

Black Hole In The Psychic Orbit

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Abstract

The "existential emptiness" originates in the contact with the mother, when the child does not receive rêverie, this special maternal love, because in its first years of existence the formation of thoughts and feelings begins, under the regency of the alpha bionian function. However, if the mother does not have rêverie, the nervous system - and not the whole organism - will cause the ideas to be processed in a distorted way in the adult, generating aggressiveness and inappropriate behaviors, in the social sphere and even in the sexual sphere, consisting of the "sex-object", or desire without love - love-hate - disturbing the love and marital life of the individual. Potentials for aggressiveness, whether in the Freudian sense or in its opposite, make society continue in a sub-human dimension. In the realm of properly human phenomena - the only one in which one could find the desire for a meaning to life - it could be admitted that it is precisely the frustration of this desire that stimulates aggressiveness. The search for peace will be doomed to sterility as long as one continues to interpret only the sub-human phenomenon of "aggression" without analyzing the human phenomenon of "hatred". We think that in this way peace would be in the opposite feeling to the guilty feeling. In conclusion, the metaphor of return - inanimate matter - is stronger than one thinks, because this petrification of the ego aims at anesthesia and the inertia of psychic death. It is just an aporia (hesitation). In the undead, certain schizophrenic states are common. To become aware of the Neutral is to be indifferent to human passions.

Keywords: Black holes; Depression; Existential anguish; Psychoanalysis; Psychology.

Introduction

The Chinese word "Wu" and its Japanese counterpart "Mu" bring with them the sense of emptiness or full creative emptiness, reflecting the absolute or the TAO, which brings the idea of origin, principle or "existence of things". For Eastern thought, emptiness would be the absence of limits or forms, representing, however, the potentialities of creation. In Sanskrit, emptiness would be related to

"Karuna" (compassion or sympathy). On the contrary, it is also called "existential emptiness" or "black hole" which represents inertia of life (1).

The baby who lacks maternal love would be subject to the malformation of thoughts, which would already originate aggressive and, later, would produce hostile sexual desires, which would lead to difficulties in sexual intercourse. The frustration of desire would lead to existential emptiness – a feeling of the absurd. Such conflict is always increasing, stimulating aggressiveness and the feeling of abandonment and leading, as a last consequence, to the crime of passion, whether by murder or constant and unbearable deceit.

Certain religious schools exaggerated the role of the snake, which seduces Eve - an attitude contrary to God's designs. Hence the great sexual conflict through the centuries. In general, the most important thing in the history of primitive human behavior is not sexual sin, but a genetic factor, innate envy: we are born with greater or lesser hatred for our parents, united by love. Jansenism (contrary to Pope Gregory) thought that certain people come into the world with the grace of God (for us with a strong ego) and have the ability to distribute affection and know how to forgive; others (with a fragile or bumpy ego) can't stand frustrations and distribute aggressiveness.

The point of view of several professionals based on the clinical experience of psychoanalysis, does not value sexuality so much in the matter of the loss of the Earthly Paradise. We think that the human being is born with a specific aggressiveness - envy in the face of the union of parents. Which of us has not observed a child from one to three years of age, or more, who, when he sees his parents in bed, goes

to lie right in the middle of them, separating them? This psychic phenomenon, this type of envy, is called the combined figure. Always persecutory, the father and mother, in the baby's fantasy, represent cannibalism, when one devours and destroys the other. Such unconscious fantasy is of great importance as the cause of psychosomatic and mental illnesses, such as impotence, frigidity, and functional psychoses. Once the parents were happy and possessed of *rêverie* (special tenderness given by the parents), all these complexes would disappear in adulthood. When parents are not happy, they exacerbate these unconscious conflicts in the child - and then in the adult - producing the feeling of eternal abandonment. Therefore, the most important thing in sexual fantasies is the guilt arising from the unconscious hatred of the parents, that is, the combined persecuting figure.

The "existential emptiness" originates in the contact with the mother, when the child does not receive *rêverie*, this special maternal love, because in its first years of existence the formation of thoughts and feelings begins, under the regency of the alpha bionian function. However, if the mother does not have *rêverie* - often she only takes care of the baby "materially" well - the nervous system - and not the entire organism of the baby (predominance of beta elements) - will cause the ideas to be processed in a distorted way in the adult, generating aggressiveness and inappropriate behaviors, in the social sphere and even in the sexual sphere, consisting of the "object-sex", or desire without love - love-hate - , disturbing the love and marital life of the individual.

