Three paradoxes theory - Part 2 : Empirical and theoretical research

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There is an ecological urgency, that doesn't leave us much time to react. In the field of human sciences and neurosciences, it has many implications. First of them concerning our work here - that is trying to determine the turning point between animalian and human mind, trusting neurobiologist Francisco Varela's statement that there is no catastrophic gap between the two[1], and specifying its conditions of possibility : what does come as proof when we are talking about the nature of the human mind and its progressive evolution ? How could we possibly probe one starting point of it ? And how to bring out a structural answer to that ?

Pertaining the method, either empirical or theoretical, we should trust the psychoanalytic discipline of self-analysis, to reach the irreducible. This must join two efforts : one leading experimentation to the outside world, another one maintaining the effort of the clarification of one's own personal limitations.

Because we trust neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp's idea that the **Tertiary Affects and Neocortical 'Awareness' Functions** [that include i) Thoughts & Planning, ii) Emotional Ruminations & Regulations, iii) 'Free Will', higher working memory functions and **Intention-to-Act** process] are the last developped and then are dependent on the primary structures of the mind.

Those tertiary affects should be taken as the tipping point of the cerebral activity and then, only an entering point to the reflection. They come after :

1) **Primary-Process, Basic-Primordial Affective States (Sub-Neocortical)**, that include i) Sensory Affects (exteroperceptive-sensory triggered pleasurable and unpleasurable/disgusting feelings) ; ii) Homeostatic Affects (brain-body interoceptors : hunger, thirst, etc.) ; and iii) Emotional Affects (emotion action systems – **Intentions-in-Actions**) ;
2) **Secondary-Process Affective Memories (Learning via Basal Ganglia)**, including i) Classical Conditioning (FEAR via basolateral & central amygdala) ; ii) Instrumental & Operant Conditioning (SEEKING via nucleus accumbens) ; and iii) Behavioural & Emotional Habits (largely unconscious – dorsal striatum).[2]

According to Panksepp, any disruption in one of the two primary levels would have immediate effect on the upper ones, which would collapse. Therefore, in Panksepp's words : 'it is worth emphasizing that although the basic mechanisms of learning may be deeply unconscious, shifting affective feelings (i.e. Generating reinforcement effects) on which much of behavioural learning is based are not.'[3]

Which means, if we follow psychoanalyst Daniel Stern's view on *intersubjective consciousness*, that there is a mental mapping of the social environment that is structured throughout the most minimal and unspoken interactions between the individuals. Then, the unconscious is part of the mind as incarnate, as fledged from the body's own sensorimotor and

1 Making – like neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp - Darwin's dictum that the differences in the mental lives of animals 'is one of degree and not of kind' (Darwin, 1872/1988, p. 127) his own.

2 *In* Jaak Panksepp, Stephen Asma, Glennon Curran, Rami Gabriel & Thomas Greif, *The Philosophical Implications of Affective Neuroscience*, « A Synopsis of Affective Neuroscience – Naturalizing the Mammalian Mind », *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 2012, p. 7.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

physiological being, on every level of its activity and experience.

To quote Jaak Panksepp again : 'all mammals *experience* their emotions although most, just like newborn human infants, probably do not reflect on these *anoetic* experiences.' In our point of view, it parallels what we are looking for, that is the shifting point between "strict" animalian behavior and human structuration of the mind through language. For that, we should investigate the limit-point of language as well as its equivalent in embodied structure – as incarnate into sound.

There is a 'developmental landscape' we are looking for that constitutes a convergent point between a certain evolutional feature – the presence of the hand in my vision - and a particularity inside the structure of language – the word *me*.

As put forward by Panksepp, 'animals turn (…) emotion-evoking brain stimulations on and off, depending on their affective valence', which means that 'whenever normal animals exhibit instinctual emotional behaviours, they probably have corresponding affective experiences'.[4] In the contrary, human behavioural's learning, via basic experiential-epigenetic mouldings, is leading to the sensitization and desensitization of particular systems. The latter happens in a social context where consciousness is intersubjective and based on social and moral - though often unconscious – rules. These rules tend to contradict and control spontaneous impulses.

In this view, psychoanalysis' work would be to disentangle how this *implicit relational knowing* - which means this form of 'procedural knowledge regarding how to do things with intimate others'[5] - takes place and gets us trapped into issues often impossible to express through language. Neither can it be fully share through the formalisation of pathological patterned behaviors as well as the attempt to signify the problem to others and to oneself *perceived as somebody else*.

