

Between servitude and freedom: an instinctual frugality

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Abstract – This work aims to understand the affective dimension that permeates human relationships and the variation that characterizes their forms. The concepts presented here aim to situate man in relation to these two poles of his existence, servitude and freedom, which are urgent for us to reflect on the subject of ethics today. Considering instability as a constitutive mark of the affective field through which man relates, we will resort to concepts which will support and illustrate the idea which we intend to present, namely the economic nature of the bodily forces which motivate and intervene in such relations which pass, as they are established, to a configuration of power. From the philosophical concepts of affection, servitude and freedom, according to Spinoza, it is possible to understand the existential and ethical dimension that runs through human life. The Freudian concepts of herd instinct, identification and love can be understood as affections belonging to the soul of the herd which, in its psychic process, leads man to his state of servitude. From these foundations, one can think about human freedom and how man can, through sublimatory processes, become the cause of himself, and thus show new possibilities, outlets that man has under his own power to make his life more joyful and, in this way, not to live at the mercy of external causes that

result in shocks, condemning him to the bondage of his own passions. This research brings these questions to reflection to show how the traditional way of thinking directly impacts man in his way of relating, freely or not, to the world and, finally, how another perspective of understanding this which constitutes its nature allows a new posture in the face of desire itself.

Keywords

Affection. Slavery. Freedom. Herding instinct. Sublimation.

INTRODUCTION

This work aims to understand the affective dimension that permeates human relationships and the variation that characterizes their forms. Considering instability as the main constitutive mark of the affective field by which man relates to the world, we will resort to concepts which will come to support and illustrate the idea which we intend to present, namely the economic nature of the bodily forces which motivate and intervene in such relations which pass simultaneously, as they are established, to a configuration of power, that is to say that sometimes the man is in a position of servitude, sometimes he is in an active position, which can be called freedom or sublimation. In this sense, man being moved by a variable drive configuration, freedom would be neither conquered, in the case of servitude, nor permanently maintained. It is appropriate to ask whether there would be an absolute position in the existence of man which would become entirely dominant in his life or whether there would be a permanent transit of the impulses or forces which constitute him throughout his life. existential trajectory.

Therefore, among the fundamental concepts, we first resort to the philosophical concepts of affection, servitude and freedom, according to Baruch de Spinoza, to understand the chain of such ideas and thus have the existential and ethical dimension that crosses life of man. Affection, however, is the human element that can serve as an indicator of the way man lives, since it necessarily implies the state of bondage or freedom he experiences. These concepts, however, demanded their deployment and were developed through the psychoanalysis of Sig-

mund Freud who, in turn, thought of the herd instinct, identification and love as affections belonging to the herd soul which, in his psychic process, leads man to their state of servitude.

Added to this, in *La configuration pulsionnelle*, it was necessary to develop the relationship between individual and mass, and the notions of suggestion and libido. Such elements reveal the nuances and psychological states that lead man to one or another existential dimension, to reflect on how man's life in unorganized groups, its subjective and ethics can diminish it compared to what it can perform under other different conditions. In the last part of *The Human Essence*, through the psychoanalytic concept of sublimation, we reflect on human freedom and how man can become the cause of himself, and thus show new possibilities, outlets that the man has under his own power to make his life more joyful and, in this way, not to live at the mercy of external causes that cause jolts, condemning him to the servitude of his own passions.

Finally, the subject of research is of paramount importance when thinking about fundamental questions such as freedom and therefore servitude, since they traditionally cross the mind of man in a dichotomous way, like ideals to be sought. or, in the case of the second, as subjection to be avoided. Therefore, this work proposes, above all, an ethical reflection, which translates into the competence that each one exercises over himself to relate to others, and the capacity for sublimation suggests a way of approaching the effectuation of power. human, as well as the ideal of a society, constituting itself exactly as the opposite of a symptom.

Fundamental Concepts

Spinoza, a Dutch philosopher, opens the preface to the fourth part of his main work, entitled *Ethics*, by emphasizing the affective dimension in which man is necessarily involved. According to the thinker, the affect is an idea which is characterized by the force to exist, more or less great than before, that a body affirms.

