the „Es“ do not animate a dialectic but dissolve into a single unconscious intentionality, the result is a mystic vision of the unconscious. In his first letter to Groddeck on 5th June 1917, Freud shows that he realized this and did not like it, speaking of a „monistic tendency to minimize all the beautiful differences in nature“ (translation mine).

Groddeck's concept of the unconscious is directly Romantic and includes all aspects of life. It is to be believed that Fromm was influenced by Groddeck in his conception of the unconscious, which includes the totality of human potentiality. Fromm's „total man“ is, in fact, the unconscious but it is a concept which takes only its raw material from Romanticism, namely the idea of a universal and vital ferment' which is then elaborated according to radical humanism and the consideration of social factors.

According to Fromm, the conscious part of the individual psyche is largely a social element, related to history. The filters (Fromm, 1960, p. 321-326) of language, logic and taboo play an

active part, allowing the passage only of psychic contents that are compatible with the requirements for the functioning of society. The conscious and unconscious are qualities of the contents of the psyche, attributed mostly to social processes that are themselves unconscious. In this way the conscious area of the average citizen is largely an illusion, produced and shared on a collective level. What remains unconscious are the universal human components, man's biological, psychic and spiritual interest, „rooted in the Cosmos“. Non-consciousness represents the plant, the animal and the spirit in human beings. In any culture, man „has all the potentialities; he is the archaic man, the beast of prey, the cannibal, the idolater, and he is the being with the capacity for reason, for love, for justice“ (Ibid., p. 328). The total man, from the most distant past to the potential future, remains unconscious.

Furthermore, the word „unconscious“ is not a noun but a descriptive adjective which indicates a quality of psychic contents. „There is no such thing as the unconscious; there are only experiences of which we are aware, and others of which we are not aware, that is, of which we are unconscious“ (Fromm, 1962, p. 102).

We can say that Groddeck's unconscious presents the characteristics of totality, vitality and impersonality. While the first two are taken up and revised by Fromm, the third is not humanistic and is therefore left out of Frommian psychoanalysis. The idea of the impersonality of the unconscious has been incorporated into the structuralist approach, for example that of Lacan.

As for the Ego, Fromm too thought it was illusory since it exists only from the point of view of the having mode. The Ego, as the objectified and verbal thought of our socially connoted identity, belongs to the having mode, it is a thing, a possession, „the mask we each wear“, „a dead image“. Insofar as it is a thing the Ego can be described in words, whereas the „I“, which is not subject to intellectual representation, cannot (1976).

The „I“ emerges in the being mode as the total and immediate experience of being an active functioning centre, a self, lived in its wholeness (1968a).



### *b) Psychoanalysis as a radical theory*

Both writers had the courage of their convictions, which they defended without compromise. Neither practised diplomacy either at the level of theoretical elaboration or in their behaviour, and they always fearlessly faced up to the consequences, even extreme, of the premises to their thought. For them, psychoanalysis was never a „party line“ (Fromm, 1958) to be adapted to, but a search for the truth. Both loved paradox, which does not belong to formal but to dialectic logic. This was not in order to surprise or scandalize, but to offer an intellectual disposition more able to grasp the twists and turns of life processes, their pulsation and palpitation. Yes, they were provokers, intellectually provocative against schematisms, against dogmatic inflexibility, acquiescence, groups in power, conspiracy of silence. Both remained on the edge of the official history of psychoanalysis. Groddeck's moral influence was beneficial and healthy, to Fromm and to his other friends, as well as to the brilliant and tormented Ferenczi, who gave so much to psychoanalysis.

Groddeck's and Fromm's theories are troublesome because psychoanalysis cannot avoid being troublesome in showing up both individual and social defence mechanisms. These two masters were radical thinkers in the sense that they would not give in to the need to be socially accepted and approved of. They pushed their ideas as far as they could go in their coherent development, without adapting them to false needs and thus betraying them.

