NO ONE IS BORN A STRANGER.
BEYOND FEARS, TOWARDS A NEW AWARENESS.

Translation by Achille Cattaneo/Gordon Leonard Symons

The speed with which the scenarios of reality change, both in the individual and in the collective sphere, is often accompanied by a sense of inadequacy and inability to exercise an effective filter on the continuous flow of information, images, emotions that dictate the rhythm of our days .

The images of commercial offers alternate more and more pressingly with those of wars, ecological catastrophes and human dramas in a sort of paradoxical narration that does not allow any time to distinguish between real news and fake news, or to reflect a little deeper on the meaning of what is happening and if and how we can act to change reality; even just our personal, internal one, which would already be a good thing. It is no wonder, therefore, that this continuous external pressure can generate a sense of helplessness and that this can prevail over that of effectiveness and *problem solving*. After all, if we don't understand the real extent of an event, we know how this can easily become a "problem"; and problems require solutions to be found. How right and effective they might be does not affect our emotional and impulsive reaction You have to hurry, you have to release the pressure.

The median area of the unconscious, in which the field of awareness of the conscious "I" has a central position, hence our ability to want the Good with determination and skill, is precisely that which develops the relational attitude of the human being horizontally: reaching out beyond the borders, outwards, both by instinct and impulsive thrust and by deliberate choice, by the "expansion" of the energy of the heart. In the first case, it is

our unconscious that moves us; in the second, it is our awareness that guides us and freely chooses which conduct to adopt. Including to "solve problems".

However, this ability is not at all obvious nor is it always present. It may happen, for example, that the pressure, the inference of the social towards the individual encounters a reduced field of awareness and a weak, "hypotonic" conscious "I", therefore more vulnerable due to momentary conditions or structural characteristics. In that case, it will be the subpersonal unconscious contents of the individual that resonate and respond. This is why both obsessive repetition and unpredictability, together with the emotional significance of the images and slogans used to elicit the desired reactions, are always the basis of human conditioning. *Fear, a sense of insecurity* and that of *belonging* are among the easiest emotions to stimulate and amplify.

Already according to Freud, in *Psychology of the masses*, individual psychology can never be separated from the social. At the same time, every human being is the bearer of individual needs (= experiences of "what is missing") ranging from the basic ones, measurable in the relationship between their onset and the times and ways of their satisfaction or enjoyment, up to those called " accretive "or of growth, which also require to be recognized and satisfied. [1] We speak of individual needs at various levels, therefore of their onset and satisfaction at various levels.

In the broad and complex field of social issues, today a great variety of stimuli and calls to as many needs can be recognized - whether authentic or induced - which in part come from the end of the last century, from what many have called "the time of consumerist neo-liberalism and the globalized market "; in part, however, they belong to the current "new paradigm" that Massimo Recalcati defines as *securiarity*. [2]

The needs coming from the 90's, referring mainly to a fragmentation of individual enjoyment, to narcissism, to liberalism that becomes libertinism, according to Recalcati are accompanied by hyperactivity and the unruly compulsion of enjoyment and are represented in symptoms of distress, such as: drug addiction , bulimia, childhood hyperactivity, panic. It is the so-called "*vacuum* clinic", emerging in the decade that saw the Berlin Wall and most of the party system in Italy collapse, with "Tangentopoli" which started the *Second Republic*; the era of the entertainment industry and beauty centers, sport and "healthy living", understood above all as a dizzying increase in the consumption of sporting goods and biologic products; the years of the "PlayStation Generation", of the Cyber Space culture and of the widespread diffusion of Personal Computers; the beginning of the telematic era and the debate on *privacy*; the start of the phenomenon of immigration from countries of Eastern Europe, North Africa and Albania.

We will deal with other aspects of the 1990s later.
The current "new *securiarity* paradigm", on the other

hand, signals the need for an identity bank, for a fortified border within which to defend themselves and self-preserve, showing the face of unease in new social figures who tend to isolation, closure, to the barricade.

The phenomenon that is being observed, especially in adolescence (but not only), is the preference for closed places such as one's own room, inhabited only by the perpetual connection given by technological objects, rather than outdoor life, exchanges and social ties. In practice, a turning off of the feeling of life, to strengthen his own identity boundary in a sort of "prison". This is called "*securitary* clinic".

A few years ago, in Japan, a social behavior called "Hikikomori" (= being on the sidelines) began to spread, which today affects five hundred thousand people. At the moment, more than one hundred thousand cases are estimated also in Italy. They are mostly well-off boys and girls, very intelligent but also particularly fragile and introverted, often only children who suffer from high parenting expectations, despite not having any difficulties at school. Their worldview is rather negative and they suffer the pressures of social achievement to the point of repudiating it. While their classmates take a diploma, a university degree and find work, the Hikikomori remain closed in their room, the only place where they are immune to the feeling of shame.