Winnicott alerts us to the early traumas that affect the baby, such as abandonment and lack of maternal *rêverie*. Even before he can become aware or

elaborate what has happened, the child remains in an emptiness, a state of expectation of something that does not actually occur. In this flaw, in this "black hole", a dead object remains: the mother without affection, the living dead without internal representation in the child (2). Such a situation may manifest itself later through experiences of catastrophic fear, as well as behavioral and feeling disorders. This sense of annihilation can, in adulthood, manifest itself through terrifying dreams, certain psychosomatic diseases and sexual deviations, such as fear of the genital act, premature orgasm in men and clitoral orgasm in women (3). Emptiness is, therefore, of a double perspective: one at the origin of thought and the other as the center of a pathology. In the latter case, the emptiness of the basic lack, the "non-breast" in Bion's concept (4) becomes the "breast that is with my father" - the ghost of the primary scene -, making it a combined figure (always persecutory) due to the castration complex, that is, due to the child's nonconformity in fantasizing that the mother stays only with the father, which entails potentials for aggressiveness, either in the Freudian sense (5), or, on the contrary, in Lorenz's sense, by making society evolve under a sub-human dimension (6).

Those who are only interested in the sexual plane are lost over time; it is necessary to go towards the human plane. The best stimulus is still "romanticism", that is, love or loving affection for the partner. Anyone who wishes to obtain salvation through the improvement of a technique of "love" exposes himself, in fact, to the destruction of all spontaneity.

He who feels that his life is absurd presents the disease of the Neutral (7), which brings unhappiness. Its main cause would be the mother's lack of r ever-

ie towards the baby in the mold periods (from one to seven years). The void or "black hole" would be the main cause of disturbed sexuality, whether due to impotence, premature orgasm, frigidity, transvestism, fetishism, etc. In all these cases, the filicidal feeling, sadness towards the mother and the decrease in interest in the child are in the foreground. The fact is that the individual feels, at that moment, a catastrophic change in the behavior of the maternal imago, which is experienced by the child as a catastrophe (lost love/narcissistic trauma/loss of meaning), especially when he feels between a dead mother and an inaccessible father, a situation that gives rise to the depressive state or the illness of the Neutral. It is the development of the maternal object and the unconscious identification with the dead mother.

Such individuals have a tendency to obsessional neurosis, as an intense power of compulsion to repetition, repeating an old defense (1). That which is totally unconscious is the identification with the undead mother, hence the anankastic ceremonials, the somatic and mental disorders and the sexual perversions, which, in turn, would lead to hatred and manic sadism, since it is a matter of dominating the object, of defiling it and taking revenge on it, taking the relationship with people to a desperate level. Another possible consequence is the blockage of love or aphanisis (afania): autoerotic excitement, not necessarily accompanied by sadistic fantasies, but with a connotation that goes from love to the object. In the case of a patient with Sjogren's syndrome - decreased secretion of the mucous membranes - resulting from a love conflict that began in childhood. The patient also had numerous stones in the salivary canals, which led to the need for several clearance surgeries. In fact, since he was 14 years old, love conflicts led to new obstructions

- a process of thanatic somatization.

To understand "emptiness" we need not mathematical or arithmetic logic, but paralogical or paleological, whose actions are processed more by non-consciousness - as occurs in countless neurotic diseases, especially in schizophrenia. In this, there is a deficiency of prolactin, a hormone that exerts some control over neurotransmitters. In Zen Buddhism or deep meditation, when "not thinking" (emptiness) is achieved, prolactin levels increase, signaling the proper functioning of the nervous system. In the individual in a state of sinister there appears, then, a feeling of strangeness or the double, as in the "splitting" of the schizophrenic, explained by the hormonal alteration (hallucinogen), especially in the corpus callosum, found in certain cases of autism (deficiency of the corpus callosum) (8). The double would also be an expression of castration or depersonalization.

Lopez-Penalver's patient (1) says: "I feel muerta in mi interior", a common symptom in the disease of the Neutral, similar to the feeling of generalized dissatisfaction that occurs in Lacan's "aphanisis" (9), motivated by the fear of having emotions that increase the death instinct thanks to the bad feelings coming from objects that have been internalized since childhood.