It relates to what psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott described as the non-communicable part of the self[6]. There can be a good enough balance between this inner and hidden part of the *true self*, that is the sensory and emotional experience that often escapes language's determination, and what is communicated to others through a rule and/or language-based behavior that might be partly pathological. That leads, when the infant subject has to adapt themselves to a mother or substitute that is not *good enough*, not empathetic enough, to the artificial creation of a *false self*.

The theory of the three paradoxes entitles the paradox of the *gazed hand* with the quality of being *not good enough*. To stare at one's own hand open fixedly is a perverse-orientated behavior. And our aim here is to specify this point in the learning of being human that is archetypical enough to connect to another paradoxal situation that we find in the structure of language. That is the paradox of the word *me* and the incapacity it has to *really* reach its object or more precisely, the incapacity to lead the subject into reaching the *me* reality through and thanks to language.

All impossibilities found in these two paradoxes are violent : the incapacity of the hand to reach itself - or to lead itself as far as to grant the intention and neural impulse with a success in achieving the paradox - though it is the first use of the hand to reach and seize ; and the incapacity of the word *me* to represent a coherent image of what it aims at.

The point where morals' learning meets the violence and frustration, due to the restriction of an unachievable aggression, is the point where we might grasp a glimpse of what is so specific in the human mind's structure. It pushes forward the inner call for fantasy to be the mental relay of the impossible action, so to be the birth of a seek for an escape, a way out of this absolute dead end.

I can learn to use my hands knowing that I could never beg them for help to resolve the impulse to an endless seeking. I have to learn to redo things, to recycle energy, to manage entropy, to build brick by brick and step by step, word by word, idea by idea, thought by thought and emotion to emotions that are hardly cohabitating easily.

In the ontogenic process of the development of the human being, it takes place notably in the

4 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

5 *In* Karlen Lyons-Ruth & the Process of Change Study Group of Boston, Massachusetts, « Implicit Relational Knowing : its rôle in development and psychoanalytic treatment », *Infant Mental Health Journal*, Vol. 19(3), 1998, p. 282.

6 In the continuation of his work on *The Capacity to Be Alone*, 1958/1964.

early infant's personal learning of *how to behave in an environment of objects* and of *which ones I am allowed to break*. In the phylogenic development of the human species, it locates in the doubling of the basic consciousness in the creation of *another self*. Both are related to a certain way to deal with the violent impossibility of being *at the same time* the me that sees and the *me* that is seen.

Because when I say 'me', I am already somebody else.

One other indicator we lean on is neurobiologist Gerald M. Edelman's statement that in order to 'be conscious to be conscious', the brain's neural network should have developed the capacity to delay or lag neural responses.[7] This postulate connects to that Panksepp's proposal that 'the neocortex [where are located the Tertiary-process cognitions] was not modularized by evolution but rather becomes specialized for diverse cognitive activities through developmental landscapes.'[8]

Then, as we may reasonably consider that an evolutional feature won't appear from nowhere and for no reason, we would have to look for a concrete biological situation that might be able to push the *anoetic* consciousness to delay the neural responses and double its developmental landscape.

What we are looking for, we find it in the paradox of *staring at my own hand*, which is artificial and therefore valid as a limit-point. It is artificial because one cannot sustain the effort of being at the limit between the impulse to do the thing – to seize the hand – and the impossibility to do it. The effort will be necessarily released at one moment.

It is then a paradox that blocks what Panksepp called the first of the seven primary-process emotional networks (concentrated in subcortical regions of the brain), that is 'the intrinsic enthusiasm of the SEEKING system', that in fact drives every other impulse – amongst RAGE, FEAR, LUST, CARE, GRIEF and PLAY.

As well, being part of an *implicit relational knowing*, because it is impossible to communicate by words, this paradox should have been forming a force of channelling to the mind, that would '[continue] to operate implicitly throughout life'.[9] The capacity to concentrate on technics, that is not dependent on what I can do but on what I in fact *cannot do yet*, requieres a doubled mind. Because one has to learn first that the impossible belongs to them. The impossible *is* them.

Then, this paradox will continue to operate but silently, through the learning of a controlled attention on my movements, what their consequences are, what they provoke amongst my siblings, what I can provoke through them.

The wonder continues to affect my perception and my experience of my social world 'outside attention and conscious experience, without benefit of translation into language'. And it happens so because violence necessarily does. Violence is a concentration of the energy that appears impossible to express without harming anyone. Violence is necessarily repressed or then leading to odious acts if it can't be turned to create a common good instead.

