THE QUALITIES OF THE ANALYST

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This paper on the qualities of the analyst is the result of long and intense study and exchange of ideas among the candidates at the Association for Intepersonal Psychoanalysis and Group Analysis (SPIGA). We have had to come to terms with the fact that within SPIGA we are individuals with different backgrounds and professional experiences. We feel these differences affect our approach and are important to the sense of our work and identities. The difficulties we have encountered in writing this paper as a group are not so much the result of the need to respect each person’s individuality as much as the effort to synthesize this variety. We wish to put elements that have been actually experienced into forms that can be communicated without losing their authenticity.

The experience of putting this paper together has made it possible for us to compare psychological and professional transformations that normally come with knowledge, without falling into an exasperated subjectivity that could culminate in therapeutic omnipotence. On the other hand, we also want to avoid covering emotional deficiencies with arid technicism.

We asked ourselves what made it possible for people who are apparently so different to seek professional training within the same school; this is even more striking if one considers that some of us may already have had a clear, albeit not explicit, model or professional style. Perhaps it was not a single cause that determined this choice; it is possible that more than one related reason may be at play. For some of us it may have been meeting the teachers of the school and its founder, Professor Morrone. For others it was the encounter with Karen Horney's writings. Others may have preferred the way the school is conducted with openness to interdisciplinary encounters and cultural exchange. Finally, and not least important, is a common agreement with Horney's approach to female psychology, more timely than ever within the epistemological debate on gender identity. It is in fact regarding the question of unifying principles of different disciplines in the epistemology of scientific research where Karen Horney's theory...
takes on a special meaning. Her views and her approach to psychotherapeutic theory and practice are within the modern paradigm.

The holistic conception of man is one in which the intrapsychic and interpersonal domains interact both in the formation of symptoms and in the resolution of pathological conflicts. This conceptualization is a point of reference for anyone seeking a clinical and interpretative approach that has as its main interest the patient's potential for personal growth as well as the development of a real self. This contrasts with attempts to seek confirmation of the principles of a structured theory in the suffering of the patient, a road much traveled by prior psychoanalysts. The real self, the guiding principle in Horney, is “that central inner force, common to all human beings and yet unique in each which is the deep source of growth” (Horney, 1950, p. 17).

Horney’s theoretical model is not seen as exclusive or exhaustive, or as the only legitimate instrument of cure. The analytic relationship is proposed as only one of the possibilities open to the individual in order to effect change.

We think that in order for the analyst to intervene incisively, he must take into account the contributions made in the understanding of the human mind from other parts of the scientific world. Edgard Morin says,

In reality the desire for complexity tends toward multi-dimensional understanding. It is not in any case that of giving all the possible information on the phenomenon under study but to respect its different dimensions; thus we must not forget that man is a biological, social and cultural being and that social phenomena are at the same time economic, cultural, psychological, etc. Complex thought, while aspiring to multi-dimensionality, carries in its heart a principle of incompleteness and uncertainty. In fact, it can be formulated only from the point at which it breaks radically from the idea of perfect knowledge. On the other hand, the problem of complexity does not come arbitrarily or through a quirk of a twisted mind; it is posed by the inevitable developments of modern scientific knowledge. (Morin, 1984, p. 20, my translation)

Horney’s theory is open to this approach in that it proposes the re-elaboration of inner objects and events, their signifiers and signifieds, by evaluating both the functions and the consequences of neurotic tendencies in order that a therapeutic project that produces change and allows growth can be possible.

Karen Horney’s contribution further enriches the view of man and puts faith in his intrinsic forces, which allow him to realize his potentials. This view brings with it a different conception of therapeutic dynamics: “... new ways in theory necessarily condition new ways in therapy” (Horney, 1939, p. 276).

The analyst who moves within this holistic theory encounters the possi-