

The Autogenic Organismic Structure of the Human Being

Luciano Palladino, Centro Divenire -Turin, Italy University
Lorraine, Nancy, I.C.S.A.T. e E.C.A.A.T.

*Rituality, Antropology, Autopoietic,
Bionomic, Psychotherapy*



Point of View

A growing proportion of the scientific community has thus come to the conclusion that it is essential to develop rigorous methods enabling the very precise study of subjective experience, in order to train researchers and the subjects studied.

Perspective

The reason is clear: the description of a cognitive process in the first person, as the subject experiences it, is far more precise and rich than an indirect description. But curiously it is above all the development of increasingly sophisticated cerebral neuro-imaging techniques that has triggered this realisation: this is because the data resulting from these techniques can usually not be interpreted without a description of the subjective experience whose activity is recorded.



The performance study and awareness state of themselves health.

As part of the psychology of health and quality of life, this project involves the application of two techniques combined and convergent, the first concerns the Explicitation Interview, the second one part concerns the fundamental exercises of autogenic training of Schultz.

The experiment aims at exploring the different dimensions of feeling and encourage the development of a new state of consciousness quality to learning.

The presence of an inconvenience and the lack of an adequate number of graduates in the international scene, invite taking of urgent remedies to improve not only the performance but also the state of awareness of their own health.



Situation now

The examination of a controversial case of the Italian University, the emergence of students recognized as "excellent", contrasts with a persistent dropout rates and above all students' difficulties in addressing and complete their studies. A context element that is placed in the wider economic, political and social development of the country, confirming the appearance of a complex system to understand.

For this reason, the framework of the "paradigm of complexity" recognizes the existence of complex systems, characterized not only by a number of factors, different from each other, but also by a number of connections, sometimes nonlinear.



Development up to the present situation

A lot of studies prove that it is necessary to identify and quantify the subjective perception of wellbeing (Biswas Diener e Diener, 2001; Diener e Suh, 1997; Marmot e Wilkinson, 1999). For this reason, in the last years the studies concerning quality of life and subjective perception of wellbeing increased.

The sensation of wellbeing is related to given states of consciousness. The value of these states of consciousness can be identified through methodologies of awareness and consciousness.



The critical observation of italian university

The critical observation of the Italian university system in this research highlights the different variables. Students are faced with forced adaptations, dealing with situations of chronic stress and discomfort that often compromise the academic path.

You also have additional variables such as: the difficulty of management and organization of the teaching faculty and the students' motivation to study.

The discomfort, as an expression of difficulty, highlights three main phenomena:

- a) dropping out of school (**drop-out**),*
- b) with chronic stress and maladaptive behavioral manifestations (**distress**),*
- c) the proliferation of legislative, administrative and organizational factors that increase and complicate the work of the management of the teaching staff (**bureaucratic impasse**).*



Explicitation Interview and Autogenic Training

The explicitation interview takes shape from the consideration of the human being as a selfpoietic system, according to the neurophenomenology of F.Varela. The organism is considered as a network of creating, processing and destruction components that interact with each other, continually supporting and regenerating.

The system defines itself, in fact, that is the domain of existence of an autopoietic system coincides with the topological domain of its components.

The Autogenic Training, instead, is a methodology that, using the Bionomic approach, as I.H. Schultz said, takes good care of your mind, body and soul. But beyond these aspects, the most important is the characterization of a principle called processuality, that Schultz believes is a fundamental principle of life.



Experiences description

The experiences that occur in the definition of the two methods detect a state autogenous and a state intuitive. Both experiences have a posture where the attention and observation come together in a concentrative process of "letting go".

The intuitive state is a mental activity that has a slowdown of functions. In the intuitive experience you reach a kind of attention "internal, peripheral and unintentional." It needs a real or imaginary object on which to focus their perception. The autogenic state focuses on the theme of calm and spontaneous slowdown brain and assumes an attitude of "passive concentration" to dedicate itself to a deep inner listening and moving away from ordinary experience of everyday life.



Autogenic Structure

Schultz (1973) framed Autogenics in the context of a bionomic model. Bionomics is a branch of biology that examines the relationship between organisms and their environments, and factors in both which maintain or impede balance.

