

Human Sentiments

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The most important question in life is to know which guidelines will lead to one's end, to their destiny. Therefore, we must examine the dynamic instances of man's capability of reaching his goals, such as overcoming difficulties or obstacles that stand in the way. Human behaviour must be rational; meaning, guided by reason. It must also obey the dictation of the virtues of will. This, in one way or another, is connected with feelings. Nevertheless, we do not know the exact position of the feelings, referring to how they relate to intelligence and will.

According to some psychologists, feelings, especially profound feelings, are like dispositions that favour the activity if they are positive or inhibiting, if they are negative. There are two types of feelings: profound and long-lasting, or superficial and changing, or interchangeable with other feelings. Other psychologists argue that feelings make the link between spiritual faculties with the human subject, however the matter is more complicated. Feelings are like precedents of certain ways of thinking or of certain characteristics of behavior, to which they often accompany. On the assumption we accept this opinion, which is somewhat vague or amorphous, according to which gives it a certain alternation between the feelings, the acts of intelligence and will, it should be added that there are deeper feelings than others that depend on the state of health and one's physical or life accidents.

The importance of feelings resides overall in their relationship with intelligence and will, and not simply as their precedents, but as derivatives of the active dimensions of the human being. Nevertheless, in our time the spiritual faculties of man, intelligence and will, are discredited. That is why relativism has increased, that is to say, the opinion that denies the universality of the truth, as well as the control of will. That is why, in our time we grant a greater credit to feelings; they appear, regarded as those who remain after the doubt about the scope of intelligence and will.

In this situation, the difference between profound and superficial feelings tends to be blurred. To doubt the intellectual ability of man and to reject the direction of will towards the greater goods, also doubts the existence of truths greater than man, and incurs to religious agnosticism. This distressing discrediting of the meaning of life; induces one to take more immediate experiences, which are sentimental as performance criterion.

The Path of the Rise of Feelings

It's necessary to refer to a doctrine published in the United Kingdom, specifically in Scotland, over the eighteenth century, and that lasted until the beginning of the nineteenth century, named sentimental or emotional moral. We refer to this doctrine because Scottish intellectuals note that we cannot replace feelings, and secondly they realize that feelings, in spite of being profound, tend

to be put down. They are dominant in the sense that they direct man according to a negative dynamic.

The feeling that these authors highlight is philanthropy as they understand it has moral relevance. Philanthropy is the feeling that inclines one to consider the rest, to treat them with benevolence, to be kind to them; as all of this is positive, it seems that philanthropy is what leads man in the right direction. Nevertheless, a pessimistic assessment of this feeling appears between Scottish authors. After sustaining the importance of philanthropy, they realized that it cannot be trusted because in human relationships, philanthropy is not maintained but will immediately give way to negative feelings that blur and are directed downwards as previously stated.

Among Scottish sentimental moralists we have David Hume, a very well-known and influential thinker, and Adam Smith, who is also very important for his contribution to economic science. They maintain that philanthropy tends to be substituted by vanity. The benevolent philosopher has his own sense of vanity, and as it is respected by others, incurs vainglory. Philanthropy is derived from vanity and this from another sentiment, is an even more negative feeling which is envy. The vain stops feeling envious.

According to this, by basing human relationships on philanthropy, the attempt is frustrated in the appearance of pride, meaning, because the desire to leave a good impression is fed by the return to one's benevolence. From comparisons between individuals emerges envy, which makes co-existence impossible. Envy is such a negative feeling that it can lead to homicide. This is the case of Cain and Abel. Cain's envy towards Abel led him to commit the first murder recorded in the Bible. When God addresses Cain and asks him about Abel, Cain answered: "perhaps I am the guardian of my brother?" In this reaction the affection between brothers is noted as a high form of philanthropy, this feeling has been replaced within Cain by a completely disparate feeling.

If this is the case, the ambition of going through life in an elevated and honest manner, with positive feelings, is not capable of tolerating human diversity. If all men pretend to be philanthropists, their social performance will become completely negative. Consequently, the moral performance of positive feelings is invalid, even more, contradictory: it converts into its opposite. From here we conclude that one cannot trust their feelings, given that the more profound are more modified according to a dialectical dynamic. It is for this reason that Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* dictates that philanthropy can only live in a very nuanced way, for example, if someone well-known's father has died, the distinctive philanthropic friend is going to offer condolences, with the intention of sharing their feelings. Nevertheless, it is evident, their sentiment of condolences is inferior to that of the isolated, therefore Smith concludes, to he whose father has died, must be very scarce in their expression of pain because they cannot expect the friend to experience the same intensity.

In short, to live philanthropically it is necessary to manifest one's own pain in a moderate manner, and he who suffers directly cannot vent their grief, but has to demonstrate their own expression of pain before demonstrating philanthropic sympathy. As such, philanthropy becomes -apart from what

transforms into vanity and envy- sentimental indifference. If the friend does not express too much pain for the death of the other's father, the latter must also realize that the feeling of that is weak, so it also must be shown sparing their expression of grief.

It is definitive, the social demonstration of feelings needs to be very weak, that which corresponds with a change in character of the English, because of this Scottish sentimental moral was substituted for what we would call emotional frigidity. If one was to consult the history of England, they would realize that in the 16th and 17th centuries, the English were passionate. Ultimately, what leads to frigidity is the idea that morality is based on feelings. Therefore, there is a sort of conflict between the way one composes themselves and internal feelings. It is evident that in England from the 9th century, Victorian morality implies a shortage in the expression of feelings.