Although rationalist in identifying impotence with man's inability to restrict his affections by reason, Spinoza, in his thought, does not suggest the existence of a hierarchy between reason and affection, it that is to say, reason, in its pure aspect, would exercise no dominion over the

passions. To this Spinoza says: "An affect can only be contained or canceled by an affect that is contrary and stronger than the affect to be contained" ¹. Thus, Spinoza, by maintaining that a single affect is capable of containing another, suggests the primacy of the affective field to which man is subject, disqualifying reason as a power sufficiently capable of dominating or power in the face of the infinite flow of affections. . Thus, in this condition, Spinoza highlights the state of helplessness in which man is confronted with affections produced by chance encounters with other bodies. In this way, man's knowledge is unable to exercise any determination over his emotions, since affective determination depends on how a body is affected by external causes, thus, true knowledge is not sufficient as a determinant . To this, Spinoza writes:

I call servitude the human impotence to regulate and restrain the affections. For the man subject to the affections is not under his own control, but under that of chance, to the power of which he is so subject that he is often forced, even if he perceives what is best for him, to however, do worse ².

Man would be in "servitude", says Spinoza, when what governs his life are the affections produced in him, so much chance plays a dominant role in his life, being able to lead him towards what can harm him, even conscious of what he does that would move him to a way of life that would preserve his own existence. By this, Spinoza indicates the insufficient character of information to modify a relation.

However, Spinoza affirms that there would be a condition in the reason by which it would place itself in sovereignty vis-a-vis the affections arisen by chance, and by which the man would be in servitude. This condition of reason capable of regulating affects would necessarily accompany an affective sense by nature, that is to say that the knowledge of man sufficient to restrain an affect must necessarily accompany an affective *raison d'être*. He says, "The true knowledge of good and evil, though true, cannot restrain any affection; it will only be able to retain it as long as it is considered as affection" ³.

With this proposition, Spinoza proposes that pure rational knowledge, a scientific datum for example, although true, can do nothing in the face of an affect. But such knowledge, considered as affect and only as such, being stronger than the affect to be contained,

¹Spinoza, *Ethics* IV, Prop 7, in *Complete Works* , Paris, Gallimard, 1954, p. 496

²Spinoza, *Ethics* IV, preface, p. 487

³ *Ethics* IV, Proposition 14

can, in the end, contain it. This true or rational knowledge to which Spinoza refers has in itself, in his logic of being, an equivalent correspondence with the laws of nature, which refer or can be understood by what suits the inclinations of the man, whatever they persevere in their own existence, because, he says, man naturally strives to affirm his own existence. This idea appears thus in Part IV of *Ethics* :

Since virtue consists only in acting according to the laws of nature itself, and since no one strives to preserve his being except by the laws of his nature, it follows: 1. That the ground of virtue is this effort to preserve one's own being, and that happiness consists in man being able to preserve it. 2. That virtue must be desired for itself, since there is nothing else preferable to it, or more useful to us, and for whom it must be desired. 3. Finally, that those who commit suicide are impotent in spirit and entirely dominated by external causes contrary to their nature. It also follows that it is quite impossible that we need nothing outside of us to maintain our being, and that we live in such a way that we have no exchange with things outside of ourselves. us⁴.

Spinoza seems to suggest that not only does man strive to persevere in his own existence, but that this effort would then have as its foundation the happiness of being able to preserve himself, that is to say that an affection of joy would be born with the possibility that man has the power to intensify life and that such a foundation would be based on a way of life governed by the precepts of reason, and here we understand the operation of reason accompanied by affections which, then, potentiating and affirming life, being on this path is inseparable and therefore its cause is of itself naturally willed. Then Spinoza refers to those who commit suicide as the ultimate consequence of man's submission to the affections, being entirely in bondage; these impotent men would not act according to the laws of their nature. Having his power to exist diminished, suicide for Spinoza will always be the total subjection of man to the powers of external causes which determine him, thus reducing man to a determination contrary to his own nature.

Now this man, subjected and governed by such affects produced in him, will then see his actions or powers overcome insofar as he remains stubbornly fixed in these affects, says Spinoza. Thus, the force of a passion can move him without knowing it, insofar as it is defined, not by the power with which we strive to persevere in our own existence, but by the power of the external cause considered by compared to ours.

⁴ *Ethics* IV, Proposition 18 Scolia

On the other hand, to think about freedom according to Spinoza's thought, one must start from some fundamental considerations of his work which break definitively with the traditional notions of the history of Western thought, considerations nevertheless in which all of Spinoza's work Spinoza The *Ethics* consists. The traditional link, for example, between freedom and will, that is to say freedom confused with a power of choice or the power to realize oneself through a model, is what Spinoza never ceases to combat in his work. , for it would be the same as presupposing an "eminence" of nature in relation to its "creatures". Freedom for Spinoza must therefore not be conceived as that of a "tyrant or that of a legislator", because one would thus attribute to nature an inconsistency in its production and one would fall back on the idea of a transcendence to be creative .

