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Articles

Anger: what we know and what we don't want to know. Scientific contributions and social representation.

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Abstract

Introduction: Aggressiveness is an essential component of every living thing and the experience of anger is common to all historical periods, all ages and all mental structures. Different forms and narrative ways of anger can be found in each society and can, therefore, become indicators of some aspects of society itself.

Method: Starting from the emphasis that our society attributes to forms of anger and violence and their narration as incomprehensible, the scientific contributions on the subject and some characteristics of our culture are highlighted. Our society, on one hand, increases the triggers suitable to trigger anger, on the other silences and disapproves all forms of anger and even aggressiveness.

Conclusions: There is a discrepancy between scientific contributions and the representation of anger in the media. The cultural operation for which we focus only on extreme episodes and repress the presence of other universal forms of anger seems to respond not only to the need to make the news but seems to indicate difficulties and defense mechanisms against aggressiveness and anger (potentially healthy and universal). It is also a way of not seeing our social responsibility and is also a missed opportunity to think about effective prevention.

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1. Introduction

Anger is a component of every living being and is common to every historical epoch, to all ages and any mental structure, but in every time and civilization, there are different forms and narrative modalities that can highlight some social characteristics.

We can think that the different sensitivity to some forms of violence expresses some characteristics about the functioning of society.

If we consider the involvement and relevance given by the mass media, and partly also by the themes of the calls financed for research and social interventions, we can say that our society is particularly sensitive to violence against women and children and violence against social and health workers; a new and emerging phenomenon is “the haters”, those who spread hate and violence messages on various social platforms. Even in the diversity of forms and results, the characteristic of being surprising and/or extreme is common to them; moreover, they are presented, in the narrative of the media, as expressions of anger without reasons, without meaning. The woman, the child, the pharmacist, the emergency doctor who are attacked are, in fact, in the social representation defenseless and innocent victims of violence without reason.

These forms of violence and anger are no longer linked, like those of the recent past, to the intensity of passion. Think, for example, of the Rocco code and the so-called "honor crime" - Criminal code, art. 587 - in which "the state of anger caused by the offense to his honor or to the honor of his family" would undermine the ability to control, to the point of completing a murder. Current anger does not seem to be included in a relationship that means or even creates the conditions for a trigger. The lack of a sense of violence should not be read in moral terms, but narrative and it is precisely the lack of meaning, the unthinkability of the experiences that makes them so disturbing. The meaning, since it cannot be inserted in the relational situation of the "here and now", seems completely absent. The undue passage is precisely the fact that the unavailability of a container of immediate meaning becomes a lack of meaning tout court; there is no possibility to place and search for meaning elsewhere. The implicit passage seems to be that "gratuitous" violence, not aimed to obtaining a concrete personal advantage, is supported by a form of anger or rage which is attributed to an unspecified anomaly of the violent individual.

A question arises: is the selection of dramatic episodes and the narration of these as incomprehensible events, far from common functioning, only responds to the need to "make news" or there are no deeper reasons and functions?

In this paper, we will propose a brief review of the scientific contributions that our society has made on anger. Research and scientific studies should have repercussions, both in therapeutic and preventive terms, and should contribute to informing the representations of a certain phenomenon. A first step is, therefore, to verify what we know about anger. Secondly, some characteristics of society concerning issues related to anger will be analyzed and an interpretative reading will be proposed.

2. A look at the literature

Anger is not a new research topic, it has been the subject of interest since the 4th century BC. with Plato and Aristotle and many contributions have been devoted to it.

Despite remarkable literature, of over 36,000 works (considering only the term "anger"), several fundamental questions remain open regarding anger. In particular there is not shared definition of "anger", or a study on the origin of it, or on the relationship between nature and culture, or on the indicators to evaluate the risk of violent acts and to distinguish care pathways. On the other hand, new areas of research are opening up, such as the role of gender determinants (O'Leary, Smith Slep, O'Leary, 2007; Dardis et al., 2015), the relationship with sexuality (Iannuzzo et al., 2014) and romantic rejection (Andrighetto, Riva, & Gabbiadini, 2019; Leary, Twenge, & Quinlivan, 2006), etc.

