

## Review Article

## The Historical Approach of Psychopaths in Greece: An Endless Effort of Seeking Therapy for the Different Other

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### Abstract

**Background:** The historical context, in which the acceptance and rejection of diversity have been constructed, is often overlooked by the medical literature. However, the evolution of science is strongly based in the past in many cases and especially when talking about psychiatry.

**Objective:** The purpose of this study is to present the historical knowledge that psychiatry has followed for its formation into current science. In particular, it seeks information from the ancient years and the Byzantine period until modern years in Greece.

**Methodology:** The historical research has been followed by using primary, secondary and tertiary sources. Historically approached studies from both medical and social sciences were also collected.

**Results – Conclusions:** The results show that the process of understanding the human soul has gone through various stages and has become a matter of research by medical, religious and social sciences. Moreover, psychiatry can be a fertile field to offer theories of understanding diversity.

**Key words:** Diversity, History, Psychiatry, History of mental health

### Introduction

Ignoring historical factors while conducting research and especially in mental health sciences, has caused difficulties in extracting reliable results related to the everyday clinical practice (Cullbert, 2006). It has been recorded that knowledge of the past strengthens the interdisciplinary approach of studies, something missing today (Dillon, 2006). This issue has recently emerged in Greece due to the financial crisis in the country, a crisis which has been transformed to a generalized one. However, the history of Greece is full of crises either related to war or economics and political reactions. For instance, in case of a war, fighters were acting with such a passion compared with madness (Butler, 2006).

The recent Greek financial crisis has affected negatively, the psychiatric care in Greece and has caused a huge increase in mental health problems (Dafermos, 2002). At the same time, the increase of mental illness in a field of a generalized crisis has become a reason for family alienation from

the Byzantine years until now (Kourkouta et al, 2009).

In addition, anyone studying the history of psychiatry is better able to understand the social constructions of understanding and dealing with diversity in health.

The cultural construction of the psychopath consists of a historical procedure. Schizophrenia was known in ancient times by the Greek doctors of the 2nd century (A.C), and specifically by Aretaios the Kappadokis, and by Soranos the Effesian, who were the first to describe it (Coleman & Simth, 2006).

The importance of the study focuses on the current situation in Greece of crisis where there is a great lack of studies on mental health and crisis.

### The Psychopath in Ancient Greece.

Dodds (2004) starts from Iliad, as a characteristic source of pumping the historical perception of the psychopath, which is multidimensional. It supplies the first clear image of the early Greek society, analyzing the episodes in which the

heroes of the Homeric poems are described as acting under the influence of godlike intervention. Such examples of this can consist of Agamemnon, who steals Achilles' wife, behaving impulsively under the influence of a superior godlike power, and overstepping the appointed limits of this society (Coleman & Simth, 2006).

The feature of Dodds's (2004) descriptions, which are falling to the prophetic madness, is this of Delphi's oracle, in which Pythia existed. Delphi's oracle was a religious experience during which all of the questions were answered, and the priest's advice was faithfully followed. Apollo was the one who was advising through his priest, Pythia, who was sitting on the tripod among the fumes, that were the means of communication with Apollo. Before every communication with Apollo, some ritual rules would be executed by priest Pythia.

It is known that if someone inhales a small amount of ethylene, they come to a state of visionary visions which are created (Dafermos, 2002). When Pythia was in the communication "state" with Apollo, and questions and advice were requested, Pythia's answers were given incoherently, as she was incoherent and delirious. The priests of the temple were those who were translating and giving a meaning to what she was saying (Marketos, 1996). Philosopher Iraklitos (500 B. C.) believed that the oracles neither hid nor revealed the truth, and that they were only implying.

But in case of mental illness too, the meaning of the disease and consequently the meaning of the treatment, were already identical, by the prehistory, with his worship, or their opposite, namely the "bad", the demonical godheads. Depending on retaining the religious approach of each tribe through the time, there were the healing activities too. It could not be considered as a disease always, but as a simple situation (Papageorgiou, 2004).

According to Dillon (2006), in ancient Greece, the oldest drift was giving healing powers to the god Asclepius. Originally he wasn't included in the 12 power gods, who were living in Olympus, but he was considered to be a demigod, a simple hero who had divine originality (as Hercules). The wide social acceptance though, classified him as equal to the other gods. Many treatment ways were developed, but the treatment's practice places were mainly the Asclipia. The

plethora of these temples which were dispersed in the whole of Greek space (at least in 300 spots), indicates the huge activity and success of this magical form of Asclepius. The combination of the miraculous or psychological treatment through faith with psychical or bodily treatment were offered by the priests, and was coming through medical nursing and adjusting in the way of living (Ploumpidis, 1989).