That's why violence and morals are deeply connected and intricated, because the morals is an ambiguous creative act that leads to myth : to the long path one takes to build themselves a way of living that can be good in spite of what the moral order forbids them to do. It can imply to create art. It can imply to try to exist in any way that is both not told to be and yet not forbidden at the moment.

To remain still and quiet, fitting oneself into a patterned behavior that is rule-based and procedural, is something alien to other animalian kinds the way it emerged in our species. In fact here, the presence of others is systematically anticipated and calculated, adaptated to. This is deeply connected to the way the hand is seen in the vision. It can't only be a question of how we learn to be social, to interact with our siblings, but a question of how we integrate them in our perception of

7 *In* Gerlad M. Edelman, *The Remembered Present : A Biological Theory of Consciousness*, 1989.
8 *In* Jaak Panksepp, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
9 *In* Karlen Lyons-Ruth & the Process of Change Study Group of Boston, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

who and what we are, of the *I* that is complex, still ambiguous and impossible to achieve permanently.

The action of seizure we mean here is both representing the seizure of objects by the hand and the hand itself mentally seized by the conscious accompagnying every move it can make.

Also important, the hand I see is an object like any other object in the world of my vision. As well as with them, I interact with my hand and then, I'm part of an ongoing mutually constructed regulation with it, which interactive field becomes more complex and well-articulated with the development of technics.

This way, if we continue to borrow from the *implicit relational knowing*, there is a 'moment of meeting' (term formalised by psychologist Edward Tronick, 1989), which is paradoxal because it blurs the distinction as to my hand being or not a part of me.[10]

If I choose to consider that this hand can imaginarily not be mine but something *I* play with, I make a distinction between this *I* and the self. The *I* in play is not the self behind. Because I expect my hand to follow a certain pattern and not otherwise to begin with. Then, to use the *implicit relational knowing*'s terms, 'expectations regarding each partner's moves in (…) game are established, the stage is set for both partners to 'play with' that form by violating established expectations. This mutual sense of the emerging possibility of new forms of interaction occurring between the two participants creates hightened affect.'[11]

Of course here, being playing with the sense of my own hand, which I control in fact, I know *exactly* what the other one is 'thinking'. But as I know my hand won't move if I don't tell it to – knowing that it will only if *I* do -, I reflect on the capacity of telling something that does nothing, that is inert, to *do*. The attention given on my hand is a *waiting* : it won't happen anything except for my deciding so. And it is paradoxal because my attention on the thing is waiting for it to *do something*, as if it would actually do something independent from my intentions. Except that it doesn't, because *it* also *is* waiting for me – and I am waiting for it – and that is the paradox.

But in that paradox and in its confusion of who is whom and which is which, occurs a delay. A sensorimotor and neural delay. The gap of thinking. The blank space to be written within. The room suddenly made for the self to come into interaction with the *I* that is a social construction. New initiatives can be made, because it is only permanently waiting for me and never satisfied – in fact waiting for *I* to decide what to do with this delayed action – this potentiated action. And the energy concentrated in this waiting can turn violent, because it is undecided – *knowing* that it *has* to decide – and thus endangering my being safe in decision and realisation.

The quality of the personal decision is something *had*, something seized – not the hand seizing objects in the world – but the mind seizing the decision that through the hand will seize the objects in the world.

The chain of the signifier has been created, as well as the objects of the world *as objects* that are not me. Distinction that has been made between my hand and *I*.

Movement of the hand, of one's own hand in their vision, is the following step to receiving the hand and the self as something that I can't tame and exhaust, that I can't annihilate nor destruct without destructing a part of me, and therefore that I will have to deal with it and cooperate.

The sensorimotor interaction between the individual and their environment implies that every move made and sensed in a continuous flow is being cognitively intergrated to their experience and neural network. So, this is the case for all mammals. But what makes humans' case different is that they have to deal with hands that are like another person, detached enough from the body to appear *like something else*. This is possible because they became biped and because the

10 See also examples provided by psychoanalyst Darian Leader of some psychological pathologies, in his beautiful book *Hands*, 2016.

11 *In* K. Lyons-Ruth et al., *op. cit.*, p. 286.

hands have been progressively separated from the motor functions.

Then, there must have been a sensation of wavering, because the whole balance of the body has been changed. Paleontologist Yves Coppens uses to state in his conferences that the pelvis became structurally important as a support of the weight of the top of the body. Verticality needs a balance or it's dizzy.

To cope the dizziness, catch your own breath.