

IRREPARABLE OBJECTS, UNRECOVERABLE OBJECTS

Psychodynamics of destructiveness and intolerance to loss.

by Alfredo Anania January 6, 2024

This article constitutes a sort of explanatory preview of the title of the conference which will be held simultaneously in presence at the Order of Surgeons and Dentists of Trapani and in webinar, on 23 and 24 February 2024 entitled *Irreparable Objects - Irrecoverable Objects, the Sentimental Education in the Prevention of Violence against Women*, which is linked to the title of a paragraph of one of my writings entitled *Beyond the Darkness of Depression* (Psicologia Dinamica, Year IV, n.1,2,3, January-December 2000) which, since I still like it and it integrates some of the themes of the conference, I decided to publish by chapters also because it addresses some of the topics that will be covered in the conference.

In a historical moment such as the current "wildness" from the spread of war outbreaks and episodes of individual and group violence there is no need to underline the presence of the evil savage in the human race as underlined by the poet *Hermann Hesse*, in his collection published under the title "Butterflies", where it tells of a teenager, lover and collector of butterflies, who, having inadvertently ruined a precious butterfly, furtively stolen from a schoolmate, realizes for the first time in his life the enormous potential destructive nature of man (H. Hesse, *Farfalle*, Stampa Alternativa ed., Viterbo, 1991) or as the psychoanalyst *Erich Fromm* warns (*Anatomy of human destructiveness*, Mondadori ed., Milan, 1978) in highlighting how the human being is the only living being capable of killing other members of its own species for reasons not strictly related to survival and personal defense, that of offspring or of the group.

Deriving satisfaction from destroying, cruelty, the pleasure of torturing others or humiliating them are characteristics present only in the human species. The primary causes of these behavioral processes are cultural and individual; assuming that we can continue to maintain a clear distinction between individual and group, in the sense that today the idea of a *cultural matrix of the Self*, of a development of individuality from the world of intersubjectivity and from a *transpersonal* dimension founding the individual psyche.

Rather than delving into scientific arguments, for which I refer to the various paragraphs of my writing cited above to be published, regarding the genetic, personological, group, ecosystem, species-specific factors that can lead to various forms of violence, I would like to emphasize the fact that in the context of human relationships the survival of the individual and the group is felt as the fruit of the ability to develop mutual processes of "love". Or rather, the mutual processes of *love* allow the development of particularly reassuring feelings which as a whole are experienced as "good". This feeling of goodness (*bonum*) corresponds, at a group level, to the idea of the *common good* which is essential for the social construction of the community and is based, at an individual level, on feeling one's own life and that of others as indispensable for mutual survival (life mea - your life) (lat. *vita mea - vita tua*). As the psychoanalyst *M. Balint* says (*Primary love*, Cortina ed., Milan, 1991) this *bonum* derives from the original experience of love that unites mother and child.

The feelings of loss, mourning, dejection, desperation, melancholy which taken together we can roughly call *depressive states* do not constitute a prerogative of the human species, in fact, naturalistic observations and experimental research have made it possible to verify the presence of depressive behaviors or desperation also in young mammals in relation to events of separation, isolation or breakdown of *emotional attachment bonds*. Such behaviors, in the animal world, would have a biological function of adaptation, they would constitute direct *signals* to warn the group, in particular the mother or both parents, that one of the smaller members is in danger. Therefore, depressive attitudes would have the specific function of stimulating in adult members the care and protection of the most defenseless individuals. But even in humans, according to *Melanie Klein*, it is possible to place the appearance of a *depressive position* in the infant after the first half of life, mobilizing affective resonances, feelings of guilt and consequently, according to *Franco Fornari's* formulation,

the need for "love-redemption" which translates into an intensification on the part of the mother of those loving responses and that empathy which are essential for the child to overcome the depressive phase.

Considering that life drives and death drives in every being are in dynamic equilibrium with each other, we are forced to admit that the absence of the mother-breast, i.e. the lack of *libidinal contributions* from the outside, causes a shift in the balance in favor of aggressive tensions which precisely - as they emerge in the absence of gratifying objects - can only be discharged towards the interior of the individual with consequent self-destructive values. Therefore, the lack of *libidinal contributions* from the outside, that is, the absence of love-dispensing objects corresponds to something bad, to an evil, to a *noxia*, which can mobilize the emergence of what *Franco Fornari* (*Psychoanalysis of War*, Feltrinelli ed., Milan, 1970) defines «internal terrifying», as the perception of the death instinct phylogenetically deposited in our unconscious.

What has been considered so far leads us to admit that at the "proto" or primary stage level there is a marked correlation between the loosening of the bonds of emotional attachment and the mobilization of self-destructive or heterodesrtructives charges.