### *c) Verbal language*

For both Groddeck and Fromm, the psychic content precedes words. Groddeck states that deepest inner life is silent and that verbal language which tries to express it lies, because it is not possible to express the never-ending movement of experiences in all their changing modalities. Words can kill thought (1923). Only the artist is the true interpreter of the unconscious (1933). On the one hand, verbal language seems to be essential to human communication, to the exchange of opinions and information, to the development of civilizations. On the other hand, this language slows down human devel-

opment because it „gags“ thought and curbs the action which follows. When one wants to communicate deep, refined and delicate contents, it is necessary to fall back on gestures, contact, looks, non-verbal, musical sounds (Groddeck, 1912). Fromm expresses similar positions when he deals with the analyst-patient relationship (1959, 1960, 1968b, 1994) and also when he gives the example of the taste of Rhein wine (1957), which cannot be understood from a verbal description but only by drinking it, in the same way as empathy is necessary to understand another human being.

Fromm's concept of language is based on the theory of social „filters“ which select the psychic contents reaching the conscious. Although this theory does not come from Groddeck, not only is it not in contrast with Groddeck's criticism of language, but it could even give it a rationalistic basis. Fromm believed that much of both individual and collective human experience remains unconscious because held back by social filters. Language carries out a determining filtering function. A vocabulary may not provide the words for certain experiences but have a wide range for others, which become conscious in all their subtle variety. Grammar, syntax and etymology also provide the various languages with different ways of perceiving things and of consciously taking in experiences. Another filter is that of logic, which, on the basis of the rules of thought, leads to the exclusion from consciousness of everything that appears to be illogical. A third filter concerns the contents of experiences as in every society there are taboos which prevent the awareness of certain thoughts or feelings (1960, 1962). On this theory Fromm refers to Benjamin Lee Whorf; according to Burston (1991, pp. 147-48), the main sources are probably Herder and Max Scheler. It is, however, necessary to remember a proposition of Groddeck's at the end of the 10th letter of „Das Buch vom Es“ (1923) : between the conscious and the unconscious there is a sieve: in the sieve, in the conscious, there remain only the bigger pieces, the bran, whereas the flour necessary to life trickles down into the depths of the „Es“ (translation mine).



#### d) *Symbolic language*

Goddeck believed that verbal language is deceitful because the „Es“ expresses itself in symbols which are not invented by anybody in particular, but which inalienably belong to all of humanity. All thoughts and actions are the consequences, outer aspects, of the unconscious processes of symbolization. The whole of human life is governed by symbols (1923). The very distinction between „body“ and „soul“ merely expresses two functions of the „Es“, two ways of revealing itself. The „Es“ is the only reality underlying the phenomenon produced by symbolic creation. Humans are lived by a compulsion to symbolize, they are symbolizing beings.

The pages of Groddeck's works continually point out symbolic operations and correspondences in reference to symptoms, human organs, physiological functions, thoughts, actions and behaviour. A masterly application of his ability to work with symbols can be seen in his interpretation of short-sightedness. Ernst Simmel's short-sightedness was cured by his friend Groddeck who, as Simmel himself reports, used a play on words in English, a language he knew very well: „The Eye is I, and anyone who is short-sighted does not want to see far ahead...“ (Grotjahn, 1966).

Short-sightedness expresses the conflict between the feelings and the thoughts of short-sighted people; their personal vision and social conventions; the morality and the ideas of their environment. The analysis is completed with a etymological study of the word „myopia“ and the word „mysterium“: the common root „my-“ means „to shrink“, in the sense of protection against the superficiality of common thought (1932a). Here, as always, Groddeck combined his sensitivity as a reader of symbols with his competence as a glottologist and philologist, tracing words back to their most distant roots and rediscovering their original meanings, lost in the historical evolution of languages.

It can be believed that Groddeck's lesson entered into Fromm's thought but that it was re-elaborated and clarified from a humanistic point of view. The fact of belonging to the human race, of carrying all its physical and psychic characteristics, means that an individual is able to understand and express the language of sym-

bols, which is a universal human language. It allows people of different civilizations, even those very distant in time, to communicate through art, myth and fairy-tale (Fromm, 1951, 1962).

The definition of a symbol as „something that stands for something else“ requires an inquiry into the correlation between the symbol and what is symbolized. This correlation means that the activity of the senses, such as sight, hearing, smell and touch, stand for an inner experience, an emotion, feeling or thought. „Symbolic language is a language in which inner experiences, feelings and thought are expressed as if they were sensory experiences, events in the outer world“ (Fromm, 1951, p. 174).