Thus, by confusing freedom and will, we reduce God or Nature – which comes to the same thing for Spinoza – to the power to create one thing at the expense of others, that is to say that nature would find itself limited by models of possibility. Now, this way of thinking is precisely what Spinoza's ideas necessarily reject, when he refers to nature as an "absolutely infinite substance" which "conceives itself by itself", the cause of its existence not being not external to it, but contained within itself ⁵. With this proposition presented in Part I of the *Ethics*, Spinoza points to a radical reversal in the way we think about the existence of life. It is true that when Spinoza thinks "God", he does not do so in the same way as the Judeo-Christian theological tradition, which constitutes the predominant Western culture and values, namely as a creative entity which would then be endowed absolute attributes such as "justice, kindness and charity" ⁶.

Deleuze, in his glossary on Spinoza's philosophy, says that "freedom is never the property of the will", because what is free is free. For him, "understands his own nature and all that derives from it", saying free, then, all that exists according to his nature, and that would amount to saying that free is he who has his actions determined by himself, or even, when his actions proceed essentially from the realization of himself as part of this "absolutely infinite" nature ⁷. Now, why does Spinoza identify freedom with the production of the absolute? What relationship would nature or God have with Spinoza's idea of freedom? Could it be possible, under any conditions, for man to be free? For Spinoza, unlike man,

⁵Cf. DELEUZE, Gilles, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* , Paris, Minuit, 2003, p. 89

⁶DELEUZE, Gilles, *Spinoza and the problem of expression* , Paris, Minuit, 1969, p. 49

⁷DELEUZE, Gilles, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* , Op., Cit., p. 89

only God is free, because he would not be subject and would be governed by nothing other than himself, contrary to the case of man, nothing would therefore come to constrain him. If this were not so, we would have to admit the existence of two distinct natures, or of two substances of the same nature. In Proposition 6 of Book I of the Ethics, Spinoza says: "A substance cannot be produced by another substance". And he demonstrates it in the following way: "In the nature of things, there cannot be two substances of the same attribute, that is to say, which have something in common with each other. Therefore, one cannot be the cause of the other, that is, one substance cannot be produced by the other ⁸. Thus, Spinoza admits one and the same substance as the cause of itself and of all that exists, that is to say "the existing belongs to its nature" ⁹. We can see that Spinoza's expressions indicate an affirmative character of nature, and therefore the thinker designates in such a concept what man knows no other than the laws which are his, and therefore would seek to take place.

Identification is a concept that psychoanalysis knows as one of the oldest affective bonds between two people, a common affect in human life and which, according to Freud, plays a determined role at the beginning of the oedipal phase. According to the thinker, the boy from an early age shows a specific type of affection for his father, takes him as a reference for who he would like to be one day, grow up and become the same man, with the same desires and thoughts, desires and ambitions, and often taking its place in all situations. In other words, the boy has at this moment his father as an ideal to follow or pursue in order to be attained. If this affect reveals a specific form of affection, it does not mean a passive, homosexual tendency or posture of the boy towards his father, but typically masculine and normal during the development of his psychic structure. Identification would then be the affection by which the subject strives to configure himself, his own Self, similar to the figure taken as ideal ¹⁰.

However, Freud describes the difference between identification and falling in love in its most developed forms and calls them "fascination" and "loving servitude". In the first case, the ego is enriched, assimilates traces of the identified object, introjects such an ideal. In the second case, the ego is impoverished, it has 'delivered to the object', has placed it in the place of an important reference component, in

⁸SPINOZA, *Ethics* I, Prop 2

⁹SPINOZA, *Ethics* I, Prop 7

¹⁰ FREUD , *Psychology of the masses and analysis of the self* , Paris, PUF, 2019, p. 60

place of the 'ideal of the ego'. The object of love is then placed in the ideal position, as the one who has what he is for the idealized subject and can then be loved. At the concept of falling in love, Freud presents us with an interesting relationship with hypnosis, and says that the agreements between these two states are obvious. For the psychoanalyst, one can even observe humble subjection, the same docility and absence of criticism towards the hypnotist as towards the loved object.

The same undermines on its own initiative; no doubt the hypnotist has replaced the ego ideal. Everything in hypnosis is even more clear and tense, so it would be more appropriate to elucidate falling in love through hypnosis than the other way around. The hypnotist is the only object, no other receives the attention apart from him. [...] The hypnotic relationship is a free loving delivery where gratification is excluded - sexual in love - it is pushed - temporarily back and remain in the background, as a possible future goal ¹¹.