The bionomic model closely aligns to the allostatic model, as it is an adaptive exchange of energy model of transitory balance states. It also closely aligns with is a forerunner to current models of the biology of consciousness (cf. Noë, 2009).



Specific dynamics

The concentrative experience of the switching process in this model the whole person (body/mind/action) is understood to be both reactive (using autoregulatory homeostatic processes) and proactive (using dynamic regulatory [allostatic processes]). The whole switching process is hypothesized to break the circle of conditioning (Schultz). Orrù (2007) adds that the whole person is embodied within environmental and social contexts.

This experience takes place in a dimension of feeling in a specific listening silent listening: a particular concentration (antropological dimension)



Basics principle

It can be seen as a basic principle of maintaining life that the organism is searching for ways of defending itself against influences from the environment that are alien to it. This means that in this way, everywhere a person finds an accessibility to connect himself in a particular dimension.

It is more probable that the whole organism will take a course which is more independent of the environment. This, in its truest sense is the biological principle, and is at the bottom of hypnosis, and is even in a more perfect form, at the bottom of autogenic training when you sink into your own body.



Continue

Contrary to the long held view of relaxation therapies and of autogenic training, this “sinking” into the body is not focused on mental and physical but it is an expansion of awareness. In fact it is focused on reducing vulnerability to stress by moving into the body in a very specific and safe way. This way facilitates the following process: detaching from efforts to control, maintain, suppress or do anything about cognitions or emotions which may come to consciousness and attach to the felt sense of simply being, in a relaxed state.



The Authors suggest

The authors suggest that direct changes at the implicational level of meaning (Teasdale, 1999) along with greater metacognitive flexibility (Wells, 1999) may be contributing factors for changing thinking. They further suggest this flexibility and these changes at implicational levels might come about and may be broadened and built upon during and after experiencing positive emotions, as hypothesized by Fredrickson (2001).

To sum up, AT of Schultz is a selfdirected passive psychophysiological relaxation practice which focuses nonjudgmentally on parts of the body ordered similarly to a mantralike sequence. It is a positive affirmations, autosuggestions, bionomic and autopoietic, for a selforganization of the body placed, selforganizing operation ('It breathes me') and the person's state of mind(' I am calm/at peace')



Experience Meaning

The meaning emerges from the subjectivity of experiencing of the connection of mind, body, emotion and action in the switching process. In part, Schultz is describing what Gendlin (1997) would name the felt sense of experience, a form of knowing that is necessary, which is not lexical or cognitive, not experienced as being in the mind or brain, and that arises from and is experienced by the body furthermore.

Gendlin postulates that this felt sense is preverbal, prereflective and pre-conscious and is essential to making meaning.

Similarly, Schultz's switching process closely resembles the meaning making process described in the Buddhist phenomenological model in which meaning is instantiated in and by the whole person.

In the Schultz model, describes making new meanings accessible to lexical consciousness happening at what appears be a metacognitive, implicational level. This is the level that Teasdale and Barnard (1995) proposed that schematic implicational models are held models that can be changed by proprioceptive information arising from the body.



And other practices

Like other meditative practices, AT has as its core process the development of the 'witnessing observer' and thus, for some practitioners, the workings of the mind may become apparent. This may lead to analytic or insight meditation experiences. Additionally, and/or alternatively, as Schultz proposes, the person may enter a state of deep relaxation euphoria', which is often the outcome of concentration meditation practice. In either case, the 'circle of conditioning' at the level of meaning making is said to be broken.



Conclusions

The awareness of our subjective experience opens up highly promising path for transforming this experience, in the pedagogical field, in the medical field but also potentially in all fields of human experience.

Deepening our understanding of which components of the AT protocol are important to learners, and how they might be working together has potential, for example, to help AT therapists determine when and how each component is best introduced to trainees and how they are best used over time.

The same could be true of learning more about how the cognitive elements of the AT program may be working to influence action in the world.



Conclusions

A theory might have a broader application than an outcome study as it has potential to point to ways the training and the application of the technique are best carried out. We are on the threshold of a vast area of research, which has been very little explored in our culture, that is of subjective experience.

It is desirable to bring together and integrate the different methods in order to develop and create a common language and federate the community of researchers and people from that wide range of backgrounds that is currently being constituted around this new field.

This exploration could considerably transform not only our vision of the word, but also the way we live in the word.