Gradually, the time that the meaning of the doctor or the healer was more distanced from this of Asclepius priest. This new age was flagged by Hippocrates and by hippocratical medicine. Although it was already divergent from the magical and ritual treatments to benefit the rational science, it succeeded in being successfully combined with the continuing worship of Aesculapius, using the Asclipiia pretty much as we, moderns, use the hospitals (Coleman & Simth, 2006). Hippocratical medicine had prevailed and the "religious-magical" element, not by fear to the unexplained but thanks to the healing power that is hiding in itself. When the patients were coming to the temple, searching for treatment, they weren't allowed entry immediately, but only after they were purged. They were washing their bodies (symbolic soul cleaning), they were performing a sacrifice for the god, and they were strictly fasting. In the evening, they were accepted inside the temple in which they were spending the night (Chartokollis, 1991).

According to Papageorgiou (2004), one of the treatment ways was through dreams. During the sleeping in a holy place, the patient was having a revealing dream, that was showing the way of treatment that he had to follow. If the expected dream wasn't appeared, the sleeping was repeated many nights in a row. The dream could present fake images, idols, and ghosts, but it could also show truths and advise us by using symbols many times. It had to be explained by the proper insider. So there were special dream-oracles, such as the famous Amphiaro and Trophonio, in which the applicant was walking down to a ditch and the oracle by himself. Fasting was preceded and there were a general tense of psychological submission, and the dream that the interested was having was considered as the message-answer to the request.

In ancient Greece, the Pythagoreans, gave bog importance to dreams, who also through a proper way of life with the right diet, music before

sleeping, and through orientation (Where was my fault? Which were my good deeds? What obligation did I skip?) they were trying to have revealing dreams. The Pythagoreans exerted big influence to Plato. His thoughts in *Timeo*, the platonic comparison of the body to a prison, the theory of memory, the different eschatological myths of the student of Socrates, were coming by a Pythagorean or, precisely, by an orphic-Pythagorean tradition (Cullbert, 2006).

The ancient people found a way to accent, during their sleeping time, the dreams that were leading them to treatments (Savvopoulou, 2004).

The symbolic and revealing character of the dreams still has effect, even in our times, against to the second rationalism. So, for example, the chemical formula for benzoyl, was revealed thanks to a dream, while many musicians have declared that first they listened to their synthesis in a dream, and even the famous writer Agatha Christie had stated that the complicated stories of her whodunits were inspired during her sleep, and she was writing them down at the morning. In contrast to all of these, Socrates, Plato, and Hippocrates, who imported the psycho-physical consideration in medicine, according as always, to the medical model of thinking, and achieved to turn away the medical thought from the perception about demons, while at the same time they imported the science approach to the research of medical disease's causes.

Mental disorders, are referred through all the ancient literatures, as for example Indian, Egyptian, Jewish, and Greek first and foremost, in Homer and in the Attic tragedies. Characteristic examples can consist of the manic-depressive crisis of Ajax, and the same disorder of Hercules's "berserk", the schizo-typical crisis of the matricide Orpheus, and the bulimic incapability of Iphicles, that have the same spot in the origin of bad spirits, which in ancient Greek mythology were represented by goddesses Rage and Mania (Chartokollis, 1991).

Pumping from the anthropological archive, Chartokollis (1991) also refers that in the primitive societies, the person who is occupied by mental patients is the "shaman". It's about a person who is gifted with the ability to fall in a situation of ecstasy, during which he is supposed to communicate with the pathogen spirits and in some ritual way he forces them to leave the body (meaning the ID) of the diseased. This ecstatic situation, that is characterized by a progressive

simulation, is abetted by different physical means, such as the aromatic herb fumes, the use of alcohol, and other chemical substances that are contained in mushrooms, seeds, or plant extracts, such as ITD and cannabis. Accompanied by rhythmical music, mostly drums, the shaman and usually the diseased, are taking a choreography, that results to a partial loss of conscience, inarticulate screams and epileptic moves (Chartokollis, 1991).

Hippocrates described the basic mental disorders, referred to as frenzies, giving them names that are still used-hysteria, mania, melancholy, dementia, paranoia- not only in Greece, but all over the world (Coleman & Simth, 2006). For the hysteria, which he considered to be more organic than psychological disease, and which he recognized only in women, Hippocrates highlighted its sexual character, attributing it to an over-movement of the uterus, and as a treatment he suggested marriage. In the same way, most of the medical disorders were caused by an anomaly excretion, composition, or temperature of body "juices", that classifies them to four: the blood, the lymph, the yellow, and the black spleen. In addition, the proportion of these body "juices" determines the human character which, according to the hippocratical system, is detected to "sanguine", "lymphatic", and "choleric" (Chartokollis, 1991).