Consulting two important databases - Scopus and Web of Science - in the last twenty years there has been a significant increase of interest about it, with an increased number of works from 600 to 2000.

Here some contributions will be proposed, chosen according to the themes, year of publication or authoritativeness of the authors.

2.1 Definitions

Literature has not come to a single, shared definition of anger. However, there are recurring elements that we highlight.

A frequently highlighted theme is the simultaneous presence of physiological activation and cognitive-motivational assessments (Di Giuseppe & Froh, 2002; Novaco, 1994; Spielberger, 1999). In the circumplex model of emotion, the anger is characterized by high arousal and negative valence category of basic emotions (Russell, 1980).

In particular, the following components of anger can be distinguished: arousal, cognition, anger regulation, physiological and behavioral displays of anger.

Alia-Klein et al. (2020) write "anger is reflected across distinct components, including the *arousal* component, as in stress reactivity with concomitant autonomic arousal; *cognitive* components, including heightened attention to threat, hypervigilance, and hostile attributions (Novaco, 2016). Outward *displays* embody specific facial expressions, bodily displays of threat, and vocal prosody as well as standard linguistic expressions which are used to reflect the subjective experience (e.g., feelings of being "mad", "enraged", etc). Thus, anger is experienced and expressed across these components, and self-regulation of anger can occur by altering some or all of these components.

Anger has a positive function. Anger is often triggered by an obstacle what impede to reach goals. It involves an evaluation of transgression and a tendency to act to counter/cancel that transgression in ways that can range from resistance to retaliation. (Averill, 1983, 2010; Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996; Towl & Crighton, 1997).

In anger, intensity variations - from irritation or annoyance to fury or rage- and form variations- emotion, mood, or temperament- are distinguished. Emotion is a momentary episode, mood is relatively mild but prolonged, and temperament implies a proneness to recurrent bouts of anger (Fernandez & Kerns, 2008). “Thus, in the varied and nuanced vocabulary of anger, words such as rage and fury reflect the phasic bursts of anger, whereas irritability and irascibility imply anger that is ongoing or tonic; hostility, by contrast, is reserved for a pattern of frequent occurrence that suggests dispositional rather than situational anger (.). As can be inferred, these different forms of anger are representable as unique configurations on basic dimensions such as frequency, duration, and intensity. Individuals also differ in the threshold and latency of their typical anger responses” (Fernandez & Johnson, 2016).

Although anger has a positive function, but it can be dysfunctional when there is an erroneous interpretation of a neutral and non-threatening situation (Kassinove & Sukholdosky, 1995; Novaco, 2016; Wenzel & Lystad, 2005), or when there is a frequency and/or reaction disproportionate to events such as to indicate a negative attitude towards others (Mc Dougall, Venables, & Roger, 1991; Novaco & Chemtob, 1998; Towl & Crighton, 1997) or problems of various kinds, both for behavior aggressive (Brondolo et al., 1998; Norlander & Eckhardt, 2005), both situations of social anxiety (Kashdan, Collins, & Elhai, 2006; Kashdan et al., 2009), frustrating situations (Van Mechelen & Hennes, 2009) reduced social support, professional stress (Deffenbacher, 1993). Aggression, intended as a physical or verbal behavior aim to hurt, and violence that intentionally culminates in actual physical injury or damage, is pathological expression (Fernandez & Johnson, 2016).

Anger, whether functional or dysfunctional, can occur in the absence of aggressive or violent behavior and vice versa (Averill, 1983); anger does not always result in aggressive behavior and on the other hand, not every violence is supported by the experience of anger: it is present in emotional aggression, but not in cold instrumental aggression (Di Giuseppe & Tafrate, 2007; Páez & Ubillos, 2004).

2.2 Anger and pathologies

There are associations between various diseases and rabies, especially considered as a trait (rather than an emotional state) (Spielberger, 2010) or as a more chronic than occasional situation. There are relationships with cardiovascular diseases (Cox et al., 2017; Mostofsky et al.,

2014; Williams, 2010) and hypertension (Harburg et al., 1991); anger control and states of acute anger and aggressive behavior are associated with functional gastrointestinal disorders (Zoccali et al. 2006), visceral and painful hypersensitivity and gastric hyperemia (i.e. irritable bowel syndrome) (Muscatello et al., 2010; Welgan, Meshkinpour, & Ma, 2000).

