

Review of: "Against Integration"

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There are several postulates in the article "Against Integration" that one cannot but endorse. In the first place, the rejection of therapeutic intervention as a means of restituting a preestablished order, as a tool of difference reduction.

In the same way, one can generally accept the idea of a necessary step from individualization towards multiplicity, from a moment of separation to a moment of emerging experiences.

I also support the refusal to consider therapeutic process as supported by the intervention of a transcendental instance capable of managing it from the outside, from a place allegedly uncompromised by the crises affecting the subject.

Likewise, I subscribe to the critique of an unconditional notion of "integration" supported in the regular use of the term in the context of therapy, especially in client-focused therapy, as achieving a complete unification of the field of experience.

In short, I coincide with Bazzano's rejection of therapeutic intervention based in a unified and transcendental exercise of integration. However, at the same time, I disagree with his adherence to an unnecessarily limited definition of integration, but would rather understand it as an undecidable process, a process open to difference, the which possibility, furthermore, is highlighted by Bazzano himself at the very end of the text, inspired by F. Varela's "integration horizon" concept.

Here I tread away from Bazzano and his attempts of finding a way out to the matter of therapeutic reduction analogically adhering to the role assigned by Goldstein to crisis during the process of *organismic* balance restoration. On the contrary, I believe a theoretically more rewarding alternative would result from referring to a social and discursive constitution of subjective experience hypothesis, which, counterpointing Bazzano's text, I think susceptible to some clarification.

First, a reading of this kind does not fail to recognize the body, in its sensitive and proprioceptive dimension, as the first surface registering the subject's relationship with the world and the emerging inner disturbances. On the contrary, it implies placing the body as the place of a first incision, a sensitive cut that, as a real, non-symbolized effect, demands an effort in articulation (P. Aulagnier considers it a process going from a primal pictographic registry to a properly symbolic registry dependant on language).

We may emphasize the discursive character of the symbolization process which, in its third degree, defines subjective experience. Such process is inscribed in a web of multiple representations, implications and remissions, only partially determined by the structures of meaning crystallized in social discourse and, furthermore, always open to the possibility of generating unpredictable effects of meaning, capable of constitutively shaping emerging modes of experience.

In order to frame the therapeutic process from said perspective, we must turn back our gaze to social order, in the understanding that, same as subjective perspective, is discursively and symbolically determined, just as it has been maintained in sociology, politics and discourse theory by authors of different theoretical traditions such as C. Castoriadis or E. Laclau, among others.

If it is a given that social and subjective life are discursively articulated, subjective crisis should be seen as a passage through the rupture of models, the fracture of established articulation links, from which the high productive potential of crisis is detached...

In second place, the process of discursive integration of experience implies the immanent production of the subject; not a self-sufficient, transcendental subject, placed at the center of experience, and managing it, but a peripheral subject, borderline, a-dimensional and permanently sliding, emergent at the place where every moment a significant fold occurs in the deployment of the signifier chain, where every time a singular effect of meaning is produced, where, for a moment at least, an attachment is generated. Lacan, in a way, referenced this in his axiom that “a signifier represents the subject for another signifier”.

In the same respect, we should reconsider what role may be attributed to the production of meanings as a byproduct of intervention, which role, by and by, Bazzano, in my opinion, rushes to dismiss. In a similar way to the concept of “integration”, the concept of “meaning” does not necessarily adhere to a unitarian and unified transcendental meaning, but to a productive process of multiple effects, emerging in the intertwining of the real, ultimately irreducible, and a polyvalent, polisemic, convergent and divergent, discursive production, characterized by its generativity.

In third place, I believe that, by categorically opposing all forms of integration, Bazzano risks omitting that intervention never occurs in a vacuum, that the process of cognitive elaboration cannot avoid the preexistence of a normative context that confers the conditions of possibility, neither absolute nor closed, for difference and multiplicity. By the same token, a risk exists of ignoring *a priori* that intervention must be proposed, beyond the realm of axiom, as a strategic reading of help solicitation: what possibilities take shape in the subject’s body of experience?; what emergences are traced by its limits?; what discursive articulation possibilities?; or, on the contrary, what ruptures can lead to a deadly overflow of the subject?

Last but not least, I think the destination of the crisis should not be cathartic discharge, the dissolution of articulations in the social vacuum, but reinscription, production of new meanings, an institutive articulation of new forms of meaning and of subjectivity inserted in a social space of meaning and not in the enclosed space of self reference.

As a reader, I believe these and similar considerations may arise between the lines during reading of “Against Integration”, bringing forth a relevant critique of therapy as normalizing intervention, as the restoration of an order that cannot be but hegemonic imposition and that, in this respect, obstructs the potential constitutive effects of subjective crisis such as it is traced in Bazzano’s article.