Grotstein's excellent work called "Nothingness, meaninglessness, chaos and black-hole" defines "emptiness" as the result of an undead mother (without rêverie) (10). Only by self-regulation of interaction and homeostasis could such patients be improved. We also think that the analyst's posture - secure, firm and loyal - can help. Emptiness is related, from a metapsychological point of view, to the lack of psychic elaboration or "lack of something",

or even to a serious structural alteration of the mind. It would be like a contract that cannot host content. On the other hand, Bion thinks that the experience of non-chest generates the conditions for the appearance of thoughts of voluntariness in search of emptiness, although, in the East, such a state is sought in practice, through non-thinking (11). The usefulness of the practice of the Sufis, when individuals play with words with double entendres, is employed in Islamic culture, it seems, for an approximation to unconscious knowledge. In mourning, on the contrary, Islam uses the color white while the West prefers the color black, which reminds us that emptiness favors the fear of death of loved ones, including the analyst, especially in the crisis of intense dissatisfaction, in the illness of the Neutral, which is why the patient needs to borrow something from the therapist, be it books, medicines or simply a lighter. Such affective dependence revives experiences composed of something terrifying. It is the impossibility of reliving the anguish of separation or loss. According to Lopez-Penalver (1), Pascal was horrified by emptiness, which suddenly disappeared when he began to use calculus or geometry; as well as Kant, who was entrenched in abstraction without object. The physicist Álvaro de Rugula believes that emptiness has a certain identity, which is why it attracts and repels.

Lopez-Penalver also reports that the "non-mommy" would be related to the baby's jealousy, becoming "because he is with his mother" (ghost of the primitive scene). On the other hand, the non-penis - not thinkable - must be transformed into something thinkable, but not in terms of "the girl has no penis", as this would exacerbate the feeling of castration. Such factors, associated with those previously acquired thanks to the lack of the mother's alpha function, would favor the appearance of a state of

diffuse anguish, common to the disease of the Neutral. This type of patient feels emptiness as a trauma, without coherence and with loss of representation (1), hence the need for compulsive repetition - due to the cessation of mental development and rejection, which leads to a temporal regression that reduces the limits of the ego. Compulsive repetition reinforces emptiness in the individual.

According to Winnicott, it is from the "good enough mother" that the baby can pass from the Pleasure Principle to the Reality Principle, but that for him is an insult, a story that seems dirty to him (12). The baby defends himself in the face of separation from the breast through the "transactional object" (pacifier), using it as an element against emptiness. It is advisable for the analyst to accept the void without trying to fill it, but he must do a work of figurability: hence the importance of using techniques that try to focus, whenever possible, on childhood traumas, that is, those in relation to which the patient often refers to as "I don't remember anything about my childhood". It is a fear stimulated by defense, which is why we must change the classical theory of psychoanalysis, indirectly stimulating the memory of childhood through the interpretation of dreams and other ways of reaching emptiness. This means thinking about why the ego always endures a certain amount of suffering!

Emptiness differs from vacuum: in the former, contrast was experienced, but at certain moments a certain fullness can be felt. In a vacuum, on the contrary, nothing can be perceived, because it would be nothingness, the lack of structure.

Some analysts suggest back-up of medications and telephone communication for permanent contact with the patient (13). Steiner postulates the "third

position" at the moment of the patient's transition. Green (14) draws attention to the "clinic of emptiness". Bollas (15) suggests approaching the primary object - feared but desired - by reaching a "nervous breakdown". We choose to distance ourselves from others. During this period, during the crisis of emptiness, the patient's reaction through anorexia, bulimia or "near-death addiction" (16) - motivated by hopelessness - is frequent to the detriment of constructive thoughts. It is in this situation that we can think of the "third analyst" of Ogden (17) and Grostein (8): being able to help the "borderline" patient to integrate into the way of feeling and thinking. It is not easy to change the way of interpreting, but perhaps it is the only satisfactory way out!

Often, patients with existential emptiness have, in a more advanced degree, the so-called death instinct, which the poet Bocage, already dying, mentions, when making an appeal to the mother for not being born: "Damn mother who / Between her knees / Didn't know how to squeeze / When I was born, / My infant body. / Damn!" It is a posthumous appeal to "not be born". It seems that the fetus would already be filled with the death instinct, just as in the fear of celebrating the day of birth - and then dying. The Caduceo - a staff of two intertwined snakes - a symbol of Medicine, represents wisdom and, at the same time, the evil mother. Such fantasies generate fear of the mother figure. On the other hand, the idealization of the "holy" mother leads the man to idealize the female figure to such an extent that he is unable to achieve genital intercourse, precisely because he feels the woman as a saint - the Virgin Mary - which would be an excess of Oedipus Complex. Man, in order to defend himself, seeks adventure, idealizes the great sportsmen, the great singers, the leaders and heroes - such as Ulysses or agent 007. All this ceremonial is nothing more than

a defense against the feeling of castration: in religion, we have a clear example in the ceremonial of the "bar-mitza", of the Jewish religion (a symbolology against the feeling of castration of the adolescent). Eckartberg's work with Harvard University graduates is interesting: he found that a large percentage of these individuals, even 20 years after graduating, complained of a deep sense of utter absurdity, even though their lives were well organized.