However, observes Recalcati, in the *securitary* clinic "it is not a substitution *from paradigm 1* to *paradigm 2*, but rather an oscillation in the Kleinian sense: there are nuclei of one in another and vice versa in a non-progressive movement of replacement, but of problematic oscillation ". The *vacuum* clinic feeds the *securitary* clinic and vice versa.

And he adds: "The basic element on which these two clinical paradigms converge is the centrality that the *death instinct* holds in them". (…) "It is not solely responsible for war and destruction, of lawless and desire-less enjoyment (clinic of the *vacuum*), but it is also at the basis of the fascist inclination to preserve one's uncontaminated identity, to protect the closed system of an enjoyment without transcendence, pivoted on the refusal of the encounter with the otherness of the world, of the drive as a deadly element of self-preservation ". (2) That is, of self-preservation radicalized to become

self-destruction. Although it has been ascertained that Hikikomori is not caused by previous pathologies (such as depression, social phobia, internet addiction), nevertheless the fact of remaining even for years separated from contacts and relationships with other peers (and often with parents) certainly can provoke a drop in mood, a computer addiction, the fear of leaving home. And, in the most severe cases, the appearance of paranoid syndrome.

Up to now we have followed Recalcati's reasoning and observed, through his psychoanalytic gaze, the current formation of needs and the relative pushes for their enjoyment. And, in particular, to which clinical paradigms they animate when is there occurs a sort of short circuit between such enjoyment and necessary transcendence of the same in a relational dimension, of openness to life and to the external world.

If we take into account what is happening today in the western world, in social groups and more generally in the collectivity of our times, we cannot fail to detect the overbearing re-emergence of openly reactionary pushes of nationalist-sovereignty type. And the paternalistic model of leader that is produced.

I wrote in 2011: "The chronicles of these times, together with those of all times, often present us the grotesque union between this paternalistic modality and the bloody practices of violation of human and civil rights by the worst tyrants. If the recognition of the other as "Thou" is not there, then neither rights nor aspirations nor capacity to realize them as a subject who can and wishes , will be recognized. [3]

Making the other a "thing", depriving him of his quality of subject, is equivalent to making him alien, foreign, external not so much because he is a stranger to know, but because he is the uninvolved not to be involved, to be excluded, to be denied in his own wishing existence. So not only in its basic needs (physiological, security and belonging), but also in those "accretive" or growth (morality, creativity, spontaneity, acceptance, problem solving, absence of prejudices, self-esteem, self-control, realization, mutual respect).

At the basis of this exclusion, there is that *death drive* which constitutes a twist contrary to the opening towards life, towards the experience of otherness with the external

world. And with its variety and variability. Therefore with its own risks.

There is a fear of losing one's identification with the fortified border which preserves identity from contamination. And, at this point, perhaps it would be better to say*: that retains its identification with the wall, with the turreted and armed border, within which the void lives.*

So the *vacuum* paradigm and the *securiarity* paradigm alternate in a problematic oscillation which then inevitably ends up extinguishing and coinciding with the underlying psychopathology: the *death drive* that becomes a paradigm.

At this point, I like to underline how this scenario is all the more dark and aberrant and therefore difficult to inscribe in the experience of humanity in evolution (if not in psychopathological terms), if we combine it with the multicolored notes of our "internal world". That is, to that territory where we can also experience the "potentialities and the best qualities that characterize our uniqueness and that tend to manifest themselves through the path of our personality in life itself".

This was what Massimo Rosselli told us about the "heart" of ourselves, of the Self "which is the Soul of Life and wants to express itself through the body, emotions, desires, beliefs and our dreams. Some aspects or qualities of this essential nucleus are so inescapable and so representative of the manifestation of the Self in the human presence, that we may to dare to call them actual *Rights of the Soul* ". [4]

The first two, in particular (Massimo Rosselli has described fifteen of them), affirm the right of every human being to be there, to be here, to take root in his own territory. This "landing" corresponds to the primary tendency of the Soul to incarnate, to inhabit a body, to find a first welcoming place such as the maternal uterus itself, or even in the first impact with the environment in the early stages of life.

And then there is the right to be in a form and to be free while having boundaries. That is to feel part of a larger whole but free to be himself.

What has become of the paradigm of the *vacuum* that oscillates and combines with the *securitary* one? In an evolutionary dimension of health, at the most, it can describe the state of existential unease that under certain conditions is expressed and structured into a psychopathological paradigm. But it cannot and must not be justified or, worse, adopted as a social model to which to refer or adapt. Rather, it should be taken care of and, if possible, made superfluous. therefore, overcome.

