

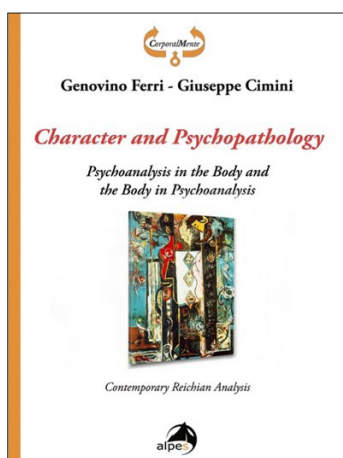
BOOK REVIEW

Character and Psychopathology

Psychoanalysis in the Body and the Body in Psychoanalysis

by **Genovino Ferri**

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Character and Psychopathology
*Psychoanalysis in the Body and
the Body in Psychoanalysis*

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From the development of the **evolutive arrow of time**¹ and the model of Contemporary Reichian Analysis, the second edition of *Psychopathology and Character* was born, with the inverted title *Character and Psychopathology: Psychoanalysis in the Body and the Body in Psychoanalysis*.

This book carefully examines bottom-up and top-down approaches to psychopathology by taking the body's availability into consideration. The title inversion points to a revolution in how psychopathology, which previously was seen from a top-down perspective, is conceived. But if we follow a bottom-up direction in analysis, a **negentropic**², evolutive, and three-dimensional view allows us to comprehend a person's character

1. The evolutive arrow of time is a concept in Contemporary Reichian Analysis that describes the total time of a person's existence from conception onward. It considers biological and biographical depth from both phylogenetic and ontogenetic perspectives.
2. Negentropy refers to a negative variation of entropy, which always moves towards greater orders of organization and developmental stratification from their original value. In Contemporary Reichian Analysis, entropy and negentropy can be represented by two opposite directions on the arrow of time, one moving towards entropic zero and the other moving towards an increase in negentropy – for example, from the birth of an individual, the origin of life, or the beginning of a relationship.

and psychopathology. When the limits of the **character trait**³ and the limits of the passages between **evolutionary phases**⁴ are overrun, the result is psychopathology. Specific psychopathologies are rooted in a person's biological and biographical history.

With the inclusion of corporeity, a complex systemic reading emerges when observing life and its systems. For example, in a 1999 scientific debate in Valencia, Ferri argued that psychosis was at the sixth **bodily level**⁵ (abdomen), that of intrauterine life, but reflected on the first level (the eyes, ears, and nose) in the pre-frontal area through psychotic decompensation. This discovery blazed the trail toward a bottom-up direction of the evolution of living systems, allowing the analyst to observe and consider the biological processes of life's development from a different perspective.

Ferri states, "It is impossible to understand psychosis without considering the low primary relational reciprocity during the intrauterine time marked in the abdominal area, at the 6th level. That is the same area where the nuclei of the base of the **encephalon**⁶ are connected, which is the ground over which the consciousness of the ego can collapse" (Ferri, 2014).

Several adaptive recombinations stratify from the body's intelligence through the phylogenetic period, which then recapitulates in the ontogenetic period until it reaches the consciousness of the self. The body already exists before the mind is shaped; therefore, life emerges, at first, in a negentropic developmental movement from conception on.

By introducing the phylo- and ontogenetic arrow of time and the time factor, Ferri was able to observe life from the bottom-up evolutive direction. Through this observation, we have three-dimensional vision to read the psychopathology, the unconscious, and the depth of the relational history of a person's entire life from the intrauterine period to the here and now.

The body is a fundamental compass that helps us avoid getting lost amidst the complexity of life. It has a precise code to allow us to build our personality. Ontogenesis is read and sorted out in terms of character traits. **Object relationships**⁷ imprint these incised marks along the arrow of time, bringing the relational patterns.

The phylo-ontogenetic and evolutive arrow of time identifies the ontogenetic evolutive phases of building our personality, which has seven floors – seven bodily relational levels. These are the peripheral afferents that carry information to our central nervous system. We regard our personality as an entire building, where we dwell in several apartments. These apartments can prove to be functional or dysfunctional. It is essential to see how we reside, and how we move. Informative are the relational incised signs imprinted