The nosographic concept of mental emptiness as a metapsychological paradigm allows us to address the various ways in which this emptiness can appear (2). Patients with mental emptiness go from anguish (18) to "Nameless Terror" (4). The baby is born with an Id full of multiple fantasies to be developed, being the facilitating environment (holding support, management) that, through projective identification, uses the beta bionian elements. These, in turn, produce mental emptying, which takes with it emotions and, especially, the ability to think. This will harm the individual as an adult, as it will lead to poor behavior and mental illness.

This mental situation is impaired by the formation of "bizarre objects": coercive thoughts and contradictory emotions that take the place of good thinking. Such objects are not generators of life and meaning, but sensory disturbances. The patient subject to these conditions ends up generating the "anxiety hole", common in patients with the disease of the Neutral, that is, indifference to everything and everyone combined with a feeling of non-existence, whose improvement is processed through the mental strength of the analyst, in the transference. In defense of a certain neutrality - of the thinking being, of the integrated being - it is

essential to distinguish the situation of neutrality as a defense from affective ideology (19). The baby can pass from lap to lap and not receive rêverie, because material care, in line with the models of erroneous care, does not contribute to mental growth.

Canelas Neto (20) argues that the void is not a region of space deprived of matter, but a unistate base of a reservoir of possibility. This concept leads Zemel to accept the possibility of some hope of success in the treatment - the "mind that does not kill", although loneliness is intolerable (1). Moreira refers to Bacon's painting, Beckett's novelist trilogy and the three Bionian concepts - containment interaction, primitive catastrophes and attacks against bonds; all of them establish a nexus relationship in thought (1). These three examples try to describe the state of man marked by all these losses: disbelief, powerlessness and ignorance - thanks to the fact that they were not loved enough by their mothers and boyfriend. However, such losses can be overcome through creations: Neorealism, the New Novel and the psychotic nuclei in normal individuals. For example, the patient with Neutral disease seems to have the attachment described by Beckett: no longer perceiving, no longer being, but rather despicuous, a term that combines the ideas of despair, shattering, depopulation and dispossession. The psychoanalytic treatment is similar to our cultural heritage, as it is based on the trilogy: catabasis (symbolic death, plunge into thunder, when the hero strips himself of his "metals"); anabasis (symbolic rebirth, ascent to clarity); anagnosis (self-knowledge).

The compulsion to repeat is a lethal mechanism that drags psychic life to paralysis - towards Nirvana, or the return to the inorganic, according to

Freud (5); mental pain is sometimes expressed through painful experiences of emptiness and animals.

stopped time (1). Bion states that all knowledge originates from primitive experiences of an emotional nature related to the absence of the object (11). The baby will memorize in the form of positive thoughts or dream thoughts (alpha elements). The bonds L and K (desire for knowledge) are strengthened in the sense of the first way of knowing love. Wismer Fries et al. point to very concrete biological causes for this to occur (21). The decrease in oxytocin and vasopressin (two neurohormones that strongly influence the emotional state) was found in 18 babies who were on the lap of their adoptive mothers. These had less of the neurohormones than 21 other babies who were in the arms of their biological mothers. Magnetic resonance imaging found that in the nucleus accumbens, the region that integrates the stimulus and reward system, increased significantly when the mother took care of her children. The brain areas that regulate reward were activated even when mothers simply looked at their children.

The density of the dendritic spine (small projections that provide more areas for the reception of nerve signals) increased in the hippocampus as the level of estrogens rose. The injection of oxytocin into the hippocampus of virgin females leads to an increase in brain memory, presumably due to increased enzyme activity, which strengthens neural connections (1).

Winnicott (22) alerts us to very early traumas that affect the baby before he is conscious. It is as if he were in a vacuum, in a state of expectation in relation to something that does not happen; in its place will be a "phallus", a dead object that would manifest itself later (Bionian psychic death) in experi-

ences of catastrophic fear, as in dreams about wild animals.