What matters in these concepts is to pay attention to their underlying effects, to what this affectivity implies for the subject in question, whether it is a matter of identification or love in psychic life or even social of individuals. In the quotation from Freud, one can note the implications of the following terms: "docility", "absence of criticism", "attack on one's own initiative", "humble subjection". We thus understand how the individual, inserted or not in organized groups, weakens in his creative and autonomous processes. Freud goes on to show how such affectivity, which originally had a sexual purpose and which has been lost through the process of repression carried out by the family, manages to create lasting bonds between people. This affectivity runs through the personal relationships of individuals in the mass, whether in the form of identification or love, when a single object was placed in place of the ego ideal. According to Freud, "A primary mass of this type is a set of individuals who have put a single object in place of their ego ideal and, therefore, have identified with each other in their ego" ¹².

The various emotional bonds created in the mass reveal its main characteristic, that is to say what the mass ends up producing in the individual. He necessarily renounces his difference and his initiative and, having, as Freud observes, a certain "similarity" between his reaction and that of others, the individual is reduced to the condition of a mass. Such an image is described by Freud as a movement of "regression of the activity of the soul to an earlier stage". Intellectual activity is conditioned

¹¹ Same , p. 73 – 74

¹²Same, p. 76

by a kind of dependence on reinforcement from others. This phenomenon is recalled by Freud as part of the normal constitution of human society; individuals constitute it through such connections or psychic mechanisms of each person's personality. In this way, emotional personal ties prevail, diminishing, at the same time, the originality and the courage of all those who are there. As Freud also points out in connection with the government of the soul of the mass, the formed unit commands the actions of the men who are governed by it, that is to say, the suggestion is not only exercised by the leader but also mutually, and the individual composes a unique whole where the differences disappear ¹³.

This formed whole which is characterized by the equalization and the submission of the individuals who are included in it, and which in a certain way operates in them, Freud will call the herd instinct, observed from the beginning in the homes where there is more than one child, since their relationship with children. However, Freud also observed that generally older siblings will be hostile to those who came later out of jealousy, repress and try to alienate them from their parents, but not being able to maintain such hostility without harming themselves, they are forced to identify with other children and therefore the "herd instinct" or "mass feeling" would form in the group of children. Freud suggests that, on the formation of the herd or the herd instinct, the idea is based on the common demand for values of equality and justice for all within the masses, that is to say where the difference cannot make room for difference, there is a requirement for absolute equality ¹⁴. For Freud, sublimation is the capacity of the original sexual drive to replace its object by another non-sexual object, that is to say that the goal in its sexual origin is replaced by another of a social nature, by example, there is no decrease in the intensity of satisfaction. Sublimated drives obtain the satisfaction of a particular, non-sexual quality, although creative in various fields such as science, mathematics, arts, cinema or theater and apparently unrelated to sexual life although their source is animated by instincts of sexual origin. The drive modifies, according to Freud, its objective because of the plastic capacity it carries within it, and he also says:

The sexual drive places extraordinarily important forces at the disposal of cultural work, and this is due to this peculiarity, particularly marked in it, of being able to shift its objective without losing its in-

¹³See Idem, p. 78

¹⁴See Idem, p. 81

tensity in the main. This ability to exchange the original sexual goal for another goal, which is no longer sexual, but which is psychically related to it, is called the capacity of sublimation ¹⁵.

On the psychic level, however, the satisfaction of a sexual nature and that obtained by sublimation are equivalent, only their objective being modified, both having the same "genetic kinship" ¹⁶.

THE PULSIONAL CONFIGURATION

To understand man and what is supposed to imprison him, we must reflect on the conditions and dispositions that favor such a phenomenon. Initially, we present the concept of affect in Spinoza to rule out any possibility that man has to make "free choices", or to be endowed with a "free will" by which we would rationalize any human phenomenon. Thus, one cannot disregard the social fabric which emotionally involves man and which, in turn, can exercise a certain power over him to determine his actions. We resort to the thought of Sigmund Freud to, from his text in which he analyzes the psychic phenomena of individuals when they are inserted into "disorganized" groups or institutionally constituted collectives, to reflect on the way in which man will be entirely subject to the coercion of the group or, in Spinoza's terms, how will man be in "bondage".

In dealing with this question, Freud (1920-1923) says that the phenomena manifested by man as a member of a collective, or of a tribe, of a caste or of a class, for example, are curiously different from the phenomena observed by the individual considered as a particular human being. Freud uses the perspectives of thinkers such as Le Bon and McDougall to develop his "mass psychology", whose main theses we will take up again. The first point that must be underlined as curious about mass phenomena is that these, when they manifest themselves and are observed, are the result of what Freud called the social instinct, which is irreducible to such "agglomerations which organize themselves en masse at a given time with a view to a certain end" ¹⁷. Freud refers to the new problem with which psychology was confronted and which it

¹⁵FREUD, Sigmund, *Sexual Life*, Paris, PUF, 1997, p. 32

¹⁶ibid.

