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Editorial

We are celebrating three years of publication of the electronic journal Psychological Opinions and welcome you to our new, enriched, and bilingual site. We would like to thank from our heart those of you who entrusted us with your articles, but also those who chose us as their source of information.

This celebration, marked by the sixth issue of the magazine, also launches the bilingual version—Greek and English, in which, with great pride, we present articles of Greek and non-Greek authors.

In this edition, we have the pleasure of hosting the research paper by Dr. Tanju Surmeli from Turkey on smoking cessation and on treatment with neurofeedback.

In this issue, we also have an interview of Sianna Sherman by Kyriakos Theodore on our dark side and on Shadow work. The trip of internal search is a path through our shadows, intended to help us discover the deepest desires of our heart.

Elias Kassaras writes about an issue facing every family with young children, the attitude of the family during adolescence.

Please also read the topical and exceptional article by Dionyssi Darandanis, titled Homo Crisious, on the financial crisis and its influence over us.

Finally, on the occasion of the publication of the book *Camaraderie and Separation* from Armos Editions, we publish a de profundis interview with the author, Trifon Zachariadis.

We are expecting your own articles and reviews.

Happy reading!

Era Moulaki

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| « Shadow work »- Working with our «shadows» Interview of Theodore Kyriakos by Sianna Sherman | 5 |
| Role of anterior cingulate cortex and insula in cigarette smoking and treatment with Neurofeedback: A new approach Article by Dr. Tanju Surmeli | 10 |
| Homo Crisi-ou-s: The quest for identity during the years Article by Dionysis Daradanis | 15 |
| Re meet your adult child! Article by Elias Kassaras | 19 |
| «Companionship and Separation»- An interview with Trifonas Zachariadis, author of the book | 22 |

Shadow work

Interview of Theodore Kyriakos

by Sianna Sherman



1) How do you define shadow work?

Well there are many different ways I could answer this question. One way is to define shadow work as the work we do to engage with the aspects of our psyche or if you prefer our personality that are more in the "dark", that have less light of awareness. So it is the process of engaging with the unknown, the frightening in us, the things we avoid and thus expand our boundaries and our consciousness. It is this work that eventually opens our hearts, to allow our full potential to manifest, to incarnate and the light of our being to shine.

2) Why is shadow work becoming more center stage?

I like to believe because our planetary consciousness is changing. Change requires the death of the old form in order to create space for the new to be created. The socio economic system we have created can no longer be sustained. We see it collapsing all over the globe. This system is based on greed that leads into exploitation and depletion of the planetary resources but also of the human resources. Greed has a lot to do with a wounded ego (you can also call it narcissistic). Greed has to do with me thinking of myself, my prosperity disregarding what and who is around us. Greed has to do with always asking for more to perhaps feed a deeper wound in our psyche. Greed has to do with 'competing against' instead of "succeeding together".

The spiritual message of Oneness is still evolving in our consciousness. We come in this world into a state of oneness, unconscious of what is 'I' and what is other. Then we find ourselves separate from everything else, and perhaps now we can unite again with a different consciousness. Pretty much as the developmental stages we pass as human beings. Moving from babies, to children, to adolescence and now perhaps to adulthood...I hope! However substantial changes in the collective level as well as in the individual level come with a crisis and a breakdown.

Crisis comes with fear, try to avoid that fear in turn makes us re-act, instead if act. We then get trap in that circle since making fear the voice of authority in us that is telling us what to do, is exactly what feeds our shadow and make it bigger. The demons grow as we try to avoid them. We can't run away from our shadow that is the shadow of our own light, since the one cannot exist without the other.

3) What happens when we repress or avoid our shadow?

All the 'evil' of the world comes into manifestation, 'hell' breaks loose, both in our inner and outer world. We can repress our shadow for a while or a little longer 'while' but not for ever. To repress something, to keep it under the surface we have to use a force bigger than the one it is exerting. Both the energy we are repressing and the one we are using to repress it are part of our own life force, our own creative potential. So we can get depleted or depressed and when the pressure cooker is at its pick we can even explode with the slightest stimulation...even because someone forgot to leave the toilet seat in the right position! In between we can just have addictions or being neurotic, etc.

