

Erich Fromm – a Therapeutic Vision Well Ahead of its Time. Erich Fromm’s Contribution to Experiential Psychotherapy

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Abstract

Introduction: *Erich Fromm (1900-1980) was a German psychoanalyst, his work focused on several areas of human knowledge: social psychology, Psychoanalysis, sociology, humanist philosophy, ethics etc. Fromm used the “here and now” presence from Zen Buddhism, the importance of being “centrally related” to the client in his psychoanalytical practice. Experiential psychotherapy adapts to the client, trying through any creative method to help them overcome difficulties, discover themselves and restructure those parts that bring pain.*

Objectives: *1. To name Fromm’s contribution to psychology and psychotherapy, his theories and private practice. 2. To identify the connection between Erich Fromm’s theories and modern Experiential psychotherapy. This paper is focused on the different ways Fromm’s work as a psychoanalyst and philosophical thinker can help therapists include the social and ethical dimensions of his theories in to their practice.*

Methods: *Analyzing Erich Fromm’s theoretical work and private psychoanalytical practice. Fromm’s vision of man, as psychoanalyst, is full of healing goodwill, using ethics and theoretical morals as a guiding thread of practice. In his works he seems to want to unite theory with practice, so that there is no distinction between the theoretical ideal and the practical living of the individual and humanity.*

Results: *Using Erich Fromm’s perspective in the practice of Experiential psychotherapy. The dual, alienated mind-body perspective of Descartes, and others like him, is different from Erich Fromm’s vision, which is more integrated, holistic, as one could say. And this vision is important in the Experiential Psychotherapy of Unification, the PEU method, focusing on the unification of perceived and often conflicting polarities.*

Conclusions: *Is Erich Fromm relevant in contemporary psychotherapeutic practice? In psychotherapy it is not enough to have knowledge on psychology, psychiatry, medicine, anatomy, anthropology, sociology; we also need vast knowledge of ethics and philosophy to be able to fully comprehend the human nature and find proper healing methods. The humanism of Fromm’s psychology is given by ethics; these values lead to the realization of the whole human potential and to humanism. For him it is important for a mental health professional to study and understand that psychology also deals with ethical issues.*

Keywords: *humanism, ethics, philosophy, Zen Buddhism, Psychoanalysis*

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Motto:

“Homo sum; humani nil a me alienum puto”

(Terence)

I. Introduction

Who is Erich Fromm?

Erich Fromm (March 23, 1900 – March 18, 1980) was born in Germany, into a Jewish family. He managed to escape the atrocities of the Nazi period by migrating to the United States. With an impressive number of published books, articles etc., his work focused on several areas of human knowledge: social psychology, Psychoanalysis, sociology, humanist philosophy, and ethics. He was the founder of the William Alason White Institute of Psychoanalysis, New York and is known to be part of the Frankfurt School together with Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas, to name just a few of those who were part of this current of social theory and philosophical criticism. For psychologists, these names associated with philosophy may be less known, but they have relevance in the philosophical thought development of the last period.

Erich Fromm studied sociology with Alfred Weber, the brother of renowned sociologist Max Weber, but also with psychoanalyst and philosopher Karl Jaspers. After completing his studies he began his training in Psychoanalysis, initially with Frieda Reichmann, who later became his wife.

E. Fromm is often classified as being part of the Neo-Freudian School of Psychoanalysis, along with Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan.

These aspects of Erich Fromm's biography are important, because each of these people influenced his work, and in turn, through his training in sociology, philosophy, anthropology and Psychoanalysis, he contributed to humanistic psychology. Erich Fromm is associated with Existential Humanist psychology precisely from the perspective of his work that focused on humanist ethics.

Fromm did not publish any psychoanalytical case studies, although he was a psychoanalyst and supervisor. He did not write about his cases and he never provided analysis material from his own dreams, as it was usual at that time.

Everything we know about Erich Fromm as a practitioner psychoanalyst and supervisor comes from the work of Reiner Funk, a psychoanalyst, writer and intellectual property rights holder of Erich Fromm's work.

At the beginning of his career, Erich Fromm wrote and published in German; later he began to write in English, most of his works being published in English. Some of them were also translated into Romanian.

