

Compassion: A Reconsideration

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From a humanistic perspective, many may believe that sympathy, kindness, or fellow feeling is an instinctual response that has been installed, evolutionarily and anthropologically, or ontogenetically and phylogenetically, for guaranteeing the cohesiveness of family circles, communities, and nations. On the other hand, in people with super-ego lacuna, like persons with antisocial personality traits, we may find persons devoid of clemency, compassion, or consideration. Therefore, kindheartedness may not be acknowledged as the indispensable component of every mentality. Therefore, how may the formation, genesis, or expression of humanity be described, despite the fact that consciences may not, automatically, be linked to gentleness? Essentially, though similar terms may be publicly substituted for each other, they may be conceptually different from each other. For example, while superego may, lexically, be comparable to morality, a sense of right and wrong, or a sense of judgment, it is a personal character and does not inevitably imply benevolence. In contrast, obsessive individuals, though usually conscientious, in opposition to antisocial persons, may be heartless as well due to their underlying unconscious defense mechanisms, like repression, isolation of affect, and reaction formation, though even they may not suppress emotions constantly in an obsessive character. Alternatively, while, theoretically, in people who are devoid of obsessive-compulsive traits, more unlimited discharge of feelings during daily life may balance emotional expression, compression of affects in, seemingly, unemotional obsessive persons may result in a more untimely discharge of sentiments in unanticipated situations, like movies or meetings. Nonetheless, humanity may be acknowledged as a sense, which may be expressed personally, as sympathy, or managerially, as a strategy, or diplomatically, as a political approach, depending on circumstances. For example, a caring and sympathetic parent may be a vindictive spouse as well, or an administration may be considerate to allies and antagonistic to foes simultaneously. Therefore, compassion may be known as an instinctive armor that may be triggered conditionally, not definitely. Thus, it is not a free-of-charge voucher. Also, it may evolve, degenerate, or transform by means of unconscious defense mechanisms or dynamic forces, in addition to real-life happenings or ordeals. Among the said unconscious defense mechanisms, identification may have a critical role for expression or amplification of emotional responses, like sympathy. Identification, which allegedly occurs by way of bodily, behavioral, or

cerebral resemblances, may arise by way of comparable fear or fate, too—a kind of judgment, which may not be, in essence, selfless. Also, while most of the defense mechanisms, like repression, are functioning individually, identification is not restricted by gender, time, or place, and it may happen limitlessly through the life cycle. Therefore, when a mother, who intuitively perceives her baby as part of herself, is worried for its sickness, she may, unconsciously, be worried for her well-being as well. The same mom, if later undergoing constant and serious distress by the said kid, may eventually hate it or even assassinate it. In this regard, in postpartum blues or postpartum psychosis with infanticide ideations, no depiction except disharmonic dynamic forces may formulate, at least to some extent, the existent morbid condition. On the other hand, in the absence of any resemblance, affiliation, or acquaintance, how sympathy may be formed, felt, or expressed. For instance, some people may feel heartily sad for calamities, losses, or blues that have occurred for outsiders, who lack any sociocultural or phenotypical similarity or acquaintance with them or their kinsfolk. At this juncture, maybe sameness of origin of human beings (evolutionary and anthropological), sameness of communications, emotions, and inferences (linguistic and behavioral), and sameness of mental apparatus (neurological and dynamic) may form, transnationally and transculturally, the essence of unconscious bonding between unacquainted individuals. Accordingly, unconsciousness may warn that whatever happens ‘There and Then’ may happen ‘Here and Now’ as well. Similarly, the phenomenon of ‘loss’ as the main source of feeling of sorrow or unhappiness is a universal and ubiquitous incident that starts with birth and continues ceaselessly till death. In addition, while an unconscious sense of loss may exist for whatever has really gone, or may be sensed worriedly for whatever may be withdrawn, it may also exist for whatever has never really existed but may have been imagined, one-time, subjectively. For example, a person who has been raised in a good household, along with his parents and siblings, may identify, unconsciously, with a pitiable orphan, who is distressed because he does not know his biological parents, and express, involuntarily, sympathy for the orphan’s sorrows. At this point, maybe nothing may catalyze this linking except the presence of a latent sense of loss in the former ostensibly happy person due to the previous passing away of his beloved families or the instigation of concern in him for possible loss in the future. But, while the orphan does not know his