The presence of anger in various behavioral mental disorders has also been studied.

Apart from the Explosive Intermittent Disorder (IED) which according to DSM-5 is defined by recurrent episodes of anger/impulsiveness disproportionate to the provocation, it can be said that the dysregulation of anger is prototypically transdiagnostic; it can be found in hallucinations of psychotic disorders, borderline personality disorders, antisocial personality disorder, mood disorders, impulse control disorders, intellectual disabilities, dementia, post-traumatic stress and depression disorder (Luutonen, 2007; Novaco, 2011).

DSM5 reports various ailments that have to do with anger. Defiant Opposite Disorder (ODD), defined as "negativistic, hostile and rebellious" behavior, is grouped, in DSM-5, in Disruptful, Impulse Control and Conduct Disorders, together with IED.

Persistent irritability or anger is present in Dysregulatory Mood Disorder (DMDD), a diagnosis that was first introduced in DSM-5. Inappropriate intense anger and affective instability are among the criteria for the diagnosis of borderline personality disorder (BPD) DSM-5. Excessive anger is a cardinal symptom of mania within the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria in bipolar disorder (BD).

Other syndromes in which anger is present, although not a diagnostic criterion, are substance dependence and intellectual disabilities (Fernandez & Johnson, 2016).

Dysregulation of anger is also linked to deficiencies in the processes of regulation and affective mentalization (Bateman & Fonagy, 2004).

Therefore, we can say that anger is accompanied, in terms of comorbidity, in a transversal way, with many pathological manifestations.

2.3 The neuroscience perspective

Anger regulation is hypothesized to be mediated by the interactions between emotional reactivity and regulation networks.

In a review of the neuroscience of anger, Alia-Klein et al. (2020) indicate various networks activated during the induction of anger: Mentalizing network self-referential, Salience Network threat detection, Habit Network automatic approach, Self-regulation Network response evaluation selection.

In Mentalizing Network Brain are activated: posterior cingulate cortex, prefrontal ventromedial cortex, superior frontal gyrus, medium temporal gyrus, and superior temporal gyrus; in Salience Network threat detection is activated anterior dorsal cingulate cortex; in Habit Network are activated caudate and putamen; in the Self-Regulation Network are activated: dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, inferior frontal gyrus, ventromedial prefrontal cortex, rostral anterior cingulate cortex, sub-genu anterior cingulate cortex.

The region related to the regulation of vmPFC plays a central role during episodes based on elevated anger: a lower vmPFC influence within the regulatory network has been associated with greater anger intensity, both in state and in characteristic. A greater impact of vmPFC on network connections is also associated with a greater tendency to apply a suppression regulatory strategy (Jacob et al., 2018).

In contrast to the approach of the regulation of cognitive emotions from top to bottom, traditional Chinese philosophy and medicine emphasize a different control and mutual promotion and mutual counteraction (MPMC) relationships. In particular, concerning anger, the role played by the insula and functional dissociation between the front and back parts of the insula are highlighted. AI is more involved in processing "fear promotes anger" and IP is more involved in processing "sadness counteracts anger". Fear further promotes greater aggression to external irritation, on the contrary, sadness has triggered the activation of posterior parts of the insula, which is involved in the processing of primary feeling and neural regions that may be related empathy/sympathy (STG / STS, SFG, and mPFC), further producing a lesser tendency to feel anger from others (Zhan et al., 2018).

Studies linking anger to specific genotypes or polymorphisms have not yielded definitive and significant results. The need to evaluate associations on the whole genome would require further research on very large samples; epigenetic studies would be even more useful but they must be implemented.

Another strand of studies studied violent behavior and populations of violent criminals.

Various contributions record structural and functional reductions mainly in the prefrontal and frontal lobes in subjects with antisocial behavior (Ling et al. 2019; Glenn & Yang 2012; Peskin et al., 2011; Yang & Raine 2009; Yang et al. 2017).