¹⁷Same, p. 15

would henceforth have to explain, since it seeks to think about the dispositions, the impulses or the inclinations which animate human actions, which made the individual comprehensible to him under certain conditions. . Thinking about the psychology of the masses, psychoanalysis is confronted with the surprising fact that this comprehensible individual in this particular individual condition, i.e. considered in isolation, this same individual, thinks, acts and feels in a completely different from that expected and such a condition would therefore be the individual aligned in a group or a crowd which then acquired the characteristic of a sort of homogeneous unity, or else of “psychological mass” as Freud rightly evokes it ¹⁸.

According to Le Bon:

The most singular fact in a psychological mass is this: whatever the individuals who compose it, be it their mode of life, their occupations, their character or their intelligence, the simple fact that they have become a mass makes them possessors of a kind of collective soul. This soul causes them to feel, think and act in a very different way from what each would feel, think and act in isolation. Certain ideas, certain feelings appear or are transformed into acts only in individuals in large numbers. The psychological mass is a provisional being, composed of heterogeneous elements which for a moment are welded together, just as the cells of an organism form, with their assembly, a new being which manifests characteristics very different from those possessed by each of the cells ¹⁹.

Interpreting Le Bon, Freud raises a fundamental question which will then give the meaning of the functioning of the masses. Since the individuals of the mass are in some way bound by it, there must therefore be something which unites them, something which would exert an influence in a common way on the individuals and which would then be a fundamental characteristic of the mass. However, Freud says that Le Bon does not refer to this question, but concentrates mainly on the modifications of the individual in the mass:

To glimpse them, we must first recall this observation of modern psychology: that it is not only in organic life, but also in the functioning of the intelligence that unconscious phenomena play a preponderant role. The conscious life of the spirit represents only a tiny part compared to its unconscious life. The most subtle analyst, the most penetrating observer, succeeds in discovering only a small

¹⁸ FREUD, *Psychology of the masses and analysis of the self* , Op., Cit., p. 17

¹⁹LE BON, Gustave, *Psychology of crowds* , Paris, PUF, 2013 ⁹ , p. 17

number of the unconscious motives which animate him. Our conscious acts derive from an unconscious substratum formed mainly of hereditary influences. This substrate contains the innumerable ancestral residues which constitute the soul of the race. Behind the avowed causes of our actions, there are undoubtedly secret causes that we do not confess, but behind these secret causes there are others, even more secret, because we are unaware of them ourselves. Most of our daily actions are the result of hidden furniture that escapes us ²⁰.

Thus, the singular traits of individuals disappear in the mass, the particularity is clearly suppressed, the differences, says Freud, are drowned in the homogeneous. The masses would then have, as a role on the individual, the capacity to equalize what is necessarily unequal by nature, that is to say that individuals constituted by different processes begin to operate in the mass in a uniform way. . Freud goes so far as to say that "The psychic superstructure is dismantled, weakened, and the unconscious foundation common to all is laid bare" ²¹.

At one point, Freud not only compares the individual in the mass as similar to the state of someone hypnotized at the hands of a hypnotist, but also defines it as where the conscious personality vanishes, "the will and discernment," says Freud, disappear and give way to feelings and thoughts then directed in a direction determined by the hypnotist. This is why individuals completely involved in what these thinkers call "the collective soul" come to behave in a determined sentimental way, having then the channels which favor such actions released by the "instincts" hitherto repressed. Freud goes so far as to say that such an individual - we have come to a very serious moment of reflection given the seriousness of such a Freudian statement - is no longer himself, but has become, inserted into the herd, a a kind of "automaton without will". On this Freud quotes Le Bon:

Thus, disappearance of the conscious personality, predominance of the unconscious personality, orientation by way of suggestion and contagion of feelings and ideas in the same direction, tendency to immediately transform the ideas suggested into actions, such are the principal characteristics of the individual. in the Mass. He is no longer himself, but an automaton whose will has become powerless to guide him ²².

²⁰FREUD, *Psychology of the masses and analysis of the self* , Op., Cit., p. 19

²¹Same, p. 20

²²Same, p. 23

However, still evoking the thought of Le Bon, Freud highlights the idea that man then, simply because he belongs to a mass, "descends several rungs in the ladder of civilization", and compares him even to a barbarian. Instinctively governed, the herd man is incapable of thinking for himself. On the other hand, Freud elevates the condition of man in solitude as a cultured individual, with greater intellectual capacity compared to the individual in the herd, where he does not even need to logically measure the arguments, "only to underline the same things with intensity". In solitude, the individual would therefore have himself as the motor of his actions, which in the mass Freud underlines what rarely predominates²³. We can then notice certain characteristics of the mass which reduce the individual by expecting from him the common fear of masters, the "respect for force" and the rejection of certain virtues such as kindness and the greatest aversion for difference, while type of innovation or progress, venerating conservative and traditional values and above all devotion to an ideal. The individual is therefore moralized by the masses, whose intellectual capacity is much lower than that of the individual²⁴.