Avoiding doing this work will result in not owning our shadow. This mean that there is going to be a tendency that everything that goes wrong within us will be projected outwardly to the people around us. The best candidates for blame will be the people closest to us, the people we love the most. Our relationships will suffer for it as are we.

All in all, we don't face our shadows; we are not in harmony with ourselves, others or anything else for that matter. If we are not in harmony, then joy eludes us.

4) How do we recognize and engage our shadows?

There are different ways. One way is to use life and the people around us as a mirror. Let me explain further. This doesn't mean that whatever people say about us is true, often because we are mirrors for them as we are also the recipients of their projections - as they are for ours. It rather means that when something that is happening outside us creates an intense uncomfortable feeling within us, we turn our

awareness within and we use that feeling as a doorway to our less visible part of our psyche. For example imagine the X thing keeps happening in your life and you finding yourself getting angry. Before taking any action to try to change that, we could turn our gaze within to see what does this external situation is triggering within.

Once we work in that level then we can act, taking the necessary steps to deal with the situation outside us, instead of re acting because our shadow, in this case the anger and what lies underneath, has taken over the control of our actions. There are many ways to explore what hides in the darkness within; mindfulness, drawing, dreamwork, Gestalt techniques, bodywork, active imagination techniques, psychotherapy, in depth yoga practices, only to name a few.

5) How do we see our shadow for what is and not indulge it? Is there a danger to working with our shadow?

There are different dangers when engaging with our shadow.

Sometimes it is tricky to recognize what is the true shadow in a situation. We can get stuck for example on working with our feeling worthlessness and failing everybody's expectations including ours. But it might be that the true shadow is being or feeling a victim, and that in turn can be a dysfunctional way we use as we try to reclaim our power....

Over indulging with our shadow can be another problem! Indulge with it, deep inside it for a while but don't overdo it. The reasons we do can be because at some level there is something we gain out of it (even if we can't see what we could possibly gain out of it), power of habit , or maybe because that is all we know, etc.

Being too long stuck in the dark though you might believe that that's all there is

I have seen so many people being in love with their dramas, and as I said they get attached to this drama because even in a dysfunctional way it still feeds them. I personally think it is much more fun to fall in love with what I find beautiful.

There is another danger when we decide to work with the shadow that I would very much like to mention because I think it is very important to identify. It is what often is revered as spiritual bypass. It is obvious to most of us that dealing with our emotional pain or fear by taking drugs (legal or illegal) is not a good idea, nor does it help. Some can even recognize than just going to the gym to deal with one's anger might not be enough. But what about a spiritual practice. You see I only want to live in acetate of love and I don't really like myself angry. So I learned an amazing love and compassion meditation that now I'm using every time I feel that anger rising! Anything wrong with that picture? A lot will say, no, that is a good idea. I will say it is

NOT! It is a 'cleaver' way to repress what is rising from within. The true shadow worker or the true light worker, (those are one and the same), will work with the shadow to reveal more light in oneself. Not work with the light to bypass the shadow.

Of course light practices are important and a meta meditation on love and compassion can help us to experience a state of bliss, but please don't do it when you are angry, or sad or experiencing any other uncomfortable feeling.

Practice presence in the here and now of what is rising and falling within. Honor the experiences you despise as the ones you love. Become an engaged observer of your inner life. No judgment. Feel fully but do not become it. You are much more than anything you experience, anything you feel.

6) Why is the dark so frightening to our psyche when we rest best in the darkness, close our eyes to sleep and feel at home when wrapped in our lover's embrace?