The research suggest that violence and violence predictors are linked to neurological abnormalities in three interconnected brain networks, including the salience network, the executive control network and the default mode network (Morley, Jantz, & Fulton, 2019). A combination of reduced prefrontal activity and increased limbic activity (e.g. amygdala) is related to antisocial behavior and reactive aggression. (Blair, 2012).

Magnetic resonance has been used in an interesting work to investigate the differences in the brain responses of violent offenders and non-offensive controls, during anger provocation or anger involvement, as well as anger regulation or distraction from anger (Tonnaer et al., 2017). The authors found an increase in ventrolateral prefrontal activity during the engagement of anger in violent offenders, while reduced dorsolateral and ventrolateral prefrontal activity was found during distraction of anger. In violent offenders, this suggests a greater need to regulate specifically during anger involvement and regulatory difficulties when is asked to distract explicitly. The constant effort to regulate violent offenders could exhaust the cognitive sources needed to regulate anger in violent offenders, leading to a risk factor for the failure of self-control. Consequently, continuous provocation could eventually contribute to reactive aggression (ib.).

There are also specific chemical elements that can promote anger, such as testosterone, substance P, norepinephrine, glutamate, acetylcholine, and nitric oxide synthetase, while the main inhibitor is GABA gamma-aminobutyric acid (Pannksepp & Biven, 2012, p.165-66). Other studies support the role of serotonin in the affected aggressiveness of the activity of monoamine oxidase (MAO), in particular, MAO-A, which inactivates some brain neurotransmitters, including serotonin (Tronccone & Tufik, 1991).

2. 4 Environmental and relationships

Extending the focus and including relational events, interesting studies show how low empathy or child abuse can lead to different alterations. In particular, in recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Farrington et al., 2017) various risk factors have been identified such as child sexual abuse, parental incarceration, attachment style, maternal substance use during pregnancy, family factors, self-esteem, low empathy, child neglect, education level, socioeconomic status, neighborhood factors, economic stress, bad dominance, bad privilege, etc.

Environmental and relational aspects have received particular attention in the psychoanalytic literature. Let us recall for example the contribution of Menninger (2007), which reads anger, hostility, hatred as responses to traumatic events and perception of lack of control in one's life. Anger, therefore, represents an attempt to regain control and a sense of integrity. Anger would be a "response to a wound of the self" (ib. p.119) and in this sense, the others are not the real engine: it is anger against everyone and no one.

The themes of narcissistic injury and the inability to integrate conflicting experiences are keys for interpretation also in the evolutionary perspective, particularly in Kohut's concept of narcissistic anger. Narcissistic injuries, as the result of the lack of an empathic relationship, indicate that archaic structures, instead of being integrated and balanced, are disconnected and

repressed, and they can reappear in threatening situations. Narcissistic wounds, in particular, can arouse feelings of embarrassment and anger, but also of shame and violent rage (Augburger, 1996).

The role of social devaluation and aggression has recently taken on particular importance. It was found that the perception of the devaluation of the relationship can make people feel rejected, sad, but also arouse anger and induce an aggressive response (Leary, Twenge, & Quinlivan, 2006). Indeed, subjects insulted increase their anger and aggression (Harmon-Jones & Sigelman, 2001). An element that, in cases of devaluation, emphasizes the aggressive response is the public and the non-private context in which it occurs (Bond & Venus, 1991; Felson, 1982, as quoted in Leary et al., 2006).

Although aggressive behavior is risky for physical safety, it remains convenient being able to signal that you are not an easy target for the aggressiveness of others. Aggressive strategies can, therefore, be used both to defend oneself and to discourage future aggressors (Buss & Shackelford, 1997). These observations fit into the recalibration theory of anger, according to which anger would have evolved to motivate the resolution of interpersonal conflicts in favor of the angry individual (Sell, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2009). In the recalibrational theory, anger is an adaptation designed by natural selection that functions primarily to recalibrate another individual who has demonstrated a lower welfare trade-off ratio toward the angry person. "I know that, in the present and future, the target of anger will weigh the angry individual's interests more highly, i.e. raise their WTR" (Sell, 2011, p. 382). "According to the theory of aggression is normally deployed by the anger system only after, i) the target of anger gives an indication that they hold a low WTR toward the angry individual, ii) early information searches provide convergent evidence that the WTR is too low, iii) the target resists early, low-cost attempts at recalibration and finally, iv) negotiating with cost infliction is deemed, by the anger a system, as more efficient than negotiating with benefit withdrawal" (ivi, p. 389).