Moreover, the suggestiveness of words or phrases, when conveyed to the masses, wields such power over individuals, as Le Bon suggests, that faces "immediately become respectful and heads nod", in more not to undertake the truth, but they are hostages of illusions and beliefs which they need and which they cannot renounce, that is to say that the beliefs exercise a power as strong on the masses as the real. Thus the individual of the herd becomes receptive as he is to the suggestion of the leader, submitting to authority in a docile and resigned manner. However, the leader according to the thinkers is also a figure that corresponds to the masses, his personal characteristics emanate from the ideals and values of the herd, that is, the figure of the leader must be supported by a strong belief to inspire the mass²⁵. In addition to the common interest shared by the individuals of the herd, we note the emphasis that Freud places on McDougall's idea that not less important, but perhaps the most remarkable and important phenomenon of the formation of Mass is the increase in affectivity caused in individuals. According to McDougall, the affections of men hardly rise in other conditions to the height which they attain in a mass. They experience an affective pleasure in abandoning themselves so openly to their passions and blending into the mass, even losing "the feeling of individual delimitation".

²³See Idem, p. 27

²⁴Ibidem, p. 27 – 28

²⁵Same, p. 30

itation". We note how the mass individual will often deny himself, that is, his uniqueness does not emerge because he is driven by the passion of personal relationships as well as merged with the collective soul, or according to the words of McDougall, by the well-known "principle of the contagion of feelings" ²⁶. It is important to mention the process by which the individual becomes involved in the affective intrigue, losing or at least diminishing their critical perspective:

It is a fact that the perceived signs of an affective state are capable of automatically awakening the same affect in the perceiver. This automatic constraint becomes all the stronger as the number of people in whom the same affect can be perceived simultaneously is large. Then the criticism of the individual is silenced and he gets carried away by this affection. But in this he increases the excitement of others who have acted on him, and thus the affective charge of individuals rises by reciprocal induction. Undeniably, it is something like a coercion that operates there, forcing them to do like the others, to remain in agreement with the majority. The simplest and grossest ²⁷emotional impulses are more likely to spread in this way in a mass .

According to the ideas of Freud and McDougall, the individual in the mass is affectively constrained. Renouncing his own way of thinking, he is obliged to agree with the majority because the latter, for a moment, puts itself in the place of all human society, as the repository of authority, whose punishments the person dreads, and above all that in whose name so many inhibitions have been imposed. However, McDougall emphasizes the dangerous nature of mass opposition, and the individual feels safer to follow suit. The inhibitions are replaced, they give way to the pleasure acquired by removing them. In this way, McDougall points out, it is not surprising to see the individual in the crowd doing or approving of things that they would avoid under normal living conditions. The small intelligences, completes the thinker, lower the larger ones to their level, which are inhibited in their activity because affectivity disadvantages the exercise of thought of those who are intimidated by the mass, not being free to think. critical expression of thought and "because in each individual the consciousness of responsibility for what he does is depreciated" ²⁸.

From then on, we perceive a process of oppression which seeks to erase the significant differences between individuals and to make equal

²⁶Same, p. 35

²⁷Same, p. 23

²⁸Ibid., p. 23

what is unequal by nature. McDougall concludes with an opinion on the psychic behavior of a mere disorganized mass, and defines it thus as follows:

Totally excitable, impulsive, passionate, unstable, inconsequential, indecisive yet prone to extreme actions, susceptible only to the grossest passions and simplest feelings, extraordinarily suggestible, light in consideration, vehement in judgment, receptive only to most extreme conclusions and arguments simple and imperfect, easily digested and intimidated, without self-awareness, self-esteem and sense of responsibility, but ready to be carried away by the consciousness of one's strength and to commit evil that the one could only expect from an absolute and irresponsible power. She then behaves like a badly educated child, or like a passionate and helpless savage in a situation that is foreign to her²⁹.