As examples, among others, there can be mentioned: *Escape from Freedom* (1941), *The Heart of Man, its genius for good and evil* (1964), *Man for Himself, an inquiry into the psychology of ethics* (1947), *The Art of Loving* (1956), *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973), *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (1960), *To Have or to Be?* (1976), *The Art of Being* (published in 1993 by Reiner Funk, this was supposed to be a chapter in another book), *The Forgotten Language; an introduction to the understanding of dreams, fairy tales, and myths* (1951). However, there are other extremely important titles such as *The Sane Society* (1955), *Social character in a Mexican village; a socio-psychoanalytic study* (Fromm & Maccoby) (1970), *The Dogma of Christ and Other Essays on Religion, Psychology and Culture* (1963), *Beyond the Chains of Illusion: my encounter with Marx and Freud* (1962), *The Revolution of Hope, toward a humanized technology* (1968) etc.

Throughout his life and regardless of whether he lived in the USA, Mexico or Switzerland, Erich Fromm kept an active private practice in Psychoanalysis, alongside the academic one. His interest in the human being, in what humanism and human nature means, encompassed sociological, psychological, psychoanalytic, anthropological, philosophical, biological, ethical levels, etc. because each of these human sciences offers more depth and understanding, and without a broader approach, without putting man in his socio-cultural-economic context, we deprive him of his humanity itself.

What is Experiential psychotherapy?

The very name of this therapy gives us an insight into what it is about. At its core lies experience, in particular the “here and now” experience, and in Experiential psychotherapy the “here and now” experience involves action, movement, activity, as opposed to traditional speech-based psychotherapy. Experiential psychotherapy encompasses several psychotherapies, that it has transformed into methods and techniques, to encourage clients to identify and address hidden or subconscious problems, through activities such as role playing and guided imagery. The psychotherapist, together with the client analyzes and restructures, unlocks and activates resources, helping

the client regain their sense and value, heal traumas, integrate experiences.

Experiential psychotherapy adapts to the client, trying, by means of any creative method, to help them overcome difficulties, discover themselves and restructure those parts that bring pain. One of the many benefits of Experiential psychotherapy is that the experiences and activities that make up the core of the process provide opportunities for the therapist to observe clients in situations when they are not focused on therapy itself.

The best description on Experiential psychotherapy is given by Iolanda Mitrofan (1999, p. 15): “The experiential psychotherapist puts in the foreground of his concerns the experience of emotion and the expression of present experience. His basic principle is the «here and now» experience which allows him to raise awareness of his own perceptions, emotions, thoughts and experiences. By acquiring self-consciousness, that person will be able to attune with the meanings of his or her internal and external world and to perfect themselves through self-structuring.”

What is Erich Fromm’s contribution to Humanist Existential psychology?

“As for Erich Fromm’s contribution to humanistic psychology, it is difficult to reduce it to a few sentences, because his vision on man goes beyond the psychoanalytic frame of thought and psychology, but as in our times Psychoanalysis can be placed under the umbrella of philosophy, Erich Fromm’s approach transcends sociology, psychology, Psychoanalysis and ethics towards a philosophy that encompasses them all, towards a unitary philosophical understanding of man.” (Enescu, 2019). We will try to summarize some general ideas:

1. At first glance, his most important and known contribution may be the theory of *social character*, a theory developed following an anthropological study conducted in Mexico (Fromm & Maccoby, 1970). The social character is a “structure-response to the environment and, in the case of man, the environment is represented by the economic-socio-cultural construct” (Enescu, 2019). And in his work “The greatness and Limitations of Erich Fromm’s Humanism”, Mauricio Cortina (2015) wrote: “Fromm (1947) pointed out that the family and social institutions act as «psychic agents of society» (p. 68), who inculcate shared social norms and beliefs beginning early in

childhood. Shared values and beliefs become internalized as emotionally based character traits that operate automatically, so that people will «want to do what they have to do», in order to adapt to society (Fromm & Maccoby, 1970, p. 18). Once created, social character functions as some social glue that helps group members identify with each other and bond together. Social character differences are fundamentally the result of adaptations to different modes of economic production, how people actually make a living under different socioeconomic conditions”.