It is a very interesting question, one that I haven't asked myself before. The first thing I see is that the two darks you are describing have a different quality. The frightening dark is unfamiliar, unsafe; our sleep and our lovers embrace is a familiar resting place, it is safe. Maybe the problem is not with the 'dark' but rather with the unknown that we are frightened off. And I don't think it is our psyche (Greek word for Soul) that is frightened but our egos that have limited awareness. It is like our small self, the ego is frightened of knowing the bigger Self, our psyche, both equally important to our journey.

7) How can we best teach our children or do the children naturally embrace their shadows and we can learn from them?

I think it was Gandhi that said «be the change you want to see in the world», so first we start by accepting and working with our own shadow. That will give us the ability to contain and be able to engage with our children's shadow. If for example we are not comfortable with our pain then when our child is in pain we will react in a way that will teach the child how to disconnect from their pain. I wouldn't say that children naturally engage their shadows but they definitely have develop less filters (or defenses if you like) in their experience of their inner world, and feelings.

Engaging our shadow really is an act of conscious surrendering, of dying. If it happens in a less conscious way I wouldn't call it shadow work but rather 'life happening'. I haven't seen any child that will surrender into their pain, for example. They will rather run to find comfort in the safety of the parent, but when the parent hasn't done the work she/he will be unable to contain the child's pain, and the child will at some level pick up on that and will learn to be frightened of pain in this example. Children are learning by the adults close to them. If a cockroach walks into

the room minding her own business (it is a 'her' in my language) and the parent panics guess what might be the learning of the child standing by.

8) How can shadow work help humanity as a whole? How does our individual shadow dance serve the Universal Light?

We are this humanity you are mentioning and we are definitely part of this universal light. Just imagine the actions of people that can own their shadows... Just imagine what the world would be like, if no one projected their shadow to another. I think we are talking about paradise on earth. A human race in harmony.

The work starts from the center. Our universe, Oneself. And it expands, as one light lights others. Once the majority of individual consciousness changes, the community's consciousness changes too, until the whole humanity vibrates in a different reality. It is a possibility, if only we commit to the work with ourselves.

9) What is your vision of balance between the light and dark in one's life?

The answer is within your question. Balance. Modern alchemists that can play with the elements within, unleashing their creative potentials, freeing their souls to express and manifest and supporting others do the same. People that can walk in the dark with the same ease they can walk in the light. These are not really two different things, rather two different qualities of the same. It is what the Tao suggests. In plain words for me will be people that will leave in alignment with oneself, with other, with the planet, with creation.

Role of anterior cingulate cortex and insula in Cigarette smoking and treatment with Neurofeedback: A new approach

Article by

Dr. Tanju Surmeli

Cigarette smoking, which is an addictive behavior, is the most common cause of morbidity and mortality in the developed world ¹. However, many smokers find it difficult to quit even while knowing that the consequences of continuing can be grave ²⁻³. Quitting smoking can be quite difficult, and even after quitting, the relapse rate is high due to the cravings they experience. The reason for this difficulty in quitting and the high relapse rate appears to be due to long-term changes in specific neural subsystems within the brain. Animal models have shown that changes in regions such as the amygdale, the nucleus acumens, and the mesotelendephalic dopamine system promote the self-administration of harmful drugs⁴⁻⁵⁻⁶. Since the cravings are a key factor leading to relapse among smokers who are trying to quit controlling these cravings may be help stopping smoking.



The anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) is a part of the brain's limbic system. Based on lesion studies in animals and humans this region has been related to affect, on the basis of lesion studies in humans and in animals.

Based on EEG studies a focal negativity develops after an error response leading to the theory that the ACC may be involved in the brain's error detection and control⁷.

Neuropsychological studies show that the cognitive version of the Counting Stroop activates the cognitive subdivision of the Emotional Counting Stroop activated the affective subdivision. The cognitive subdivision is part of a distributed attentional network which maintains strong reciprocal interconnections with the lateral prefrontal cortex (BA 46/9), parietal cortex (BA 7), and premotor and supplementary motor areas. The affective division on the other hand (ACad) is activated by affect related

tasks as seen in normal volunteer studies of emotional processing and in psychiatric disorders (anxiety, simple phobia and obsessive–compulsive disorder) when their symptoms are provoked. It has also been activated repeatedly by induced sadness in normal subjects and in individuals with major depression. The affective subdivision is connected to the amygdala, periaqueductal gray, nucleus accumbens, hypothalamus, anterior insula, hippocampus and orbitofrontal cortex.