In other words, what is essential to note is the debasement which the individual experiences when engaged in disorganized groups, the imperceptible way in which this often happens, and this is the danger signaled by the aforementioned thinkers to renounce singular thought, to undergo a profound modification of his intellectual activity by the constraint he undergoes on the part of the masses. The idea of suggestion imagined by mass psychology leads us to verify, without a doubt, the human tendency to incur the same affection, says Freud, when he notices signs of an affective state in another person, and questions the reader on why we give in to this contagion. Freud asks whether it should still be said that it is the suggestive influence of the Mass which leads us to obey this tendency to imitation, which induces affection in us.

However, Freud, in commenting on this idea, concludes that studies of the conditions by which logically groundless influences are produced, commonly understood as suggestion, are often inconclusive, without sufficient clarification to account for the idea. Therefore, such a lack of clarification led Freud to think about what in us would lead to the tendency to imitate, as a consequence of suggestion, and he thus applies the concept of libido, a concept that has made great contributions in the study of neuroses, and to psychoanalysis in general, explaining the dynamics of psychic energy or libidinal economy which governs the psyche. For the thinker, libido is a term derived from the theory of affectivity, and denotes the energy, taken as a quantitative

²⁹Ibid.

quantity, although not measurable, of these instincts linked to everything that the word "love" can cover:

What constitutes the core of what we call love is, of course, what is commonly called love and which the poets sing about, the love between the sexes with a view to sexual union. But we do not separate from this what also shares the name of love, on the one hand, love for oneself, on the other hand, love for parents and children, friendship and love for human beings in general, and also dedication to concrete objects and abstract ideas. Our justification is that psychoanalytical research has taught us that all these tendencies would be the expression of the same instinctive drives which in the relations between the sexes push towards sexual union, and which in other circumstances are remote from this sexual goal or prevented from reaching it, but still retaining enough of its original nature, enough to keep its recognizable identity ³⁰.

Thus, in reflecting on the phenomenon of suggestion in the masses, Freud does not deviate from the concept dear to psychoanalysis of the libido, believing in the hypothesis that love relationships also constitute "the essence of the collective soul". In other words, Freud suggests that what lies behind the relationships, hidden from the phenomenon of suggestion, would be such affective bonds moved by what has been called the libido. However, Freud offers two fundamental reflections on the individuals in the mass, which is the union maintained by a determined power, and attributes to this power the effect of Eros, which holds together everything in the world as well as and even what others suggest it themselves. The need to be in agreement and not in opposition with others is perhaps no other force than the same love ³¹.

THE HUMAN ESSENCE

There is a whole effort in the work of the Dutch thinker Baruch de Spinoza, notably in *the Ethics*, to break the traditional link established throughout the history of thought, namely between freedom and will.

These two themes were traditionally confused, since freedom was conceived as the power of a will to choose. In this conception, man

³⁰Same, p. 43

³¹See idem, p. 45

would be decidedly free to deliberate on life, or to settle on a pattern and execute it. Now, this idea, from Spinoza's perspective, introduces an inconstancy into the power of God, since he could have created something other than what he created, or worse still, says Deleuze, introduces a divine impotence, since his power would be limited by possibility models. Thus, from Spinoza's perspective, freedom conceived as free will would reveal questionable aspects. The will therefore cannot be a free cause, since Spinoza's principle is that freedom is never a property of the will ³². This is why the will is not part of the nature or essence of God, and why they are not gratuitous causes. Deleuze, says that necessity, being the only modality of all that is, it is only necessary to say that a cause is free "which exists by the necessity of its nature and by itself is determined to act" ³³. Spinoza therefore separates what was traditionally thought, and freedom acquires another status. For Spinoza, God is free, because everything necessarily flows from his essence.

What defines freedom is therefore an "interior" of necessity, says Deleuze. We are not free according to our will, but because of what flows from our essence, and which exists by the necessity of its nature. Thus, when the cause of an action is determined, it is not done by free will, but by itself, thus nullifying any distance between cause and effect ³⁴.

It is important to note in Spinoza's thought what we call freedom. The traditional conception of freedom is a fundamental illusion of consciousness, said the Dutch thinker, insofar as we ignore its causes. It was however believed in freedom of conscience in such a way that the soul would act voluntarily on the body and in this way the body would be subjected to the yoke of the soul. Starting therefore from the Spinozian conception of God, it becomes impossible to link freedom to the will and obviously to man, who is part of God, that is to say of nature.