2. Overcoming the orthodox psychoanalytic framework through criticism of some of Freud’s theories: libido, Oedipus complex, life and death instinct.

a) Regarding the libido, the character of the child is formed, not by the libidinal force, but as a response to the interpersonal atmosphere as a whole, from his family context, that is, in relation to the character of his parents or other primary caregivers. Meeting the biological needs of a child is a simple technicality, what matters is the attitude of the caregivers towards the child, which the child interprets as a reality of life and which teaches him to react in the future based on these answers¹.

b) Oedipus complex in Freud’s vision, in short, is based on sexual attraction towards the maternal figure, but in Erich Fromm’s view, this attachment is not of a sexual nature, but is much deeper in nature, implying attachment, unconditional love, containing protection, an area of deep safety, which every human needs.

c) Freud’s vision for the conscious is based on the conflict between two extreme forces, Eros and Thanatos, but for Erich Fromm this view has limitations. The human being is not just biology; rather, unlike animals that still have an instinct that helps them survive, following his social evolution man has lost this instinct and thus appeared the character.

3. Erich Fromm develops certain classifications (biophilia – necrophilia, productive – non-productive, freedom and alienation, analysis of human destructiveness, to have and/ or to be as a way of life, etc.) and definitions of psychological structures, but they seem to be an addition or a change of perspective, which does not mean the opposite, but only a different perspective of the psychological theories of the time.

4. The art of being and Love. In his works Fromm tries to find practical solutions for the mental health of the individual, the mental health of the society

¹ Erich Fromm audio interview recorded in 1962, “Man is not a thing: childhood” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ir9Wp-Pqf2Y>)

as a whole, for the good of man and of humanity. The book entitled “The Art of Being”, as we said, was initially meant to be a chapter from another book, but Erich Fromm gave up this chapter to give the individual the opportunity to develop in a real and authentic way, not through the “happiness in 10 easy steps” type of recipe. For Fromm, the essence of individual and social health and well-being is love; love in all its forms: parental, brotherly, romantic, etc. is the way in which man can transcend his condition and create a healthy society.

5. And of course many others: the importance of society and relationships in the formation and development of the individual, his studies and researches on human destructivity, ethics and moral psychology, the introduction of Zen Buddhism into psychotherapeutic practice and theory, etc.

II. Objective: Connecting Erich Fromm’s theories with modern Experiential psychotherapy

Erich Fromm’s favorite quote was Terence’s “Homo sum; humani nil a me alienum puto”, meaning: “I am human; I consider nothing human is alien to me”. This guided his whole vision on human nature, in theory and practice. The fact that we are humans makes us carry the whole humanity within ourselves, with the whole spectrum of emotions, feelings, making us anything from saint to criminal for example. When we carry within ourselves the whole humanity, we have the ability to understand and empathize with the others. For Fromm, unlike Freud, what matters is how we relate to life, not the libido organization. “In the process of living, man relates himself to the world (1) by acquiring and assimilating things, and (2) by relating himself to people (and himself). The former I shall call the process of assimilation; the latter, that of socialization” (Fromm, 2015b, p. 73).

The structure of the psychic in Fromm’s work is profoundly humanistic, at the same time descriptive and analytical, with many extensions in ethics. For example, from a psychological point of view he states:

“By personality I understand the totality of inherited and acquired psychic qualities which are characteristic of one individual and which make the individual unique. The difference between inherited and acquired qualities is, on the whole, synonymous with the difference between temperament, gifts, and all constitutionally given psychic qualities, on the one hand,

and character on the other. While differences in temperament have no ethical significance, differences in character constitute the real problem of ethics; they are expressive of the degree to which an individual has succeeded in the art of living” (op. cit., 2015b, p. 64).

When it comes to character, he identifies two types of orientations: the productive and non-productive type and the description of these types contains many qualities and moral defects. Obviously, in our paper we will analyze the guidelines proposed by Fromm that have become classics in moral psychology. This is how Fromm analyzes the two productive and non-productive orientations²:

The non-productive orientation has the following forms:

(a) The receptive orientation – the person is available only to receive anything, either material or emotional from the outside, from a source external to them. This type is similar to Freud’s oral incorporative type and similar to K. Horney’s submissive personality type, now called addictive personality (Dumitrache, 2013).

(b) The Exploitative Orientation – the person is also directed outwards, but in an aggressive, violent way, they take what they want from others through power, force or deceit, the value being given by the fact that it belongs to another and could be taken by force, cunning, deception. There are similarities with Freud’s aggressive oral type and Horney’s aggressive type, now being framed in antisocial personality disorder.

