

The New-Functionalism

Functional Psychology

The New-Functionalism

The Functional model is at the cutting edge of the investigation of complex organisms, viewed in a multidimensional perspective but as whole, not fragmented units.

The Functional model has been elaborated and developed since 1975 by Luciano Rispoli, involving years of research, theoretical reflection and clinical experience. The Functional approach studies the psycho-corporeal *Functions* and *basic functioning* in their complex interaction. The person is viewed as a whole through the various functions organized in four major areas: Cognitive-symbolic (rationality, memories, fantasies); Emotive (affects, emotions, motivations); Physiological (internal systems and apparatuses); Postural (bodily movements, form, posture). The whole person finds expression in each Function.

Another innovative scientific conception of Functional thinking is the *basic functioning*: how the person is in relationship with oneself and others, how his Self act in the world. Is the *basic functioning* that creates the thoughts, words, attitudes, feelings of the person; the *basic functioning* is the essential basis of behavior.

The Functional model makes it possible to identify the interactions between the various levels of the Self and to comprehend the possible alterations to which individuals may be subject during the course of growth, viewed comprehensively and at the same time in great detail thanks to the concept of *Function* and *basic functioning*.

The *basic functioning* in a child development is called "Basic Experiences of the Self", meaning those experiences which the child needs to go through in a full and positive way in order to maintain the original state of integration, health and well-being, and develop all the skills required to face up adequately and fully to the reality of existence. It is thus possible to intervene in a specific way and recreate the Self's harmonious equilibrium at all levels, and to recuperate, re-live and to reconstruct the Basic Experiences.

Functional epistemology makes it possible to adopt a complex, multidimensional perspective on the functioning of human beings and also of such "organisms" as families, groups and institutions.

Theoretical Background

Foundations of Functional Psychology

Functional Psychology has its roots in:

- studies on the mind-body relationship
- the early Functionalism of the School of Chicago
- formulations of the Psychology of the Self
- studies of psychophysiology, neuroscience, biology

- studies of newborns and recent research on prenatal life.

It draws on studies on the group, ethology, anthropology, as well as recent developments of evolutionary theories and research into childhood development.

Other contributions

Among other input we can recall; Winnicott, Balint, Racker, Ferenczi and Alexander for their intuitions concerning the psycho-soma, an "active" technique, "corrective emotional experience" and extension of therapeutic techniques; Fairbairn, Kohut and Stern for their studies of the overall structure of the Self; Hartmann and Fromm for their emphasis on objectual relations; Reich, Lowen, Pierrakos, Keleman, Kelley and Levine in America; Boyesen, Raknes and Boadella in Europe about interactions between the psychic and somatic.

Functional Theory of the Self

All these contributions have been re-elaborated and reorganized by Luciano Rispoli, working within the Naples's School, into a comprehensive, original theory called Functional Psychology (or Neo-Functionalism). This shows how the unitary structure of the Self is composed dynamically in a constellation of psycho-corporeal Functional processes, which can be grouped in four main areas: cognitive-symbolic (rationality, memories, fantasies), emotive (affects and sentiments), postural (bodily movements, form, posture), physiological (internal systems and apparatuses).

Functional Psychology is based on the concept of the unitary and circular nature of the psycho-corporeal processes, with all Functions seen to contribute equally to the organization of the Self, and no single function being predominant or subordinate. Psyche and soma (viewed not as separate entities but as sharing fundamentally the same Functional identity) were recognized as being too vague and generic; the concept of "Function" makes it possible to enter into the details and mechanism of processes without losing sight of the whole picture or fragmenting them into different "parts".

Functional Epistemology

This global approach to a specific reality seeks to come to terms with complexity without foregoing the wealth of details and without dividing up the individual. Functions are not parts or fragments of a person or system, they are not "structures", but rather constitute the whole system which expresses itself at different times in different ways.

The Functional approach makes it possible to analyze very different realities with equal efficiency: the individual, the group, the family, the institution and even (as has recently been done) a whole city.

The Functional approach as intervention on complexity

The Functional approach can be seen as a significant contribution to building a more comprehensive theory and technique able to transcend the separate entities of the various clinical approaches and overcome their limitations, in a promising approach to complexity. It is

not restricted merely to treatment, but expands to cover the day-to-day functioning of the individual or group, in a vision which tends not to separate treatment and prevention or health and sickness, but identifies concepts of regulation, utilization of resources and enhancement of wellbeing.