Starting from the Freudian concept of sublimation, defined above as the capacity of the originally sexual drive to replace its object by another non-sexual object, that is, the goal in its sexual origin being replaced by another of , for example social , without, however, a decrease in the intensity of satisfaction, but which achieves a particular, non-sexual, although creative quality in various fields such as, for example, science, mathematics, arts, cinema or the theater and, apparently, without any relation to life Although it has its source in the drives of

³²Cf. DELEUZE, Gilles, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* , p. 88

³³Same, p. 89

³⁴Ibid.

sexual origin, it can be linked to the way in which man appropriates his essence and becomes the cause of his acts. Before Freud considered sublimation as a very particular process, like the destiny of drives, this term, according to Joseph Attié, had three connotations:

In the alchemical sense, sublimation is the transformation of base metal into pure gold. It is the age-old dream of human beings transformed into a metaphor. In Baudelaire, when he says to God: "you gave me your mud, and I made gold out of it". It's the same alchemical metaphor. In the chemical sense, it is a technical term describing the passage from a solid state to a gaseous state, without passing to a liquid state. It is a purification process, probably still in use. To these two senses of the term must be added the one which, it seems to me, dates from the 19th century, but which was founded in the highest antiquity. In the moral sense, sublimation is a purification of the soul. We easily find the basis for this in Aristotle: the soul is purified by the spectacle of the tragic hero. Tragedy, through fear and pity, pushes the human being, the spectator, to rise, to elevate his soul ³⁵.

In this way, sublimation is considered a success, because a society's ideals are the exact opposite of a symptom. Sublimation connotes a noble destiny to our essence. Likewise, a fundamental characteristic of the drive is its plasticity, that is to say that the drives would have the capacity to move freely and would have it as their essence. Contrary to the symptom, which has the fixation of the libido on an object, in a zone of the body, sublimation is the displacement of the drive, the capacity of the drive to be carried out by the displacement which it operates ³⁶. Joseph Attié, attributes to the plasticity of the libido the capacity of the human being to adapt to the circumstances that life imposes on us. In the case of the loss of a loved object, there is a natural grieving process to go through. However, if this process does not occur or if the grief continues, we have signs to suspect. The normality here would be, says Joseph Attié, to do the work of mourning, that is to say that it resides in untying the ties in relation to the lost object in order, another moment later, to be reinvested in new new objects. This displacement therefore constitutes sublimation.

Thus, considering the concept of sublimation as one of the most adequate and ideal destinations of the drive in a society, man, having his drives destined for sublimation, allows the writer or the painter to

³⁵ATTIÉ, Joseph, *Between the said and the written - Psychoanalysis and poetic writing* , Paris, Michèle, 2015, p. 146

³⁶Same, p. 151

become the very cause of their desires, and of their acts in the exercise of their respective competences.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, let us remember that historically or politically, the problem that the idea of freedom poses to man, motivates him to seek something to grant or to prevent, perhaps conquered or avoided by political and social means, in short, freedom is an ideal to be achieved. Man's struggle reflects preconceived ideas or thought patterns throughout history in such a way as to shield him from supposed involvement in this process, that is, thought as they are traditionally, they end up determining a subjective way for men to live, preventing them from exercising their freedom in their daily life, or withdrawing it in case of servitude. Therefore, such themes lead us to reflect on our way of living and, above all, to ask ourselves to what extent we can or cannot engage in such a process, because we are the very creative source of the way we want to live. The concepts presented here were intended to situate man in relation to these two fundamental themes of his existence, namely servitude and freedom, because they reveal questions of primary importance and that it is urgent for us to think, above all, to the topic of ethics at present. Ethics translates into the competence that everyone exercises over himself to relate to others, and such concepts have shown us an existential dimension in which man transits. When in servitude, man finds himself subjugated and ruled by the affections produced in him, being libidinally involved in these processes, especially when inserted into unorganized groups, masses of individuals who assimilate individual differences, tending to uniformity. Having erased the marks of their singular differences, men will see their actions or their intellectual power diminish as they submit to this uniformity.

Thus, the singular traits of individuals disappear into the mass, the particularity is clearly suppressed, the differences, as Freud observed, are submerged in the homogeneous. The masses would then have, as a role on the individual, the capacity to equalize what by nature is necessarily unequal, that is to say that individuals constituted by different processes begin to operate in the mass in a uniform way. and, as we have seen, what in them predominates their affections, because the affectivity is intensified in these situations and hardly rises in other condi-

tions to the height which they attain in a mass. Individuals experience affective pleasure when they surrender so openly to their passions and blend into the mass, even losing "the feeling of individual delimitation", to the point of denying themselves, that is, their uniqueness. no longer emerges because they are moved by the passion of personal relationships and merged with the collective soul. In these affections man remains stubbornly fixed, thus, as Spinoza suggests, the force of a passion can move him in spite of himself, insofar as it is defined, not by the power with which we strive to persevere in our own existence, but by the power of the external cause considered in relation to our own and, therefore, the man involved in the affective plot produced in him by the mass will necessarily be in bondage.

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