The ancient people believed in the salutary results of hiking and of running track. The simpleness hiking makes the body strong and flexible (Foucault, 2004).

Although there was a return to rationalism, the ancients didn't turn to psychology or psychiatry as mystical, magical-religious perceptions pre-dominated, that with the form of demonology passed in gospels and in Christianity.

Gradually, we notice that during the Byzantine times the first "seeds" of the modern rationalism and positivism are spotted, however interpretations such as dreams or religion are always overcoming.

### **Byzantine Time**

According to Kerofulas (2002), medieval medicine is characterized by three medical periods: Byzantine, Arabic and Western. These three periods are almost overcoming a millennium, since the catalysis of the Roman Empire, the Hippocratical Gallinical was

transmitted and dominated all over Byzantium (Marketos,1996).

The transportation of the empire's capital from Rome to Byzantium connected the falling Roman civilization with the sources of Hellenism, with a result of the creation of the Byzantine civilization and the domination of the Greek Christian spirit.

The most important sources of Byzantine medicine are: the Hippocratical, the Alexandrian, and the Gallinical medicine, and the rich scientific treatises of the Latin medical writers Kelsos and Plinos, through which they recorded with details the perception of the Greek founders of the rational medicine (Foucault, 2004).

The first hospitals were established a little bit after the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century by Saint Helen (mother of the emperor Constantine), and by Saint Bill, who was at the capital of Kappadokia, Ceasaria. Except for hospitals in Byzantium, they also established the first workhouses, nursing homes, nurseries, leprosariums, orphanages, and hospices (Marketos, 1996). The bibliographical knowledge of the monasterial medicine were the summaries and the synopsis of ancient Greek wisdom that were written afterward by writers, and not many relative texts were saved.

According to Savvopoulou (2004), the introduction of the hospital treatment is mainly attributed to Byzantium. The byzantine medicine was less searching, and more clinic and philanthropic. Christianity's affection enforced the spirit of "love to each other", and so the byzantine medicine gave particular attention and weight to the anthropocentric side of the medical profession.

Even in Byzantium, where an important trial of managing the phenomenon of madness, and acts of violence were happening, proving the physical tendencies for control of the weak by the powerful ones. There was also happening: crazies were whipped in public, and during some kind of running track they were driven out of the town. This is a sign that the departure of the crazy people was getting a ritual meaning, an analogue to this of other ritual whippings (Foucault, 2004).

The feeling of melancholy and of pessimism that characterized the decades of the Middle Ages has been commented on by numerous researchers. As Rosen (1968) states, this feeling wasn't unjustifiable. In reality, a world was "falling apart", and the new order was ready to emerge.

The feudal order was giving the baton to the politic of the autocracy and to the state.

The thinkers of the revealing, and the propagandists were expecting the worlds disaster by God and that humanity would be replaced by a new order which by some miracle would be good and happy. All the obstacles to achieve this goal had to be shaken down. One of these obstacles was the Antichrist. Antichrist was the demonical counterpart of God's son, Satan. Heretics were accused of alliance with Satan and practices relevant to magic. At first, the inquisition was directed against the heretics but subsequently the wizards and the diviners were arrested. From the 14<sup>th</sup> century and after, there are reports about trials against magic by the inquisition. Certainly some of them had massive character. The state authorities also contributed to the revealing of witches so they could be conducted to justice. The Reformation didn't bring any change to witches persecution, and most of them were women (Foucault, 2004).

According to Rosen (1968), many times accusations about magic were raised, just because the person who was accused was old. As Angermeyer (2009) demonstrated, this time the difference was psychopathological. The psychopathology of the "weird", and the different in society is defined more to their unclear position than to their biological structure.

For a long time, women, especially the elder ones, were occupying such an unclear position. Rosen (1968) refers to the example of the two women that were under arrest, in Germany, because they were accused of being prostitutes and urging other women to copulate with them.

However, there was a belief that the demonical possession was caused by the witches. A variety of cases of demonical possession are recorded, in which the scientists today recognize different types of mental illnesses, and especially types that are classified between types of schizophrenia (Freud, 1923).

Some of these people that were involved in trials against magic were really mentally disordered. But, the reactions of many of these were doctrine product, reactions that were espoused by bullying them. Extremely interesting is the Urbain Grandier's case that is described by Huxley (1992), in which a series of nuns at the monastery were taught how to personate the demonical.