The Anterior cingulate Cortex

According to functional imaging studies show that areas such as the cingulated cortex, the anterior cingulate cortex, the orbitofrontal cortex, and the insula activate in the presence of drug-associated cues⁸⁻⁹.

The insula is particularly interesting due to its potential role in conscious urges. This area has been proposed to function in conscious emotional feelings, through its role in the representation of bodily (interoceptive) states¹⁰⁻¹¹⁻¹². Subjective drug urges induced by a cue has been shown to correlate with activity within the insula on both sides of the brain during a simple decision-making task associated with relapse to drug use¹³⁻¹⁴⁻¹⁵. During a simple decision-making task a high amount of activity in the right insula has been observed which has been associated with drug use¹⁶.

It is interesting to note that damage to the insula may lead to a loss of the urge to smoke. According to Dr. Antoine Bechara of the University of Southern California and the University of Iowa, and his colleagues have patients with insula damage were able to quit smoking immediately, easily, and without relapse in comparison to patients with other types of brain injuries.

There are numerous methods available to quit smoking. They range from nicotine replacement therapy to psychotherapy to different self-help and behavior

modification programs. However, the success rates for them have been quite low. To achieve total abstinence may take several attempts and even then persons who have quit may have problems staying smoke-free. Although 70% of smokers report wanting to quit, only 5% report being able to do so. The relapse rate is more than 70%¹⁷. Daily pressures, environmental factors such as the smell of smoke, and other environmental factors and triggers may induce strong cravings as well as fond memories of smoking which may be difficult to resist. That is why most tobacco cessation programs encourage people to avoid triggers, reduce stress, and find alternatives to cigarettes.

One method that has been found to be effective in altering dependence behavior is neurofeedback. NF is an operant conditioning paradigm whereby patients are given contingent audio/visual rewards for producing specific patterns of brain wave activity. Since the 1960s, studies have shown that through NF patients can be taught to promote normal functioning of the brain by normalizing dysfunctional brainwave patterns characterized by excessive slow wave activity¹⁸⁻¹⁹ or by normalizing patterns which deviate from corresponding age related norms.

NF Presents the user with real-time feedback on brain wave activity, typically in the form of a video display and sound. The aim is to provide real-time information to the Central Nervous System (CNS) as to its current activity. For instance, people are asked to increase beta or sensorimotor rhythm (SMR) and decrease delta and theta. When the desired paradigm is accomplished, the patient is rewarded with a moving display and/or a sound. This is operant conditioning.

Studies using EEG neurofeedback were shown to have positive effects on drug use, treatment compliance, and cue reactivity in patients with cocaine and alcohol dependence²⁰⁻²¹⁻²²⁻²³⁻²⁴.

Neurofeedback, delivered via real-time functional magnetic resonance imaging (rtfMRI), can facilitate self-regulation of internal states by providing feedback from localized regions of interest (ROIs) to individuals while performing a task^{25-26 -27 -28 -29}. In recent years, rtfMRI feedback has demonstrated therapeutic potential by facilitating modulation of brain activation associated with pain³⁰, depression³¹, and ADHD³²⁻³³.