relatives, the other one knows them. So, the said identification is structurally incongruent. But is it possible that the informed person may have had, ever, an unconscious sense of lonesomeness or boycott during his development, whether reasonable or unreasonable, which has been reverberated, melodramatically and falsely, into an unconscious sense of loss? Thus, this kind of loss may be a bit adjustable with the orphan's loss, who has never known his relatives. This kind of presumption is somewhat comparable to Freud's opinion regarding false claims of some analysts, who may turn their childish wishes or concerns into traumatic memories, which, though they may not be devoid of conflicting dynamic forces that demand probing, are not, in actual fact, genuine. On the other hand, while subjective analysis or inference may not always be reasonable, it may be submissive to misunderstanding or non-understanding as well, especially in an undeveloped child. Dissimilar manners in offspring of a family, who have been raised up by the same parents and ethics, may display that the non-acquired part of behavior may not be, smoothly, in harmony with its learned counterpart. Therefore, erroneous misinterpretation, whether unconsciously or consciously, may not be rare among kids. Thought and behavior are two switchable facets of a single entity. Besides, sympathy with an offender, for example, a murderer, as well, may be possible by a guiltless native when the said wrongdoer shows powerlessness or agony, though it may not be expressed in the presence of explicit heartlessness in the same delinquent. On the contrary, relatives of the said felon may feel misery for his condemning, which depends on the offender's psychosocial importance for them and whether he is hardhearted or compassionate. So, there are many intervening parameters that may determine hatred or gentleness, whether individually or mutually, or rightly or wrongly. By the same token, and disregarding interconnected facts, debates, or gaffes, the antagonism of some social movements against capital punishment (execution) of criminals may be described as their unconscious sympathy with visible and, apparently, despondent persons, not with annihilated victims or their distressed families. Anyhow, though proponents of clemency and law enforcement workforces may show contrasting attitudes regarding evildoers, which is based on their responsibilities, their humanistic feelings seem to be more similar to each other than otherwise. Such a similarity may be echoed in the higher rate of suicide among the latter group, in comparison with the general population or many other careers, which may have roots in a reinforced unconscious sense of guilt. Similarly, sympathy with a criminal who is going to be lawfully executed may have a basis in unconscious and egoistical self-preservation instinct and the supporting of primary narcissism, which may be endangered, someday or somewhere, by real hazards. But, since it is expectable that, regardless of criminological philosophies, omission of the death sentence may increase crime, because delinquents may, consciously or unconsciously, be assured that they may be safe from execution, a plea for its revoking may not be intuited commonsensically. Likewise, though it seems that the phenomenon of sympathy may not be applicable to mass murderers, who kill intentionally and mercilessly, like a machine gun, known or unknown victims, it must not be disregarded that self-annihilation inclinations, which psychoanalytically have roots in death instinct, happen typically in apoptosis (biologically), suicide (psychiatrically), and altruism (sociologically). While the first phenomenon may be accompanied by damage to nearby cells due to the release of intracellular calcium, the second one may be attended with injury to close people (like extended suicide), and the last one may be escorted with destruction to adjacent coworkers or compatriots as well. In suicidal mass-murdering, which has some contradictory similarities with extended suicide, and non-suicidal mass-murdering, which is similar to

intentional homicide, lack of empathy or sympathy, while seeming to be random and situation-dependent, must be evaluated based on other intervening factors, like revulsion or retaliation, as well, similar to hating and slaying enemies during war. In addition, other possible parameters, like substance abuse or mood, must not be unnoticed. In conclusion, while sympathy is one of the finest emotional reactions in human beings, it is not independent from exceptions, distortions, or reversions. Despite the fact that a person deprived of sympathy may be acknowledged as sick, like individuals with antisocial personality disorder, apathetic or blunted psychotic patients, self-absorbed autistic cases, depressed patients with anhedonia or pseudo-dementia, or patients with dementia, its exaggerated or untimely presence, too, may not rule out histrionic, deceptive, or affective problems. Anyhow, though empathy is necessary for sound communication and through analysis of actualities, sympathy may be acknowledged as the backbone or energizer of arts, literature, and humanity. Indeed, humankind without sympathy may not survive [1-15].

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