Research

Functional research has investigated and elaborated various broad, significant and large topics including the therapeutic project, the phases that characterize the therapy process, the regular “recurrences” that may occur in the therapy, the verification of results, effects of the process itself.

But also develops on many other topics many other problems:

- the first disorders of the newborn
- disorders of childhood
- objections and whims of the child
- the roots of violence in children and young
- Stress: its workings, assessment and intervention
- the elderly
- disease and stress
- the world of work and business
- work-related stress.

Functional Psychotherapy

Functional Psychotherapy

For many years Functional Psychotherapy has been working towards an Integrated psychotherapy focusing on

the *basic functioning* which are at the basis of our actions, behavior and ways of relating with others and coping with life.

Functional Psychotherapy can thus claim to be a truly innovatory multi-focal methodology which, by avoiding any separation between treatment and prevention, health and illness, is able to recognize concepts of regulation, exploitation of resources and reinforcement of a state of well-being in numerous fields of application: clinical and psychotherapy, pregnancy and birth, childhood and adolescence, education, stress, expressing him self, institutions and organizations.

Diagnosis

The Functional model makes it possible to identify the interactions between the various processes and systems of the Self, and understand the possible alterations that may be encountered in the course of a lifetime's development. Functional diagnosis rather than referring to "typologies" (of whatever description), produces a theoretical framework tailor-made for the person in question.

An Integrated Psychotherapy

Functional Psychotherapy is a "multi-focal" therapeutic methodology which acts on the specific alterations in one individual, covering all levels of the Self and intervening directly with appropriate techniques under the guidance of a general theory. An intervention restricted to certain levels cannot produce changes which are truly stable, profound and complete.

Basic Experiences of the Self

The key to Functional Therapy is the retrieval, reliving and reconstruction of the "Basic Experiences of the Self", meaning those experiences which are fundamental for a child to become an adult without dispersing the original state of integration, health and well-being, and to develop all the skills required to face up adequately and fully to reality.

History

History of the Functional Psychology

Functional Psychology was created in Naples in 1968, into the first Institute founded in Italy. It was the first such association in Italy to arrange visits from the leading exponents of Reich's approach, from Norway, Britain and America (Ola Raknes, David Boadella, Alexander Lowen, Eva Reich, Myron Sharaf, etc.). These figures, with other visiting experts, made an important contribution to the Institute's research into the psycho-somatic processes of the Self, the functioning of the group and developmental studies, with reference to social and educational applications.

1973 saw the creation in Naples of the Experimental Nursery, making it possible to observe and carry out first-hand research on childhood development.

A national research and intervention organization was set up in 1975, linking the various Institutes which were coming into being in Italy, and became the S.I.F.

From the outset its formative vocation has been characterized by openness to scientific confrontation and contact with the European and international organisms of Psychotherapy. In 1983 this vocation found expression in the setting up of the Four-Year Courses of the *European School of Functional Psychotherapy* (S.E.F.) recognized by the State and the Ministry of University and Research in 2000.

In 2010 the School inaugurated its 26th Course.

In the years 1990-1995 Rispoli founded the *Ecole Internationale de Psychothérapie Fonctionnelle* in Paris (E.I.P.F.) and the *Escuela Internacional de Psicoterapia Funcional* in Mexico (E.I.P.F. Mexico).

The S.E.F. promotes and orients research, elaboration and interventions concerning:

- the Functional approach in individual and group therapy
 - the therapeutic process: phases, regularity, verification
 - therapy for couples and families
 - prevention of malaise: prenatal, childhood, adolescence
- interventions in Institutions and organization
- Stress, its workings, assessment and intervention

And also;

- deepening about the Training mechanism
- seminars and congresses

In recent years the School's long history of theoretical elaboration and clinical and developmental research has seen (in addition to its practical applications) an intense

activity of seminars, meetings and congresses attracting participants from all the main branches of psychotherapy and clinical orientations.