In syntony with the previous contributions is the importance of the role of shame in anger. Lewis wrote in 1993: "shame leads to rage, which leads to more shame, which leads to more rage" (Lewis, 1993, p. 159). Recent research has also shown in this case how anger and aggression emerge as responses, often maladaptive, to a healthy need, that is self-protection.

Affective, neuroscience identifies a link between shame (social panic) and anger/aggression. "Indeed, aggression may be an adaptive defensive response to physical pains, through evolutionary processes, to be linked to shame once social pain co-opted the affective response to physical pain" (Rogier, Garofalo, & Velotti, 2019, p. 447).

The idea that violence is triggered by shame is also reflected in recent work by Scheff (2011), which describes a theory of multiple killing, as a socio-emotional process. In particular, it is stated that the combination of isolation and denial of shame can lead to the perpetuation of circuits that generate a complete withdrawal (depression) or extreme violence. The spirals of shame/anger and/or shame/shame could, therefore, be a predominant cause of violence, both in the considered cases of multiple killing and in the historical events of the wars.

In short, anger represents a complex subject, which is expressed both in body and in mind, thus referring to various disciplines.

Some theories have a focus on the individual or relationships or the social context. This subdivision must be assumed in rather fluid terms since currently not only the interaction of several factors is recognized, but also in all disciplines the expectation of linear causality is not sustainable; indeed from epigenetic studies to neuro-psychoanalysis, it is recognized the modulation of the brain starting from experience, which is relational and inserted in a specific social context.

In the expression of aggression and anger, we read the influence of genetic predisposition and environmental risk factors (Garaigordobil, 2014). Various areas of the brain are implicated, from the phylogenetically ancient brain structures to the more recent ones. Current hypotheses suggest that "environmental effects such as early life stress or chronic psychosocial risk factors (e.g. maltreatment) and variation in genes related to neuroendocrine, dopaminergic as well as serotonergic systems increase the risk to develop aggressive behavior" (Waltes, Chiocchetti, & Freitag 2016).

3. A look at society

Even with the limits of a synthetic excursus and of the scientific literature for which anger is in a certain way a "misunderstood emotion" (Tavris, 1989), we can exclude that anger and the consequent violence may emerge by chance.

We are therefore faced with a singular contradiction: the socio-cultural narrative of anger that involves few people, in the form of unexpected violent anger, without meaning goes in parallel with scientific literature, which does not support this reading. Anger is recognized as a healthy and common emotion, which arises in response to triggers. Even in violent expressions (rage), there are influences from life experiences, which are likely modulate on neurological expression.

3.1 Shame and social devaluation

As for the society, it is also striking to note that in our time are assuming progressively higher importance elements, that are triggers or risk for anger.

In our society, the aspect of evaluation is, in fact, pre-eminent and available to a public that is never so vast: now, much more than in the past, we are therefore potentially exposed to the risk of devaluations and in the most unpleasant form, namely public.

It is difficult to identify the activities of our daily life that are not judged. If we go to a shop, if we go to a gym, if we enter a bakery, we receive an immediate invitation to give an evaluation on our mobile phone. If we have to choose a vacation, a restaurant, a vacuum cleaner we can count on the evaluations, often very varied, of many customers. If we have received a telephone consultation, another operator will contact us to have our opinion on the effectiveness of the intervention and the courtesy of the interlocutor. Every activity and service can be subject to a questionnaire of customer satisfaction. Each accredited training event includes an evaluation of it and of the individual speakers and in the university, there is a consolidated and codified practice for the evaluation of teaching and research. On social media and multimedia platforms, we can also enrich the picture in less codified, but also more impactful ways with several posts and also with videos and photographs.