This conflict between the state of internal feelings and one's manner of behaving, implies that deep feelings cannot be the guides of the human behaviour. To this conclusion, Adam Smith adds another. In effect, if philanthropy is not the base of cohabitation or human behaviour, it must be replaced immediately to also preserve envy. This means that the human behaviour needs to be uniquely guided by one's own self-interest. From here emerges the theory of the free market, a notion already developed by Adam Smith. It would be in good interest to organize social life by eliminating feelings and replacing them with the laws of the market, only like this can we expect the achievement of social harmony. In conclusion, the theory of free market is part of Smith's conviction, that it is impossible to base social life on feelings. Smith's famous "invisible hand" can only be understood if that hand does not feel any feelings.

Nevertheless, these days we appeal to the feelings that are considered to be the most vital, the innermost that are in man. If man must be guided by his feelings, he is owing to the only way that remains after the crisis of intelligence and will. However, guided by feelings is equivalent to be led by that whose unleashing of hostilities we are not capable of driving. Therefore, after the sentimental morality follows the contemporary Victorian morality with the emotional frigidity of the bourgeoisie business, after the latter, the current sentimentality behaves that man accepts what he likes and avoids what he dislikes. This is the hedonistic morality that is guided by the search for what pleases. This type of moral carries along a reduction in goals, because the merely pleasurable goods are not the highest. If philanthropy ended in emotional frigidity and in the calculation of interests, in the end the moral of pleasure is the formula of the lowest intensity of behaviour. With this, we can answer the initial question of which guidelines leads to one's destiny.

The hedonistic morality removes man from his highest form of life, the most intimate, which is the donation of self. To be led by feelings leads to a superficial life that disregards high goals. The consequence of this is consumer society, which abides by more sensitive feelings, meaning, those that have to do with eating or sexual pleasures. Ancient philosophy calls these feelings passions of the soul, events of the human life that are superficial, until the point of

being guided by them only eliminates *ethos*. Ethics come from *ethos*, just as moral from *mos* (*mos* and *ethos* mean nearly the same thing in Greek and Latin).

Television advertisements show especially the pleasant and what displeases. It advertises a good car or a good beer. However, if the most important things in life are volatile emotions that involve beer, or the choice between whisky and gin, it loses its vital profoundness, and it becomes impossible for a man to lead himself.

After this brief history of feelings in the modern period, and the conclusion of history in consumer society, in which are embedded industrialized countries and which seems to be the hope of the rest, the only possible consequence is that we cannot define them. We cannot share the ideal of making money at a high speed, precisely to be able to withdraw sooner and stop working, simply work as in *la dolce vita*, as the Italians would say. This disagreement can only be true if spiritual strength is reestablished. To the extent that it grows, unsuspected feelings appear that are derived from the love of truth and goodness. The love of the truth is characteristic of intelligence and is accompanied by deep feelings with those which increase and ratify. He who does not love the truth, ignores those feelings which will never happen to him. Only experience emotions that have to do with sensitivity, whose abuse leads to drugs, the last means of hedonistic moral.

Hedonism, to feel its vital insufficiency, resorts to exaggeration. In this way a dynamic appears, explained by St. Augustine. Hedonistic exaggeration, with what man confesses, sensual pleasures are not sufficient and at the same time the exercise of will and intelligence are not within reach. There is a clear correction whose experience occurs, for example, when one drinks to excess: the next day one will experience strong head pains. One will also feel bad when eating to excess. The same in sexual relations, when one exaggerates, gives place for spitefulness and objectification. To treat a person as an object of pleasure is equivalent to being considered as lonely as an object. The negative consequence of exaggerating sensual pleasures is called corruption of morals. This sensation affects the spirit and the body and is more intense when consumed by drugs. In the case of drug addicts, this feeling means that the nervous system is completely damaged.

In short, it is invalid to expect to be guided by feelings. Nor philanthropy, nor frigidity that replaces it, nor hedonism which settles in superficial feelings are acceptable. It is necessary to turn to the love of the truth and the greater good, to grow with positive habits, the capacity of truth and goodness. In this way appears what may be called affections, which are movements that are more spiritual than feelings, which are rather psychosomatic. Affections have an obvious spiritual nuance because they are awakened by the truth and admiration. The love of truth brings a feeling that is unknown to hedonism. Admiration unites the truth and beauty. When the truth shines through, we capture beauty. We admire, and admiration encourages us to further follow the truth. A positive affect is superior to psychosomatic feelings.

Admiration is replaced with an advantage to philanthropy. The true dignity of the human being is there character as a person. A person is loved with a love that brings joy. Joy is a spiritual affect that is unknown to hedonism,

that which senses pleasure but cannot enjoy themselves with a beer. Love is an act of will that rejoices in the truth of the other that is radical because it consists of their personal reality. Joy is accompanied by a positive feeling that is surely one of the most important, for instance, respect. Respect avoids the degradation from philanthropy in vanity and envy, what Scottish moralists are talking about. Moral conduct is moral when it is guided by intelligence and will. Admiration drives, in the last place, to a feeling that accompanies devotion. Beer cannot adore. In adoration, intelligence and will intervene, which leads to the Supreme Good, which is the most admirable. It is essential to recover the experience of adoration.