By using neurofeedback (NF) from the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), a key craving region, Canterbury et al.³⁴, were able to reduce craving related to brain activation and self-reported craving in one visit³⁵. In another study feedback from a craving related region of interest (ROI) in the ACC was more effective than multiple sessions of simultaneous resistant related feedback of an ROI over the medial prefrontal cortex³⁶. This shows that in order to quit smokers can use feedback methods to effectively modulate the responses of their brain and behavior to smoking cues and that

decreasing activity in areas involved in cravings (e.g. ventral anterior cingulate cortex (vACC)) is more effective than increasing activity in regions involved in resisting them (e.g. dorsal medial prefrontal cortex (dmPFC)) because dependence severity, for example, is associated with craving and smoking cessation outcomes³⁷⁻³⁸ and has been linked with ACC activation during exposure to smoking cues²⁹⁻⁴⁰. This shows that the severity of nicotine dependence may influence the response to neurofeedback where low-to-moderate nicotine dependent smokers can use neurofeedback targeting the ACC to decrease craving-related activation¹⁸⁻¹⁹⁻²⁰.

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«Homo Crisi - ou -s: Searching for identity through time»

Article by

Dennis Daradanis



It is remarkable how, almost simultaneously - the outbreak of the economic crisis in our country, Greece, was combined with discussions about "human's lost identity". Words like "change", "adjustment", "return" more and multiply wanting to describe the mobility molded to each person's temperament who is violently forced to

change his/her everyday way of life. The science of Sociology, Psychology and Political Economy can give us answers to why that happened.

Identity contributor

According to Freud, human personality is formed under the influence of two opposing propensities: one determined from the world of desires, which has the potential trend of satisfaction without restrictions and without regard to the fellow man. The other one determined by what Freud called the "superego" that is the socially accepted norms imposed and express stereotypes (fixed remuneration) of the social system. Between these two powers ego is formed, the personality of man.

But the economic system that prevails in Greece in the last 50 years (neoliberal - capitalist), reversed the pyramid of values by placing in the top materialism rather humanity, thus forming both impulses and social constants. As successfully Marcuse analyzed, the oppression of "libido forces" in modern development, is made on such a scale that creative elements necessary for the development of the human personality being lost. People live so one-dimensionally as economic beings (Homo Economicus).

Social stereotypes continued to occupy a huge area and form in a big way people's behavior. The adjustment process in stereotypes works with such a facility that not only does not become compulsively but almost spontaneously, acting as a relieve in the soul of the average person who receives social standards as an authority above

him, a principle that indemnifies him from the weight and responsibility of a personal evaluation and decision. As Nietzsche mentioned, it is easier to obey to someone else, than can you define yourself.

So, as long as the system was stable and the basic rules were not being doubted, the process of socialization (and personal's identity) was relatively simple and safe. But when the question began to exceed a certain tolerance of the system, problems created in the socialization process. This is because the actual situations, physical economic - social conditions that gave birth to an evaluative and regulatory system changed. The "rules of the game" changed unexpectedly, without warning and violently.

So, what financial crisis created was the vibration of a society which was organized systemically on the standards of the economy.

By changing the rules many people automatically found exposed, defenseless, outside the circle of the group that until then protected them. What makes this process even more painful is that the system does not admit its mistakes, thus attributing the elimination responsibility in human itself. This condition has physical consequences as the other members of the System, not eliminated yet, sideline people who come out of the cycle of social adjustment which in a second time feel guilty, inadequate, "little".

Whether we consider the above behavior of isolation as correct, each contrariety to a social situation or a certain social system should be downgraded to an individual problem. Besides, this is the reason why term "maladjusted" in the perception of degraded for human social manipulative, it means practically not that a person resists against a certain social environment but that he/she has individual malfunctions and abnormalities. Certainly we cannot say that this is true.

Best example to prove the above will not be found by our own country, Greece. In 2010 when our fiscal problems started to have a strong presence in international Media, terms such as "Greek statistics", "lazy", "thieves" and other numerous insulting epithets wandered for a long time until we finally get to the «We are all Greeks» - slogan that accompanied demonstrations of millions of unemployed and excluded from the System throughout Europe.

The social role and identity search

The human quest for identity is closely linked to the social roles he has chosen or imposed. Crisis has intervened in each part separately with the man to be adjusted separately to each role.