There is a distinction between absence and emptiness. The first is symbol order. Absence can be thought of, because it arises after an experience. Emptiness, on the contrary, is of the order of the real, of the "thing in itself", and would correspond to an internal space where the possibility of representation of the object is annulled. Emptiness can lead to the feeling of oceanic (fusion of God with the Universe), of depersonalization or hallucination (loss of the sense of time). Hartocollis (23) reports that when time is lived without affection and affection is lived without time, the experience is pathological and is translated by the feeling of strangeness, distance and emptiness, because one of the individual's organs does not belong to him. Emptiness is associated with depression, with the feeling of abandonment, that is, the experience of Donnet & Green's white psychosis (24) is manifested by alterations in thinking - the "hollow head" or the inability to think, more common in the neurotic personality with a psychotic core. This sensation of psychic death and poverty in the relations with objects is called by Deutsch (25) the personality "as itself". Bion (11) suggests, in these cases, that the analyst makes himself available to the patient and offers himself as a continent, so that the latter can speak and feel his bad feelings (alexithymia).

Emptiness can be processed in the anabolic setting, depending on the transference action of the analyst, especially on occasions when the analyst says: "I feel like an empty and dry tube from head to toe". The patient tries to stop time in order to control himself! Often, most patients who suffer from emptiness feel that the glory and success belong to the analyst, leading to dangerous envy; in

this case, the analyst must, and must, be humble and firm, because he faces a tyrannical and persecutory superego. Aulagnier (26) says that the therapist must be concerned with the figurability of interpretation, that is, with the fact that his words can evoke for the patient representations of concrete things and affections, acting as transformers of two stories: the one that brought the patient to the analyst and the one that he builds throughout the transferential process.

It was in the Symposium that the term *poesis* was used by Plato (27) with the meaning of bringing something to the surface, bringing out what was not there before. It is a process through which the fragility of the inner emptiness - felt as insecurity - is gradually transmuted into depth (1), because the archaic or divine language, between mother and child, is loaded with affection (*rêverie*), nobility, grandeur, dignity and seriousness, that is, the way it is spoken and received conveys a diffuse but constructive feeling. Chesterton says: "If you look at something 999 times, you are perfectly saved; if you look at it for the thousandth time, you run the frightful risk of seeing it for the first time" (1). Another example: if you've never seen what George Oppen is, it's because you haven't sat still long enough - and haven't found yourself firmly with him.

The frustration caused by the absence of the desire "to have meaning for life" would lead to existential emptiness, to the feeling of absurdity, always growing, stimulating aggressiveness and the feeling of abandonment.

Potentials for aggressiveness, whether in the Freudian sense or in its opposite, make society continue in a sub-human dimension. In the realm of properly

human phenomena - the only one in which one could find the desire for a meaning for life - it could be admitted that it is precisely the frustration of this desire (the existential emptiness, the ever-growing feeling of absurdity) that would stimulate aggressiveness.

The search for peace will be doomed to sterility as long as one continues to interpret only the sub-human phenomenon of "aggression" without analyzing the human phenomenon of "hatred" (10). We think that in this way peace would be in the opposite feeling to the guilty feeling.

Man has a greater tendency to crime when possessed by the feeling of the absurd, as seen in the work of Grotstein (8), Raine et al. (28), in which the lack of *rêverie* on the part of the mother, when the baby is born, would result in the transformation towards a murderous personality, at 18 years of age. Murphy et al. (29) found that the same fact occurs in a baby without *rêverie*, who later, in adulthood, needs aggressive genital act. This work has been confirmed in rats. The same occurs in maternal deficiency - alteration in oxytocin and vasopressin in the blood.

What is true for criminality is also true for sexuality: the sexual libido hypertrophies and degenerates when there is an existential void.

Today, we are faced with a sexual inflation that, like all inflation - including that of the financial market - goes hand in hand with devaluation. Sexuality is devalued to the extent that it is dehumanized, because human sexuality is more than simple sexuality, if it is measured by the transsexual and personal planes, because it can no longer be integrated into clichés, such as "pure sublimations".

The opposite of pleasure is not always displeasure. The opposite of pleasure can be Neutral. It is not depression that we should think of here, but of apathesis, anorexia of living, asceticism and emotional indifference, as we have already emphasized.

In conclusion, the metaphor of return - inanimate matter - is stronger than one thinks, because this petrification of the ego aims at anesthesia and the inertia of psychic death. It is just an aporia (hesitation). In the undead, certain schizophrenic states are common. To become aware of the Neutral is to be indifferent to human passions.

Acknowledgments

In memoriam: Luiz Miller de Paiva.

Conflict of interest

None.

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