(c) The Hoarding Orientation – most important for this type of person is the amount they can accumulate or save, this behavior being found in all aspects of material or emotional life. The attitude is: “Mine is mine and yours is yours”. In this case, we can make a parallel with Freud’s anal-retentive type and Horney’s detached type, and in DSM5 we find similarities with obsessive-compulsive personality disorder.

(d) The Marketing Orientation – “developed as a dominant one only in the modern era” (Fromm, 2015b, p. 85); being a culture based on the market economy, people measure their success or failure according to their own abilities to “sell”, man becomes a good, superficial qualities being valued. This type of personality is extremely visible in our times, in a world of social media, Facebook and selfies. In DSM5 narcissistic personality is being defined as a “pervasive pattern of greatness, need for admiration and lack of empathy” (Dumitrache, 2013, p. 155).

² The description of all these types of character are found Erich Fromm’s book “Man for Himself. An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics”, published with Open Road Integrated Media, 2013.

The productive orientation is described as “type of character in whom growth and the development of all his potentialities is the aim which all other activities are subordinated to” (Fromm, 2015b, p. 99). In a way synonymous with creativity, this productive orientation is the ability of the individual to improve and self-create, but also love.

The other classification made by E. Fromm according to love of life or death divides man into two typologies and variations of the two: biophil or necrophil. The productive orientation belongs to the biophilic, life-loving type. For the author, love can be defined by four characteristics: care, responsibility, respect and knowledge, which are found in the productive orientation. The necrophilic type is attracted to death, destructiveness, ruin, misery, etc., setting Hitler as an example for this typology.

All these psychological typologies have a moral relevance to Fromm inasmuch as he radiographs his contemporary society and shows the importance of love, biophilic type and productivity for moral behavior. Most obviously this fact appears in the “Art of Loving” (2016a), in which he broadly addresses the theory of love in its individual aspects: parental, fraternal, erotic, self, but also love of God, and hoping for the possibility of love as social phenomenon. “To have or to be” (2013a) is a criticism of the consumer society and, at the same time, a manifesto for a new socio-economic but also psychological order, analyzing the two ways of existing, through power, possession or love and giving.

The Private practice and also Erich Fromm’s theoretical writings were deeply influenced by Zen Buddhist practice. At present, mindfulness, meditation and other practices inspired by Buddhism are widespread in psychotherapeutic sessions, but during the 1960-1970s (the book “Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis”, by Erich Fromm, Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, Richard de Martino was published in 1960) this practice was not common in psychoanalysts’ activity. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, a master of Zen Buddhism, was the one who introduced Zen Buddhism to Western culture by writing Zen Buddhism books in English. He believed that people can benefit from self-awareness through spirituality and that this form of awareness through Zen has universal values. D. T. Suzuki introduced Zen in the West and Japan in psychology³.

For the authors of “Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis”, “Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis are both theories of human nature and methods of healing”⁴.

Experiential psychotherapy is based on the “here and now” experience and this comes from Zen Buddhism. In Fromm’s vision, there are two forms of living, inspired by Buddhism, TO BE and TO HAVE, described in the book “To Have or to Be?”, which in Fromm’s own words “extends the development of my work in radical-humanistic Psychoanalysis, concentrating on the analysis of selfishness and altruism as two basic character orientations” (Fromm, 2013a, p. 2).

III. Methods: Analyzing Erich Fromm’s theoretical work and private psychoanalytical practice

Erich Fromm’s works are deeply humanistic, with an optimistic vision and constructive criticism. Inspired by the works of Marx or Maslow, he tries to see the therapeutic part, the reparative mode of the whole psychological and philosophical theory. Being a psychoanalyst practitioner, his vision of man is full of healing goodwill, using ethics and theoretical morals as a guiding thread of practice. In his works he seems to want to unite theory with practice, so that there is no distinction between the theoretical ideal and the practical living of the individual and humanity. Therefore, in his works we find recurrent themes analyzed in psychotherapeutic practice and in the existential drama of each human individual: love, life, wealth, power, aggressiveness, and destruction.