Main Congresses

- *International Congresses of Body-Psychotherapy* (Mexico 1987, Montreal 1990, Barcelona 1993, Boston 1996, Mexico 1999, Ischia 2002, Sao Paulo 2005, Paris 2008, Isla Margarita 2011)
- *European Congresses of Body-Psychotherapy* (Davos 1987, Seefeld 1989, Lindau 1991, Strasburgo 1993, Carry Le Rouet 1995, Wien 1997, Travemunde 1999, Ischia 2002, Athens 2004, Askov 2006, Paris 2008, Wien 2010, Cambridge 2012)
- *National Congresses of Body-Psychotherapy* (Naples 1990, Catania 1992)
- *International Symposia* (Naples 1987, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998)
- *International Congress of Body-Psychotherapy, Ischia 2002.*
- 1st *International Congress New-Functionalism "Integrated Systems Body-Mind in the modern sciences. Psychotherapy Psychology Psychiatry"*. Naples, 8 e 9 May 2010
- 2th *International Congress New-Functionalism "Stress from a clinical, employment, social perspective. Methods of measurement, intervention, prevention"*. Naples, 15-16 June 2012

Sector

- Clinical psychology and psychotherapy
- Individual psychotherapy (for adults, children, adolescents)
- Group psychotherapy
- Psychotherapy treating psychosomatic disorders and certain specific problems
- Courses and Workshops therapeutic
- Counseling and therapy for couples and families
- Counseling for Children and Adolescents
- Counseling integration, support and treatment in the elderly assistance procedures
- Consultations with psychological organizations and private
- Supervision to other professionals
- Development of educational and rehabilitation programs

Legal Consultation and psychological assessment

Prevention and education for health and well-being

- Preparation for delivery and assistance in pregnancy
- Maternal-infant guidance (problems of pregnancy and birth, relationship with infant and partner)
- Prevention among children/adolescents (meetings with young people, parents, interventions in schools, etc.)
- Complete psycho diagnostic tests
- Quality monitoring and control in assistance for elderly
- Scholastic and occupational orientation
- Psychological guidance for sports activities

Training and up-dating

- European School of Functional Psychotherapy

- Post-graduate specialization:
 - Two-Year Master in Functional Psychotherapy for doctors, psychologists, psychotherapists
 - Two-Year Master in Functional Psychology for teachers, educators, rehabilitators
 - Two-Year Master in Functional Psychology for developmental operators (birth, childhood, adolescence)
 - Two-Year Master in Functional Psychology for rehabilitators and socio-sanitary operators
 - Three-Year Master for professional, scholastic and socio-sanitary counselor
- Introductory courses in Functional Psychology
- Training and up-dating for socio-sanitary operators, teachers, educators and social workers.
- Placement activities for students at university or from other training establishments.

The School

Affiliations and endorsements

The *European School of Functional Psychotherapy* (S.E.F.) was recognised by the M.U.R.S.T (State and the Ministry of University and Research) in D.M. 16.11.2000 with its headquarters in Naples and subsidiary venue in Florence, Catania, Rome, Padua.

Others venues in Palermo, Brescia, Trieste.

The School is also recognized by the EABP (*European Association for Body-Psychotherapy*), by the CSITP (*Comité Scientifique Internationale de Therapie*

PsychoCorporelle), by the CNSP (*Coordinamento Nazionale Scuole di Psicoterapia*) and by the CNCP (*Coordinamento Nazionale Counselor Professionisti*).

The School is a founder member of the AIPC (*Associazione Italiana di Psicoterapia Corporea*).

The School's Founder and Director: Prof. Luciano Rispoli
Psychologist, psychotherapist, the creator of Functional Psychology and an integrated model of psychotherapy, trainer and educator in Italy and abroad. Founder and President of the "*Società Italiana di Psicoterapia Funzionale*" (SIF) de l'*Ecole Internationale de Psychothérapie Fonctionnelle* (E.I.P.F.) Paris, de la *Escuela Internacional de Psicoterapia Funcional* (E.I.P.F.) Mexico. Participant from the outset in important International Organizations of Psychotherapy, honorary member of the *European Association for Body-Psychotherapy* (EABP) and of the *Comité Scientifique Internationale de Psychotherapie Corporelle* (CSITP), Honorary President of the AIPC.

He is the author of 17 books and over 140 articles published in Italy and abroad.