Fromm distinguishes three types of symbols: the conventional, the accidental and the universal. The conventional symbol is generally understandable because the relationship with the object symbolized is a conventional one, as in the case of linguistic symbols or sign systems. On the other hand, a symbol is accidental if it is significant only for an individual who has associated it with a certain thing or experience. In both cases an intrinsic relationship between the symbol and the thing symbolized is missing, whereas this relationship characterizes the universal symbol, which is based on „experience of the affinity between an emotion or thought, on the one hand, and a sensory experience, on the other“ (1951).

„The forgotten language“ is the language of universal symbols, common to all people in all civilizations.

„Yet this language has been forgotten by modern man. Not when he is asleep, but when he is awake (...) I believe that symbolic language is the one foreign language that each of us must learn“ (Fromm, 1951, pp.175-176).

Symbolic language has its own grammar and syntax with a different logic to conventional logic, in which the categories of time and space are less important than those of intensity and association (Id.).

#### e) *Body language*

As a medical doctor, Groddeck starts from the care of the body in which he gradually discovers the language of the „Es“, realizing that symbols



are embodied in and act on the biochemical and physiological level. Body language is symbolic language which speaks through the workings of the organs and their alterations, their illnesses with all the symptoms and consequences on behaviour and daily life. Groddeck sees psychic contents translated, directly or indirectly, into aspects of the body or things concerning it (1917, 1923, 1926, 1932, 1933).

Fromm too believed that the body is an expression of the mind (1951) and that it is possible to recognize a person's character from aspects of his or her body: bearing, gait, hands, gestures, voice, facial expressions. The receptive character type is revealed through the mouth and the lips which tend to be open as if asking to be fed; gestures are „inviting and round“. In the exploitative character type the mouth seems to be ready to bite, with direct and aggressive movements and „pointed“ gestures. The hoarding character type is tight-lipped, with a withdrawn attitude and „angular“ gestures (1947). The marketing character type alienates the body as an instrument of success, to be kept young and attractive for the personality market. The necrophilic character type's interest in smells is expressed in the face, giving it its characteristic trait of „sniffer“; the face shows an inability to laugh, it is inexpressive and gives the impression of being „dirty“ because of its dry and yellow-tinged skin (1973).

#### *f) The high consideration of female*

Both Groddeck and Fromm appreciate and admire the female soul. Groddeck in particular is fascinated by pregnancy and maternity. Fromm believes that a woman is generally more able to love because she is more in touch with her feelings, which she tends to dissociate from her intellect less than a man and because she is more prepared to take on the responsibilities of an affective relationship.

According to Groddeck, the highest form of human pleasure is maternity and for this men envy women. When a man has a large paunch, it is an expression of his desire to give birth; a fall-back is to at least give birth out of his head, as Zeus gave birth to Athena. Groddeck's goitre only disappeared when he became aware that it was caused by his fantasies of pregnancy.

Fromm is very much influenced by Bachofen concerning a woman's capacity to love. The experience of birth and of looking after a child allows a woman to extend her love from herself to other human beings. Female power is marked by this experience of life and tenderness and it encourages peace and brotherhood, material well-being and earthly happiness. Matriarchy is inspired by a universal principle, patriarchy by a principle of restriction (1970).

However, myths, anthropological research and the contents of many religions document the double role of the mother figure: that of giving life and loving unconditionally and that of taking life and hating without reason. In dreams too, the mother can appear as a good figure, full of love, as a terrifying wild animal or in various other symbols of similar ambivalence (1973).

„I have found clinically that the fear of the destructive mother is by far more intense than of the punishing, castrating father. It seems that one can ward off the danger coming from father by obedience; but there is no defence against mother's destructiveness; her love cannot be earned, since it is unconditional; her hate cannot be averted, since there are no 'reasons' for it, either. Her love is grace, her hate is curse, and neither is subject to the influence of their recipient“ (Id. pp. 329-330).