Until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there weren't any hospitals as we know them today, for the treatment of mental patients, only places that they were locked in (White, 1996). In general, the relatives and the friends (relative structure) were those who took care and were responsible for the patient. This wasn't the start and didn't gave the material for studying, to the wider society, but only for those cases that weren't considered as dangerous, which were examined by the society. In many cases, the families were hiding by the rest of the community the existence of the psychopath. In other places, it was usual for the impaired and the very anxious to be hospitalized in general hospitals. Bedlam beggars were a familiar spectacle in the whole England (Rosen, 1968).

The belief in demons or goblins as the causes of the mental disorders-after a relevant recession that was brought by Hippocrates affection- was preponderated again during Hellenistic period to finally pass to Christian religion. However, for many years, the church had doubts about what a mental disorder consisted of, often setting the questions of if the crazy was a saint or a devil's believer.. The psychiatric disease passed to the jurisdiction of the priests, who dealt with it by exorcism or persecution. The doctor that was occupied with the crazy people didn't totally disappear, but we don't know many things about his theories and his practices. It seems that he continued to use many of the Greco methods among which: the treatment of the oppressive diseased with music. Allegorical pictures with surgeries on the brain to remove the stone of madness vouch his existence (Chartokollis, 1991).

Historically, in Christianity the exorcism consisted of a basic therapeutic method of a situation of madness, which the religion called demonism. According to Babiniotis, the exorcism is defined as "the practice of expulsion the demons or other bad spiritual entities that were supposed to possess (take control) of person or an object" Babiniotis (1998:52). The practice, although it is ancient in its roots, is still a part of the system of beliefs of many religions. The word "exorcism" means "push someone to swear", and it mainly refers to the exorcist who coerces a supposed spirit to obey a supposed superior power. The exorcist is often a priest, or a person gifted with special powers and skills. He uses a combination of magical and religious rites,

among which are also included: the prayer, the movements, the pictures, and the charms.

Correspondingly, the witch hunt during the period of 1480-1700 consists of another example of perceptions about the different and illicit behavior. A "witch hunt" is comprehended of the persecution of witches that transacted with particularly persistent research about the verification of incriminating clues that proved possible use of magic. Many civilizations worldwide, ancient and modern, were reacting to the use of magic. During the first centuries of the Middle Ages, the prosecutions of witches were stressed only in certain circumstances and for specific time periods (Dafermos, 2002).

The witch hunt was especially known during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, mostly because of the countered activity of conservative catholic circles.

Magic doesn't consist of a single phenomenon, but part of a wider ritual whose original goal wasn't the change of nature, but the conversation and the management of the network of the links, of the tensions, and of the conflicts in society background (Escher, 1993). Meanwhile, the scientists had begun to recognize that magic isn't the same everywhere; it incurs a whole range of its versions-from the indo "mag", an idea of power, to "medicines", spells, and oracles. This dimension of the magical, that was expanded on during the postwar decades and with the contributions of M. Douglas (1996), A. Rivera (1998), and R. Kieckhefer(1989), it is definitively rejecting the discrimination between magical and religious, the claim that religion is the communication with the personalized holy, while magic is only the handling of impersonal powers (positive or negative) approaching both of them as "symbolic expressional actions". At the same time, it imparts great meaning to the ritual of understanding these symbolic expressional acts as a "ritual" means transact ceremony, officiate, mystical.

The main conceptual issue is the study of the women's magical rituals that consist of the "woman's body", as a natural symbol and as a carriage of meaning and sense. There is already a conversation, since Durkheim's time, about if the human body consists the image according to which the society is formed or the society is prior, the body is set and classified by it. I think that we'll agree that the body is a symbol of the society and not its standard, which is evinced by the way in which powers and dangers that are

founded in the social structure are reproduced in a reduced way at the human body. As Papagaroufalidis highlights, “the body consists central analyzed category in the interpretation of the social relationships and it is approached as cultural constructed “text” that is written not only by who “carry it, but also by who “live” it” (Papagaroufalidis, 2002:37).

### Conclusion

The historic point of transition from the metaphysical to the rational ages basically comes after the industrial revolution, and the Age of Enlightenment. It is about an age that functions limbically since the psychiatry is outset constructed with deep influences from previous ages.

Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a more intense turn happened to the organized knowledge, according to ancient Greek positivistic standards, in regards to rationalism. The western rationalist rejects the over logical, the insight, the intuition, the divination, the astrology, and the myth. Only two things were recognized: the logic and the mind. Logic is constructed by the unconscionable. For the western rationalist, anyone that doesn't accept logic, is considered to be crazy. It was noted that the more knowledge was organized into sciences that were by objective criteria, the more the social check was intensified as to the “normal”, and the “right”.

Totally, the historic data that are opposed come to supply current bibliography, by highlighting the different understandings and perception of the psychopath in societies or other diverse social groups.

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