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A Pandemized World: the Human Being in the Face of its Own Exclusion as a Species

Summary:

We would like to set the agenda regarding times of pandemics. Questioning ourselves about what is left of the human being in face of the current extraordinary events. Is it necessary to take this into account? With that in mind we are interested in specifying what is human in the human, especially when biology threatens its existence and when the human being is excluded as a species.

As psychoanalysts we believe it is important to take a stand in face of this global emergency. Furthermore, in an effort to extend it outside of our private practice, we refined some guidelines that we understand allow us to sustain both the analytical practice itself, and what remains of the human being when its species is threatened.

How would it be possible to create tension or friction between elements when one of them couldn't resist at all? We are witnessing how the biological world, when making itself be heard, is devastating without contemplation.

A question immediately arises: By quarantining ourselves, are we preserving biology or are we shielding from it?

Jacques Lacan in "Science and truth" expressed his discontent with what was called, at that time: A man of science.

"There is no such a thing as a science of man, and this should be understood... There is no such thing as a science's man does not exist, only its subject does.

My lifelong repugnance for the appellation human sciences is well known; it strikes me as the very call of servitude" (Lacan 2006, 729).

Subsequently, our question would be answered by Lacan as: In both biology sets the human in a servile position, despite whether we protect or we defend ourselves from it.

In light of current events, what is human becomes relevant, however remains alone, with no possibility of articulation. The fraction of humanity in ourselves, therefore, is what remains. In which case, what do we infer by Human?

Whatever the case, one thing is clear: the human is a problem today.

Suddenly, this glimmering of light on the horizon appears with a concept that seems to emerge: solidarity. Solidarity is a way of curing the human? Or restoring himself to a previously healthy condition? Is the human something that heals, or must it be healed by external forces? And, if so, is solidarity the only way?

Recently, an extensive article in the *New Yorker* emphasizes solidarity. The article describes, among other details, how an NYU doctor has a conversation with his Uber driver on the way to work one night. What would one do without the other under these circumstances? One doctor couldn't comply with his duty; one Uber driver wouldn't make a dime to bring home.

It is often said that solidarity is the human response in face of the onslaught of some catastrophe. If this were true, that which occurs before but paradoxically, left for later (or never), undoubtedly comes to be something that only psychoanalysis will deal with.

Nevertheless, there are some other specific questions to examine. In the *European Journal of Psychoanalysis*, for example, Giorgio Agamben readily speaks of "the invention of an epidemic". Regardless of the events that followed, his statement is well founded: there is "what is once again manifest is the tendency to use a state of exception as a normal paradigm for government" which articulates "the state of fear that in recent years has evidently spread among individual consciences" to "the limitations of freedom" (02/26/2020). Jean-Luc Nancy, right away, responds that "the exception is indeed becoming the rule in a world where technical interconnections of all kinds are reaching a hitherto unknown intensity that is growing at the same rate as the population". He calls this "there is a sort of viral exception – biological, computer-scientific, cultural – which is pandemic".

He adds that "governments are nothing more than grim executioners, and taking it out on them seems more like a diversionary manoeuvre than a political reflection" (02/27/2020).

This tension seems essential to us if we understand that Jean-Luc Nancy seeks to emphasize that the exception mentioned by Giorgio Agamben refers to more than a human operation, to one that ends up excluding him from humankind.

It seems that what is left for the human and his servile position facing Human Sciences, wouldn't be the only venture for Men.

We conclude that only after the biological danger attacks, we become. Keeping in mind what Sigmund Freud located as the constant refusal to work with that "beyond". In this regard, although Jacques Lacan researched this matter extensively, we prefer to quote the philosopher Quentin Meillassoux to point out that: "(...) against the reasoned violence of various fanaticisms, it is important that we re-discover in thought a modicum of absoluteness – enough of it, in any case, to counter the pretensions of those who would present themselves as its privileged trustees, solely by virtue of some revelation" (2011, 49). That "modicum of absoluteness" does not exclude the absolute itself, rather to the contrary, it ascertains the place for it and, essentially, therefore, it can operate with it. The point to be emphasized is not the impossibility of the absolute but its pluralization and proliferation: but on condition that each one of these is put into play somehow to show its existence because the presence of an absolute, allows one to continue seeking. On the contrary, the illusion of finding the absolute or totalizing, is a dead end.

To clarify, we must establish a modicum of absoluteness by seeking our humanity, in every possible occasion, so as not to be complicit in the illusion of totalization. The mathematician Georg Cantor paved the way for such notions/ideas.

We are deeply interested in going back to basics to work with that human fraction that remains only after the contingent devastation. Is this fraction made of biological science and solidarity?

To deal with that beyond the pleasure principal, or to put it another way, with that which neither Bioscience nor solidarity can reach. Perhaps to encounter novel paths that would obturate the incessant hope of finding,

once and for all, the definitive solution for the peace of the humankind or imperturbable equanimity for all.

The fundamentals of psychoanalysis teach us that the precise purpose of our practice is not only to advocate speech/articulation but also when it is paramount to embrace silence.

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