According to Fromm, it is necessary to see the positive and negative aspects of both the matriarchal and the patriarchal principles. The former does not permit the complete development of the individual, who remains infantile and fixated to the mother. The latter does not encourage love and equality while rewarding obedience and subordination. The synthesis of the two principles leads to an integrated vision (1970), both in terms of a civilization in which pity and justice are no longer in conflict and in terms of an individual who becomes mother, father and offspring of him or herself (Fromm, 1955; Silva-Garcia, 1983).

#### *g) Aspects of clinical approach*

It does not seem that Fromm had any sort of personal psychoanalytic supervision from Grod-





deck in the technical sense. However, he did take part in the meetings of psychoanalysts which were held in Baden-Baden - at the end of Groddeck's life it was Frieda Fromm Reichmann who organized these meetings and acted as host (Farber, 1966). Indirectly, we can examine a passage from Ferenczi's „The Clinical Diary“ (1985) in which he refers to Groddeck and Clara Thompson. Ferenczi states (7th January) that an attitude of spontaneity and sincerity creates the atmosphere most suited to the analytic situation, unlike inflexible theoretical positions. This is a psychotherapeutic position that is widely accepted by the psychoanalysts of the interpersonal-cultural school, to which Clara Thompson brought the lessons of Ferenczi, and Frieda Fromm Reichmann, together with Karen Horney, brought those of Groddeck. The historical precedent of this psychoanalytic practice is therefore to be found in Groddeck's method of work, which was very direct, honest and sincere towards the patients (1923). Maud Mannoni (1979) noted how Groddeck's „laughter“ recalled not only the patient's childhood, but also the analyst's. We can think of it as laughter which swept away theoretical schematisms and entrusted the patient's recovery to the intuition of the astuteness of the „Es“ and to the compliance with its life processes. Fromm also believed that theoretical explanations, especially if complicated, had no therapeutic effect and that the analyst should tell patients, simply and directly, the truths which concerned them (1968b). „Fromm rejected any dogma, ritualized procedure, or a priori theory-based interpretations that deny the uniqueness and complexity of the individual patient and violate the potential for a singularly vital encounter“ (Lesser, 1992).

The atmosphere of the analytic situation, which Ferenczi mentioned with reference to Groddeck and Thompson, was also essential for Fromm.

“The essential factor in psychoanalytic therapy is this enlivening quality of the therapist. No amount of psychoanalytic interpretation will have an effect if the therapeutic atmosphere is heavy, unalive and boring“ (1976, p.296).

Furthermore, it is possible to find a hint of

Groddeck's idea of reawakening the unconscious healing forces in a patient (1923) in Fromm's psychotherapeutic principle of mobilizing „emergency energies“ (1968b, 1994), with the important specification, however, that, according to Fromm, „one cannot change without an incredible effort“.

## 5. Conclusion

Groddeck's influence on Fromm was not theoretical. Groddeck did not pass anything really significant on to Fromm in terms of his thought system, and this explains the lack of references. The observation that Groddeck was not a systematic thinker does not seem to be the main point, which is, in my opinion, the fact that both were free, non-conformist thinkers. What can be learnt from a non-conformist thinker **is**, above all, the ability to think independently and openly; to keep faith with oneself while following one's own thought and path; to believe in oneself and in one's potentiality which means self love in the courage of one's convictions. The teaching that comes from both is not that of collecting notions and organizing them in rigid systems, but that of giving rise to concepts out of experience, of never dissociating intellectual activity from the use of other human faculties, and, in psychoanalysis, of not separating thought from feeling, affection and emotion. Both learnt from their love of living things and arrived at their psychoanalytic theories through their clinical practice. Groddeck arrived at psychoanalysis through his original work with his patients; Fromm was able to write:

„For over thirty-five years I have been a practising psychoanalyst. I have examined minutely the behaviour, the free associations, and the dreams of the people whom I have psychoanalysed. There is not a single theoretical conclusion about man's psyche (...) which is not based on an critical observation of human behaviour carried out in the course of this psychoanalytic work“ (1962, p. 43) (underlining mine).

Above all, what Fromm seems to have received from Groddeck is spiritual nourishment, teaching based on example. Groddeck's laughter was very serious: a school of paradox. The few



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words that Fromm wrote about him are words of affection, admiration and gratitude.

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