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3. Within each developmental stage, an imbricated set of behavioral patterns and modules are deposited that have been established by the relationships with specific partial objects. These result from each of our own life stories in particular stages, and they define the trait patterns of our character.
 4. A developmental stage is the period of ontogenetic evolution in which the Self receives imprints from relationships with the partial objects of that time. The interval bounded by two transitions is biologically marked on the evolutive arrow of time.
 5. The relational bodily level is the somatic location associated with the time of that specific stage in which the imprints are recorded, and where the peripheral and implicit memories of that particular character trait are deposited.
 6. The encephalon is the result of recapitulating phylogenetic evolution within the ontogenetic process. It is the central interface where the imprints from each stage's partial object relationships arrive, penetrate from the periphery, and are deposited.
 7. Object Relations define the how of a subject's relationship with their world, which is the complex result of their specific personality's organization. In Reichian Analysis, the object, which may be partial or whole, is real. It is present in the biological-biographical person's history, and has marked a prototypical how of trait on the bodily level. It should be interpreted as an interrelationship and as reciprocity (excluding-including, persecutory-welcoming).

on the body (where), the evolutive phase of their occurrence (when), and the relational language of character traits (how). Thus, we can see more precisely and appropriately the psychopathology or symptom being updated.

As we view psychopathology through this new paradigm, we understand its roots in the body. And the brain also belongs to the body.

Ferri confirms the pivotal importance of the **therapeutic setting**⁸ by introducing the analysis of the character of the relationship. From this point of view, it is possible to reach aspects of pre-subjectivity and subjectivity that exist in the here and now of the analysand-analyst dyad. Therefore, it is possible to gather the intelligent meaning of the psycho-bodily narrative, and the implicit and explicit memory of their analytical, clinical, bodily, and relational history. Such a new paradigm allows us to reach pre-subjective aspects of the inter-corporeity between the analyst and the analysand in the therapeutic setting. Thus, we come to the language of the traits. According to Ferri, traits share a deep dialogue among themselves, exchanging implicit developmental requests that have been experienced throughout a person's life story. In other words, an implicit trait request will elicit an implicit request trait response from the other person's history.

Contemporary Reichian Analysis differentiates through its complex, systemic reading and its three languages: verbal, bodily, and trait (which includes both verbal and bodily). The cultural and historical evolution of Contemporary Reichian Analysis begins at the **fractal**⁹ of the analysis of character, where Reich began to look at the system, not only the symptom. Ferri has put together vegetotherapy of state from Reich, and vegetotherapy of the relational bodily levels systematized by Navarro and Raknes, and created vegetotherapy of the stages, traits, and relational bodily levels.

The language of traits reveals dialogues of the unconscious. It has pre-subjective and subjective aspects, and reaches the second brain directly, as well as the limbic sub-system. It revolutionizes psychotherapy in the therapeutic setting, as it includes the body and relational style of both the analyst and the analysand in the analysis.

Character is the imprinted sign of relationships along the evolutive arrow of time. How we pass on information, communicate, and direct the progress of a relationship has to do with the combination of our character traits with our relational style.

This model reads the body in psychoanalysis, and represents psychoanalysis in the body; it brings biology to psychoanalysis, and collaborates with neuroscience in a bodily-psychoanalytical language.

The importance given to reviewing psychopathology and the unconscious via clinical symptoms and the analytic history, together with the bodily code and the pivotal role of the therapeutic setting, represent a significant contribution to neuroscience. This review shows the author's search for "better-fitting" psychotherapy and psychopathology, which allow a greater understanding of the implications of the counter-transference of traits and therapeutic bodily activations.

8. The therapeutic setting allows for the relationship between the analyst and the analyzed. The relationship itself is a third presence – a responsive, third living force. It will create triangulation that can be expressed, and will expand the dialogue to a triad.

9. In complexity theory, a fractal is a form characterized by patterns that repeat themselves in different sizes. Besides being patterns, they are also functions that can be repeated, and are always similar to themselves on every scale. This continuum is possible because of the fractal, which we consider an "elevator of internal evolutive time."

Therefore, from this point of view, psychopathology becomes more understandable, human, and intelligent. The inclusion of body, feeling, and relationship support the differential diagnosis of “when,” “how,” and “where” of the psychopathology. We can see the imprinted signs from a person’s biological and biographic history, and their corresponding relational and bodily levels.

We consider this book fundamental for a better understanding of psychopathology and the unconscious, and their reflection on the rapid and intense changes imposed on us by the contemporary world. The book has been updated so that readers can better understand it. Still, it has preserved its original structure, and the coherent, continuous study of psychopathology along the arrow of time.

When we add this complex systemic character-analytic model to psychotherapy, psychiatry, and psychopharmacotherapy, we have enhanced clarity, precision, and greater personalization of psychopathology. Therefore, we can make better differential diagnoses to help prevent and treat mental health questions.



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