Fromm thought it might be surprising for many of his readers “to find a psychoanalyst dealing with problems of ethics and, particularly, adopting the position that psychology must not only debunk false ethical judgments but that it can, beyond that, be the basis for building objective and valid norms of conduct” (Fromm, 2015b, p. 8), and that the purpose is not the adjustment, which puts the man in the context of an “ethical relativism”, but the good. The moral values of the client, the ethical judgments are those that affect the actions and the psychological well-being and in “many instances a neurotic symptom is the specific expression of moral conflict, and the success of the therapeutic effort depends on the understanding and solution of the person’s moral problem” (op. cit., 2015b, p. 9). If Freud made a distinction between the two areas and Jung saw

³ Ayumi Osagawa paper for Erich Fromm Seminar, Tuebingen, Germany, 2019, “The creativity in Fromm’s Psychoanalysis – from the point of view of the interaction with Japanese Zen priest, Daisetsu Suzuki”.

⁴ From “Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis” book description on Editura Trei website. http://www.edituratrei.ro/carte/Richard_de_Martino_Budismul_Zen_%C5%9Fi_psihanaliza/2727/

the way philosophy and psychology intertwine, for Erich Fromm philosophy in psychology is a necessity, they are based on each other and together they provide a complete picture of the human psyche (alongside of the other sciences that study the human being).

We remind that Erich Fromm never wrote and never published a case study, as it happens in Psychoanalysis, as the Freudian tradition demanded; he did not publish his patients' cases, interventions or material from his own dreams. However, all his theoretical works have in fact practical applicability. Reiner Funk was the one who interviewed former patients, former students, in order to showcase with as much fidelity as possible the practical nature of Erich Fromm's work, so as to meet the needs and curiosity of mental health professionals: How was he as a therapist? What kind methods did he use? Did his patients really benefit from "treatment"?

We can see in all his work that Erich Fromm has put the human being in the center, from all perspectives and points of view; his approach is holistic, with a deep respect for everything that is human. He saw the man in humanity and humanity in man.

Following extensive reading of Erich Fromm's work and the statements of those who had the opportunity to work with him, be they students or patients, I personally have great difficulty translating or interpreting into Romanian what was essential for Erich Fromm in therapy: "being centrally related to the patient" (Funk, 2009, p. 7). But these difficulties only arise when translated into Romanian. The relationship with the client, in terms of Experiential psychotherapy also, goes from center to center, not from peripheral to peripheral. The real, authentic and focused way of the psychotherapist is in relation to the client's center. The way presented and supported by Erich Fromm to be in a relationship, even in a psychotherapeutic one, is to have a sense of sharing, of human solidarity, to form an union, without judging or labeling, to see the other with our Center, with the Self (not with Ego) and to have a relation with the Self of the other.

In a period of orthodox Psychoanalysis, when the client was lying on the couch, Fromm decided that in psychotherapy the two participants in the process are equal. Thus, his patients were treated face to face, sitting on a chair, in a position of equality, in a "center to center" relationship. To be in a central connection with the client means to understand the drama of his life in all its aspects, as an individual in the society, as a member of his family, as a partner in a couple, etc. Each of the interviewees remembers the same thing: the

relationship, the connection, the closeness, the humanism. The relationship was not one-sided, but from both directions, Fromm considered that the analyst should be open to change as much as his patient. The change in therapy can come from the therapist to the client and vice versa. Growth and openness happen in both directions, the therapeutic experience has the possibility to change both the partners in the therapeutic approach.

At this point we can easily be tempted to draw parallels between John Bowlby's attachment theory and Erich Fromm's addressing the central relationship to the client. Although Fromm was aware of Bowlby's studies, his theory was published only after his death, in 1980. Basically, Fromm talks about the importance of adult attachment relationships, prior to Bowlby's studies on child harassment (Funk, 2009) and the recent studies of Sue Johnson (2018) on attachment in adult relationships. In psychoanalytic practice, Erich Fromm emphasizes the relationship, his "here and now" experience, the authenticity of the therapist in the relationship, the therapeutic presence, and a deeply humanistic theoretical framework.

IV. Results: Using Erich Fromm's perspective in the practice of Experiential psychotherapy

Fromm's ethical vision puts man at the center, but not in a narcissistic way, as if everything is about himself, good and evil as representing what is good or bad for man, but in a manner integrated with nature and society. The dual, alienated mind-body perspective of Descartes, and others like him, is different from Erich Fromm's vision, which is more integrated, holistic, we could say. And this vision is important in the Experiential Psychotherapy of Unification, the PEU method, focusing on the unification of perceived and often conflicting polarities.