The "one-dimensional man" as called by Marcuse is (was) a reality in our time. Is the one who under the crushing weight of the Media, propaganda and advertising, adopts credulity and passivity. Reacts and thinks evenly with all the others and is an easy prey for various authoritarian "elites" and interests. In this respect, Marcuse is right when he considers human as a "thinking and speaking engine" with complete disregard of the importance of human action.

The freedom of the isolated and excised human is illusory because even when it is not under the debilitating pressure of the struggle for survival, hetero-determinates across the line through a competitive society adapt to the determinism of puts human completely out of the pursuit of genuine self-realization and the obligation to limit the meaning of life in a power struggle.

The reversal of the pyramid of values, to which we referred at the beginning, is being reflected perfectly in the image of society. "Good father" is the father providing material goods to his children, "good professional" is the one who makes a lot of money etc. So, although people grow up by learning what is right, moral or lawfulness in course they transform to a consumer that morality matters less than the material.

Search for identity through time

In an environment where everything is moving people tend to seek stability points. Lighthouses. This process is not easy as it creates too much stress and fear. Anxiety and fear are two identical emotional reactions toward risk and may be accompanied by physical symptoms such as trembling, sweating or strong heartbeat that may be so strong that the sudden intense of fear induce even death.

The deeper understanding of the conditions under we live helps us to understand ourselves much better. So we can understand our emotions better and discover our real possibilities without feeling insecurity because we can't (or want) to lie in Procrustes' Bed to be increased or decreased and finally fit in the existing system.

As Karen Horney mentioned difference between the potential and the actual return of a human can be attributed to external conditions. But many times, even if conditions are in favor, human remains unproductive as it has the impression of barring the way he's self.

Search, or rather better, the creation of identity through time is a tedious process, dependent on many external factors which are constantly changing. Every one of us has to find out those standards that will keep us upright to every change. But as each person is different, so are the standards. We must be very careful when we show unlimited trust in a system that at any moment can be reversed or alienated.

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Get acquainted with your teenage child!

Article by

Kassaras Ilias



Dear Parents! Today, through this article we will try to give some basic information about adolescence, and how are the usual relationships and behaviors created between the teen and his/her parents. Firstly, adolescence is the period that usually begins at the end of our childhood, around the age of 11-13 (pre- adolescence) and ends where adulthood begins, approximately when we are 17 to 18 years old. The most common characteristics of adolescents are the completion their personality which starts from childhood, mainly based on experiences, social learning and modelling (from their close people), endogenous factors. From all the above their future ideals are being formed. Moreover, teenagers tend to spend a lot of time focused on their body (at the same time we have the first major changes in the body and these changes simulate those of their adult body, such as hair growth, maturation of the genitals, etc.) and social image. Also they have their first sexual thoughts and contacts with the opposite sex. Young people begin to take into account what others think about them; usually their peers and they will also begin to make their first steps towards their independence. They often experience internal conflicts regarding various issues. These conflicts may be revealed with mild manner to parents but some other times they may be very intense and violent. Eventually, all the above will define the personality of the teenager which will accompany him/her throughout the rest of his/her adult life.

Now that having given the general outline of puberty let us now explore the main sources of adolescents' behaviors and how they usually deal with their parents. In a first level, adolescents realize that in certain subjects that -mostly- concern their future, they often have different opinions comparing to their parents'. They feel that

their parents are "of an older generation" so they cannot understand their needs and their beliefs. On the contrary, their friends have similar ideological approaches with them and the same aspect about the world and its structure. In addition to this, the fact that they interact so well, leads to the creation of common representations about themselves and their world. On the contrary, the gap is growing between them and their parents in a way that they now recognize even more differences! Soon enough, they are aware that they can do activities "likeable or not" to the parents, because they begin to experience the eminent feeling of 'omnipotence', which is the herald of their future emancipation. They still have the need to prove the right of their opinions against the "anachronistic" perceptions of their parents, something that is likely to lead to conflicts between the members of the family. In these situations it is usual that parents constitute the major recipients of their children's complaints! Parents should aim to establish a qualitative communication with their child. Such forms of deep communication are established from the early childhood. A stable and safe environment can 'absorb' typical conflicts. Every intervention has to be discreet.