But we can also hypothesize that there exists, in each species, a directly proportional relationship between potential aggression, the need for *libidinal contributions* and prolongation of the period of complete dependence for the purposes of survival (*neoteny*). From this point of view, man occupies the absolute first place in the evolutionary scale in relation to all three variables considered, that is, he is the being who is potentially most destructive, who has the greatest needs to receive love and who depends the longest on totally from others.

Ultimately, the continuing lack of external libidinal contributions from those who are the object of our desire for love, or even worse the sensation or belief that this object of our desire for love is lost, disappeared forever, in short that this loss is irrecoverable or irreparable, that the loss is definitive, then the death instinct emerges internally (with feelings of guilty expiation) or externally when we believe that the object of our desire was vacant towards us, was guilty of the lack, whether "bad" state and, therefore, causing the external emergence of the death instinct. In this second case, quite intense hostile feelings are produced, with profound persecutory anguish following which one's own survival is felt impossible without the destruction of the other (*mors tua - vita mea*). An unconscious projection of one's destructive and deadly parts onto the Other.

I quote myself in the phrase "dissolve to unite forever" in this case relating to the definitive destruction of the *Other* that is object of desire. This is when the Other is felt to be so important and so indispensable as to make any idea of detachment or loss unbearable!

The problem is that the subject in these cases experiences the loss as a narcissistic wound inflicted by the Other and experiences himself as incapable of building and lacking the libidinal (psychoenergetic) resources that allow him to invest in living and livable objects rather than grieve for the objects irreparable or irrecoverable. This subject, we can assume, is a person who lacks sentimental education!

It is surprising to note in certain personalities the absolute inability to enjoy the world to which we belong in its most genuine, innocent and wonderful aspects (from the blooming of flowers, to the fluttering of birds, to the variegation of the sea, to the shining of the firmament and, again, to the endless fascination of creation). This would be enough to lift us up, to make us feel full of *anima mundi*, to counterbalance the pain, suffering and hardships of existing. This should be enough to give us the strength to get back up, to start again, to go back to "loving". However, in my opinion, this ability to be satisfied with the enchantment of the cosmos and feel part of it belongs to people who have enjoyed a sentimental education. *This education undoubtedly must go beyond scholastic didactic models since, having to do with the Soul and the Individuation Process, it has dimensions related to Individual Elective Affinities, to the Aesthetic Research of Beauty, to the Exercise of Practices inclined to the Muses and to Psychosomatic Care of the Self, to the activation of Interpersonal Relationships that do not overpower the Other.*

In most cases these are people, recalling *M. Balint* and *J. Lacan*, who have contracted a "basic fault" (*Balint*) since early childhood, a "fundamental basic defect" in the form of accentuated and prolonged needs for dependence caused by insufficient or incorrect ways of care on the part of the caregivers and, furthermore, *not having been the object of adequate desire by Other* (*Lacan*), initially by those who took care of the evolving little person.

We still have to explain the enormous difference in percentages of violence between men and women: the latest official data shows that 92.7% of women are victims of a man! Surely many will say that these are cultural problems, of what I call traditional "male racism" towards women. *F. Nietzsche* writes (*Genealogia della Morale*, Adelphi ed., Milan, 1984.); «a race of conquerors and masters who, warlike organized and with the strength to organize, inflicts without hesitation its terrible claws on a population perhaps enormously superior in number, but still shapeless, still wandering...".

A final metaphorical self-quotation, (A. Ananias, in the Phoenician Trilogy, *The sacred Tophet of Tabaah*, *Psicologia Dinamica*, Year XIV, N. 2/3; May - December 2010):

Tanit

*Countless times you accused me of being "terrible"!
And in railing against me you railed against yourself
forget that at the beginning of the Earth,
when matriarchy still existed
all of us were generating goddesses,
venerated by males and at high in the favor of other gods.
Then We taught the men,
saving them from the hardships of hunting,
the art of plowing fields and sprinkling them with seeds,
the ability to wait for harvest time.
A "master race", born to command,
"brute meat"! aimed at yoking the weak,
a host of tyrants without a soul and without pure feelings
took away the beauty of the meeting,
the richness of exchange, the joy of participation
to relegate us succubus to the game of barbarism.
The time is near when such beings
they will bend their backs under the weight of their chains
and we will return queens of creation
of dance, of singing, of colorful canvases
and we will chase away predators forever
the jackals of other people's works
the arrogant impostors
those who ban war only in words
and in everyday life they argue with everyone.
Our young people will return inviolable
and no monster will be able to abuse it.
There will no longer be anyone who, profaning God,
will attribute to him the demands to eat
the beings that he himself created
or wanting to leave them at the mercy of murderers...*