In our specialized practice, as Experiential psychotherapists, we can use from the study of Erich Fromm's work:

1. *His "here and now" experience.* Erich Fromm told a student during the supervision "there is nothing polite about the unconscious" (Funk, 2009, p. 98), that is, during therapy we should not take refuge in social masks and provide the client with politeness and platitudes. The unconscious does not take into account social norms and politeness; therefore we can offer the client the authenticity and kindness of our interventions for his supreme benefit.

2. *Understanding the personal drama of the individual.* Each person experiences a drama, a personal

one, a unique suffering, and any kind of labeling, diagnosis is becoming something blocking that does not help and which dehumanizes the person. Fromm did not believe in diagnosis, a person must be approached in his humanity, not from the perspective of a psychiatric label.

3. *The context of life.* We cannot study human psychology outside the social context of a person and we cannot do psychotherapy with a person if we do not take into account the whole context of their life, the social, economic, cultural, ethnic, religious conditions, etc.

4. *Presence in the relationship.* Orthodox Psychoanalysis was not enough in practice for Fromm either. The moment he realized that there were patients who were boring, that sometimes he was dozing off during the sessions, and that for his supervisors and professionals of the time such a behavior was something normal, it became a problem for him. Thus he realized that presence in the relationship is essential to therapy and that the therapist must maintain his curiosity and interest towards the client.

5. *Authenticity of the psychotherapist in the therapeutic relationship.* The central relatedness to the patient was essential for Erich Fromm, as a form of relationship, connection, relational availability, begun as a derivative of the presence in the relationship.

6. *Theoretical framework and psychotherapeutic practice.* As stated above, Fromm theory and practice are intertwined; in the therapy of his patients he put into practice his whole philosophical vision on man and humanity.

7. *The Philosophy of Erich Fromm.* Erich Fromm's work is available in many languages, so we have access to his philosophy, because for Fromm psychology and Psychoanalysis are intertwined with many other sciences, as well as with ethics and philosophy.

Erich Fromm's vision and implications for therapeutic practice are much deeper and offer us a very wide range of creation. For me, it is the object of an extended and deeper research. This paper offers just a few of the results of my wider study.

V. Conclusion: Is Erich Fromm relevant in contemporary psychotherapeutic practice?

In today's psychotherapeutic practice, each specialist seeks and finds his own style of work, and the tendency is to go beyond the theoretical and practical framework of his psychotherapeutic school and philosophical thinking. Fromm did not want to have followers, nor did he want to create a "Frommian" current, but through his deeply humanistic approach we

have access to an optimistic vision, which puts man and love at its center.

In his works and in his specialized practice Erich Fromm formulated his theories based on the belief in humanity and in ethics, as "applied science to the art of living" (Fromm, 2015b, p. 30). The humanism of Fromm's psychology is given by ethics; these values are what lead to the realization of the whole human potential and to humanism. For him it is important for a mental health professional to study and understand that psychology also deals with ethical issues. Below you can find the entire quote (mentioned briefly above, also) in which Erich Fromm argues his position regarding ethics:

"It may be surprising to many readers to find a psychoanalyst dealing with problems of ethics and, particularly, taking the position that psychology must not only debunk false ethical judgments but can, beyond that, be the basis for building objective and valid norms of conduct. This position is in contrast to the trend prevailing in modern psychology, which emphasizes «adjustment» rather than «goodness» and is on the side of ethical relativism. My experience as a practicing psychoanalyst has confirmed my conviction that problems of ethics cannot be omitted from the study of personality, either theoretically or therapeutically. The value judgments we make determine our actions, and upon their validity rest our mental health and happiness. To consider evaluations only as so many rationalizations of unconscious, irrational desires – although they can be that too – narrows down and distorts our picture of the total personality. Neurosis itself is, in the last analysis, a symptom of moral failure (although «adjustment» is by no means a symptom of moral achievement). In many instances a neurotic symptom is the specific expression of moral conflict, and the success of the therapeutic effort depends on the understanding and solution of the person's moral problem" (op. cit., 2015b, p. 8).

We do not have yet a generally valid theory of man and humanity and no efficient and perfect tool for healing, which is why in psychotherapy is not enough to have knowledge of psychology, psychiatry, medicine, anatomy, anthropology, sociology; we also need vast knowledge of ethics and philosophy. Throughout history, all human problems have already been debated by philosophers, who provided a much richer and more detailed case work studies and analysis than maybe we, Freud's descendants, could ever provide.

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