Nobody is born a stranger, in that it is the embodiment of a Soul that is a reflection of the Self in a Life that wants to live, not a "life that defends itself from life and insists on always returning to the same place, repeating itself over and over, in order to exclude the possibility of its transformation ". (…) "The psychic apparatus (according to Freud) is an unsolved, flawed at the root, imperfect apparatus. Its functioning - since the time of the *Project* - is polarized around a conservative *defense* and *evacuation* exercise: stiffening of the border, loss of its porosity; discharge of internal tensions towards the outside, a push to evacuate to the extreme of the 'short way' of hallucination ". [2] A theoretical model, this, very different from that represented in the Assagioli "Egg diagram", in which the relationship between internal (unconscious) areas and among internal and external areas occurs by "osmosis", through dotted lines. It is not by chance that the former (the Freudian one) describes the human being in his oppositional and resistant to life aspect, while the latter (the Assagioli one) underlines his tendency towards openness and evolution.

The theme of the border and the encroachment has always been dear to psychology also to philosophy and sociology. In particular, as early as the 1990's, in the full onset of the *vacuum* paradigm, in the "Society of appearance and image", together with the superficiality and frivolity of the cultural industry and the "post-modern" lifestyle, the Jewish-Christian culture and the sociological-philosophical school of Frankfurt (neo-Marxist) which considered all this "hidden persuasion for economic and political ends".

Just in that end of the millennium, between 1996 and 2006, Anna Camaiti Hostert (philosopher and scholar of identity theory and *visual studies*, in particular of cinema) wrote a book that still surprises for its relevance and ruthlessness*: Passing . Dissolve Identities, Overcome Differences.*

The term *passing* dates back to the early 90's when it described, in the American black community, the practice by which individuals from the "racial position" that

were not clearly defined could be *considered* "white", thus avoiding discrimination and violence. Here is the effect of rigid binarisms, of linguistic, ethnic, religious and sexual barriers, to which post-colonial literatures, cinema, theater, music, new communication technologies have tried to respond. That is, that network of common references for the *passing* experience, with which we all have dealt well or badly. And maybe we are continuing to do it.

But what is behind the choice of renouncing one's own form of identity as overcoming the limitation and as access to a "good land" which we can always carry within us, where we can feel at home and "put down roots"?

Anna Camaiti Hostert writes: "And it is precisely in this perspective that irony becomes a fundamental element for me in building disidentification techniques. Making fun of ourselves, playing with our own roles and with ourselves becomes essential, because it provides that necessary detachment from any systematic body of values or beliefs in which we find ourselves very often trapped ". (...) "The *storyteller* (street singer or ballad-singer) that each of us is, can really take over and unleash a creativity that gives us back a multifaceted and poliedric dimension now lost, recounting stories made of gaps, of errors that change the original and official version, undermining the authority of the dominant narrative that created it and the language through which it expressed itself ". (5)

Still in the heart of the 90's, in the midst of the *vacuum* paradigm, Alexander Langer was one of the few Italian and European politicians to commit himself to attempting a peaceful solution to the conflict that was bleeding the regions of the former Yugoslavia and to keeping communication open between those who opposed the war.

Alex felt interethnic violence in his bones, because he was born in 1946 in Vipiteno, in the German-speaking Südtirol. His father, born in Vienna, was a non-practicing Jew and his mother was firmly secular.

So he writes, in the "*Attempt at a handbook for interethnic coexistence*": "In our societies, a reality open to multiple, non-exclusive communities must be possible, in which the children of immigrants, the children of mixed families, the more educated people (pluralist and cosmopolitan) will be recognized as themselves ". (...) "Multi-ethnic, pluricultural, plurireligious, plurilingual, plurinational coexistence belongs and will increasingly belong to normality, not to exception". (...) "In such societies it is very important that someone devote himself to the exploration and the crossing of borders, an activity that maybe in conflict situations and will resemble smuggling, but it is decisive in softening rigidity, relativizing borders, favoring integration ".

In this way he talks to us about Rom and Sinti people: "Gentle and nomadic people, who do not claim sovereignty, territory, mint, uniforms, seals, stamps and borders, but simply the right to continue to be that people subtly *different and transcendent* compared to all those who vie for territories, flags and palaces. A people that, a bit like the Jews, is part of European history and identity. (...) Unlike all the others, Roms and Sinti have learned to be light, co-present, able to pass above and below the borders, to live among everyone else without losing themselves, and to maintain their identity without building a state around it. The inexorable destruction of a convivial world (...) has taken away from the Gypsies their natural world: you cannot take the water away from the fishes and then be surprised if the fishes can no longer be as agile, kind and self-sufficient as they once were. Yet Europe, with its overwhelming majority of settled people, must accept, even in its own interest, the Gypsy challenge and make way for a kind of life that definitely does not fit into the schemes of national, fiscal, industrial and computerized states ". (6) Therefore integration with rules and laws according to inclusion and coexistence, not to force the *stranger* to lose or, worse, to the renounce his history, culture, religion, philosophy. Softening the rigidity of borders, betting on the possibility of renouncing the "new *securitary* paradigm", recognizing that everyone is an inhabitant of his own life with full rights, in the place where it begins or where he will seek a place to live; subsequently, allowing everyone to exercise full responsibility for their choices and actions. Nobody is born a stranger, if we, in our fear of the otherness of the world, allow the voice and gaze of our Soul to respond.

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