In itself the evaluation is not a new event: all our education-training involves evaluative aspects and they have always been present also in work activities, decreeing in large part the possibility of career or the success or otherwise of activity, of product.

What seems new to me is the capillarity of this process, its function and the vastness of the public. Everyone can say something about (almost) everything, without needing to argue, without a specific competence and what is said is often visible to anyone.

But above all, the evaluation risks being stripped of its proactive value. It is not aimed at identifying critical issues for improvement, there is not so much the idea of addressing or suggesting an area for further training or greater care and the link with subsequent and further paths is lost or at least very much frayed. It is not by chance that often the judgment translates into a number or an inch and there isn't after. The approach is "commercial": every activity (every person?) can be looked at as a product, liked or disliked, bought or not. The more likes you get the more successful you are, the more approval you get. The good, what is worth coincides with what is appreciated by most, with what is popular. *Vox populi vox Dei*. It is not a theme that can be explored here, but it is clear that this also addresses "products". How can different roads be explored? How can a new, counter-current thought be expressed? We risk more and more forms of self-censorship (Manfredi, 2018), although we are consoled to remember that this is not a completely new problem if Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein wrote in the last century "It could set a price for thoughts. Some cost a lot, others are less. And what do you pay for your thoughts? I believe with courage".

What dangerously disappears is time, the time in which we learn, the time in which we improve, the time in which we mature, the time of change. There is instead a verdict, which photographs the *hic et nunc* absolutizing it. In this regard, we consider how difficult it is to eliminate content, photography, and video from social media.

All of this creates a favorable ground for situations in which one can feel mocked publicly and can be ashamed. It is, therefore, possible to produce wounds, which in subjects with certain frailties can predispose to a transformation of such feelings into anger and violent acts.

Breaking the bond that connects the violent expression of anger to feelings of shame, augmented precisely by the characteristics of our civilization, is then perhaps a way of not recognizing such vulnerabilities in us and responsibilities in such processes. We could be victims and perpetrators (even in the collusion of silence) and neither position is welcome. Anger becomes so senseless because we don't want to consider its reasons.

3.2 Envy

Another interesting theme is the envy.

Envy should be one of the feelings most likely to be present in our time but is instead the least recognized. Envy has always been there, but it could be named. It is the envy of Joseph's brothers in the book of Genesis ("and they hated it even more ... Gen 37, 8" and his brothers envied him " Gen 37, 11); it is envy for the kisses of the "Vivamus mea Lesbia" of Catullus "*..conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus, aut ne quis malus invidere possit, cum tantum sciat esse*". In primitive and rural societies envy was a constitutive part, institutionalized and intertwined with it were the practices of the evil eye and witchcraft.

In our society, there are probably several reference cultures, partly related to socio-economic conditions, partly to age.

It is striking to note how many social pressures push us to differentiate ourselves and distinguish ourselves from others for what we might more know, do, have: think only of the charm of "exclusivity", applicable to any product, being it a bottle of wine or a holiday or the brand of a garment, a new smartphone for teenagers. You can be part of an elite or be among the "waste" that our society creates. The logical, self-evident consequence of this attitude is that one can only be envied or envy. Today it seems that envy is only present in the passive form: in the look that confirms a success. We forget- or remove - that envy is destructive and that the gaze instead of seeing does not see the other, does not recognize it, even if it always has it in mind. It is as if one wanted to become an object of envy, forgetting that someone must feel envy and that this

is not harmless; in other words, it is as if we were playing with fire, forgetting that fire burns and then asking ourselves how come there are arson.

But there is also, as Gilles Lipovetsky (2006) identifies a new trend, which pushes hyper-consumer and hyper-individualistic societies to replace envy with the manifestation of happiness and the fear of the evil eye with indifference towards others. So no longer material and destructive envy, but existential envy. Everyone would have the possibility, in a democratic and post-capitalist society, to be happy; those who are unable to succeed, to be famous, beautiful, loved are responsible for their failure. Here, once again, shame can dominate.