Now let's pass on the other side! How parents act when their children enter in puberty? In this critical period of their lives, adolescents will change mentally, sentimentally and cognitively in different ways and in different intensity. This essential change is something that parents do not detect fast enough (one reason is due to the fact that adolescents tend to become more slinky) and this is why they do not cope satisfactorily with what adolescents consider as "satisfactorily"! Furthermore, parents may begin to allow certain things more often, for example that their child return later at home, however they still prohibit other activities, and such as being alone at home for a whole day because he/she is still 'too young'! These behaviors send contradictory messages in these children and some of these children may as well get angry by their parents' inconsistency. One other common attitude is the parental refusal to realize that their children will not remain forever children! This is really important, as we discuss about puberty, where adolescents make their first steps to emancipation. Many parents seeing this try hard to regain the feeling of need of their child for them, which usually has precisely the opposite results. Finally, the stereotype of the "ideal parent" is... harmful! Ideal parents do not exist! We can just be proud about parents who try hard for their child's best and stand by their side.

Summarizing, there is a strong interaction between that bipolar, sometimes smooth and some others not so smooth! It is a common phenomenon that these two sides persist vigorously in their opinions, intensifying the existing intensity that results from the different sentimental needs and opinions of these two sides. In conclusion, we thought that it would be better if we could mention certain advices for the parents... under pressure!

- The most important is a safe supportive and stable family environment.

- Any sentimental needs should not be ignored by parents.
- A frame of relevant freedom and flexibility should be provided for the adolescent to develop his/her personal beliefs/skills.
- Parents should assign tasks to their child in order to teach him/her the meaning of being a responsible person. We should be cautious so as not to assign tasks which are incompatible to their age and their cognitive level.
- Parents should reward their children for their progress and their success, especially at the beginning of their attempts. Any rephensions should come in a soft (or moderate) and instructive way. Offensive and damnatory comments are not recommended because of their irreverent nature and the fact that they have no real results in a long term way!

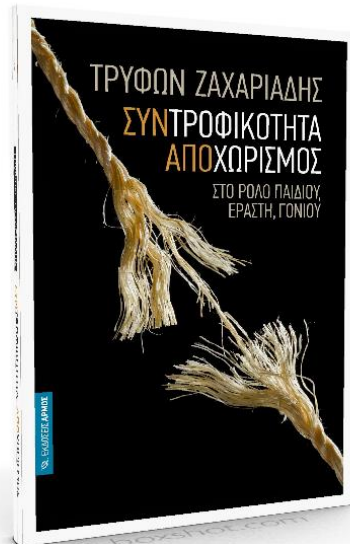
P.S: The purpose of this article is not to judge. As well as, we do not claim that every teenager will experience violent changes in his/her life or that every family will face serious problem as their child becomes adolescent. We just described some common situations and their major causes.

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Interview of writer Tryfon Zachariades

By Era Moulaki



Era Moulaki (E.M.) On the occasion of the publication of your latest book entitled “COMPANIONSHIP and SEPARATION” (from Armos publications), I would like to ask you: How did you decide to write about these two emotional “concepts”? In addition, how has the fact that you are a psychotherapist affected your writing?

Tryfon Zachariades (T.Z.) My personal experiential journey led me to choose these two dominant emotional thrills of life. My experience as a therapist helped me to “organize” opinions and conclusions concerning the human psyche when it is called upon to handle experiences related to companionship and separation.

The interesting concept of this book is perhaps that it deals with the three basic roles that we perform throughout the course of our lives. Namely, how we deal with companionship and separation as children, as lovers and as parents. Our aim should be to try to connect with emotional maturity, so as to be able to develop a “healthy” companionship with the people we chose, and at the same time to have the emotional strength to be separated from them when we have to. However, as it is well known, we usually don’t act within these optimal standards in mind. We often allow dark and hostile emotions to affect negatively our behaviors in our daily life.