3.3 Aggressiveness

The desire to take distance from anger (whether in the form of scotomization, or denial, or repression or a projection) is perhaps even more profound and could involve the same aggressiveness.

Storr wrote in a lapidary manner: "if man were not aggressive, he would not be man at all" (Storr, 1992, p. 10). Aggressiveness, as Winnicott taught us half a century ago (1971), is a vital element, part of normal narcissism and allows regulating social interactions, defining one's own space and promoting an affirmation of oneself.

The problem arises when in an evolutionary path the healthy value of aggression and anger are not recognized: the message is that aggression is not lawful and that anger must be suppressed. If the child cannot get angry, if his anger is frightening to the parent or is not tolerable for him, is not containable, that child will not be able to learn to recognize, manage and process anger. Thus, the path of depression, anxiety, and the unmediated and explosive response will remain open.

In other words, we could say that the problem arises when the anger turns into a rage. Wiener writes some very clear words about it. "I believe that anger and rage are linked but in terms of psychic functioning, they are different. Anger is a complex emotion but in general, it is aroused when desired goals are frustrated. As a way of overcoming obstacles, anger is usually conscious, ego-related, has a cognitive component and is up to a point checkable. It has developed a response involving some mediation between drives and reality and testing on the other. Both ego and self are involved. Anger is not necessarily destructive and is often part of normal healthy narcissism or an attempt to regulate social interactions. It is part of the rhythmic disintegrative/reintegrative process whereby the self packs its archetypal potentialities by reaching out for real experiences. It is unsatisfactorily mediated, anxiety and splitting, that anger becomes disorganized or repressed and the capacity for rage may develop" (Wiener, 1998, p. 497).

Significant and emblematic is the way we manage children's normal aggression. Lively behaviors involving confrontation / physical contact, only a few decades ago were accepted as normal expressions of evolutionary physiological processes, while now they cause concern, they immediately question alarmed parents and teachers, who already foresee dangerous psychopathological developments. One wonders how they will learn to handle aggression if the parents who are supposed to educate them are so scared. Which society will we have? Maybe we are creating social conditions for anger to degenerate into rage. We propose some observations.

On the one hand, at a public level, emotional intensity and verbal aggression seem to have space: we think in particular of certain debates about political declarations - no matter if instrumental and recited for consents - and to the messages of the haters. We do not have the impression in such contexts that there is a modulation but, just like in the rage, it is as if an on-off switch were tripped.

On the other hand, it appears that there is, in different areas, an invitation to repress anger by following the "politically correct" criterion. This results in a sort of strange tolerance and a climate of hypocrisy, of the appearance of good manners in which aggression cannot have (manifest) space. This creates a confusion between the inviolable respect of people and respect for ideas - even those that we should legitimately fight - and has aberrations in which, in the name of ideals - perhaps of peace and democracy - people and not ideas are eliminated. Eliminating the "bad guys" (e.g. terrorists, dictators) does not however make one feel violent, nor humiliated, nor vindictive or angry.

Thus, we note the coexistence of two contradictory tendencies, which do not arrive at an ambivalence, but are split and alternately recognized or denied.

4. Conclusion

We could conclude these brief observations by pointing out how our society appears to have a rather dysfunctional relationship with aggression and anger, which translates into split polarity extreme manifestations or suppression. There seem to be some tendencies not to recognize and legitimize the healthy presence of anger and aggression. In addition to this lack of legitimacy, there are some characteristics of our time, which instead emphasize the conditions that could lead to feelings of shame and envy, which can hesitate in anger or rage. But here another defensive subterfuge intervenes: these conditions are repressed and only remains narration of a violent rage devoid of meaning. Collective responsibility is avoided.

This is serious because, even if the sociocultural dimension is an element that interacts with various other systems, relational, family, physiological, hormonal, neurological, genetic, etc., in the expression of anger, it is also true that, perhaps even in small measure, it reaches every person. Indeed, the culture shapes our own personally embodied experience. Every social institution in which differences do not become discriminations, in which conflicts can be expressed and become regenerative, in which relationships do not aim at oppression, but at the care and custody of every living being and of the planet that hosts us, can offer a healthy containment of anger and promoting the well-being of everyone.

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