E.M. Two sentences from your book: “People get connected in order to separate” and “Companionship aims to fulfill the feeling of loneliness whereas separation certifies loneliness”. Don’t you think they are provocative statements? Can’t family and friends cover this emptiness?

T.Z. The first sentence is neither philosophical nor psychological. It contains the truth of human mortality. From the time we are born, we carry inside us both life and death. Therefore, separation is an unnegotiable truth. Symbolically the same stands for human relationships. Eros, sexual love, has a beginning and an end. Friendships justifiably require mutual effort, not only at an emotional level. Some cases that seem "ideal", because they are very rare, confirm the frustration the majority of people experience. The people we love are the ones who have the most chances to betray us. This is not because others are always mean, but as we grow up we often develop the false certainty that others owe us more than what they give us. It is an endless game of immaturity, that each one of us strengthens with his/her claims.

As for the parents and the possible fulfillment of our loneliness through their love, I would say that this happens when we are very young. If in our adult life this parental love is sufficient by itself, then we lack the emotional aptitude to love other people (develop companionship at a satisfactory level), apart from our parents, and are unable to feel a relative completeness in our relationships. Therefore, during our emotional upbringing by our parents a harmful trait in our relationship with them was developed.

E. M. "The need to exist in the daily life of others with the hope that we won't ever have to be separated from them" is a natural need or does it develop because of lack of emotional maturity?

T.Z. What you state as a "natural need", is different in our childhood than in our adult life. It has to do with the request of the child for an "all-powerful, ever present, immortal mother" who serves every need and the idea that separation is against the baby's interests, as her everlasting existence satisfies the need for survival. Later in life when one comes to deal with the feeling of something coming to an end or the feeling of death, realizing the existence of mortality, one starts playing "games of utopia" with his feelings. He promises to his companion that his love will last forever and that he will never betray the other person, hoping that these feelings will be reciprocated. In other words, trying to convince himself for the "continuous existence" of the relationship, thus attributing a "never-ending" quality to it.

In my opinion, the majority of people do not choose to think with this naiveté. But I know that in times that we need to feel happiness in the moment it's not so terrible to act naively.

E. M. The "self-care" that you mention in some parts of the book, does it mean that we don't need others?

T.Z. No, it has nothing to do with the feeling or the idea of considering ourselves as "omnipotent". Practically and emotionally we need others. It is in human nature to have the need to feel loved from the "significant" other person. In childhood years if

others won't feed me and take care of me I will die. In adult life, if others don't take care of me, I will have to take care of myself. Otherwise, I will wander as an overgrown incapable baby around a "dried-up breast" demanding love and care from people unable or unwilling to offer them. Being aware of the self-care we ought to provide to our own selves is the antidote to the "endless trauma". Self-care is the core of maturity and it can be exhibited in different ways. One aspect is that we need to be psychologically prepared by our parents for separating from them. Another aspect is that we, as parents, need to make it easier for our children to separate from us. This is an honest approach towards life and its continuity!

E. M. The last chapter of your book is entitled "Aftermath of Love". Would you like to explain the connection of companionship and separation with love?

T.Z. I will answer this question with a citation from page 161 of the book, "[...] the two basic instincts, love and death, relate equally with love. When you are in love, you are the loved person or you aspire to be loved by the other person, whereas in death the interruption of the physical existence thwarts abruptly the other person's love towards you or your expectation to feel loved by the other person in the future".

The quality of this human interaction is related with how someone was loved as a child or, to put it more precisely, it is related with what has been left over from the relationship with the first "significant others", i.e. the parents. Depending on what has been "left over", there are many times in which we call love what is actually a familiar routine, fear of loneliness, stress of adhering to the societal "musts", insecurity, or any form of dependency.

This is why a companionship may be based on false needs, whereas a separation may be based on an unconscious fear of closeness, companionship and the obligations that stem from it.