

Ethics

Why and how is it that we modern human beings care about the consequences of our actions? Biology does not care. The cosmos does not care. We are the present of a cosmic and biological history that courses without aim, goal, or project. We have happened and nothing in the history that gave origin to us was necessary. We are a result of an evolutionary drift, not the product of a design or of a purpose. But as the kind of animals that we are as a result of such a history, we care, we have ethical concerns, we see our doings, and we care for their consequences to others or to the biosphere. According to us, this is so because we are loving animals. Love is not good or bad in itself, it is only the relational domain in which social life, trust, cooperation, and the expansion of intelligent behavior take place.

Ethical concerns, responsibility, and freedom, exist only in the domain of love as we live as languaging animals. Ethical concerns, responsibility, and freedom arise only as one sees the other and oneself, as well as the consequences of one's actions on the other or on oneself, and acts according to whether one wants or does not want those consequences. In other words, to have ethical concerns, to be responsible, to be free, one must see the other and oneself in his or her legitimacy. That is, one must operate as a languaging being in the biology of seeing the other as a legitimate other, which is the biology of love. Ethical concerns appear in the

biosphere with human existence in language, and they either take place or not; if ethical concerns take place, ethical behaviors take place.

Language is not a system of symbolic communications, language is, as we have said many times, a manner of living together in a flow of consensual coordinations of consensual coordinations of behaviors. Moreover, we do not just live in languaging, we live in conversations in the braiding of languaging and emotioning. Ethics is a particular kind of conversation, a reflexive conversation of seeing and care for the consequences of one's actions on others. In other words, ethics is a network of doings and emotioning in which the care and concern for the consequences of one's actions on others is present in what one does, and one acts in a way that entails accepting the consequences of that care and concern. Ethics belongs to the domain of emotions, not of reason, and as such it belongs to the domain of love.

We human beings care for other human beings and other living beings in the biosphere, and have ethical concerns and ethical behavior, because we are loving, languaging animals. That is, we belong to an evolutionary history in which the biology of love has been a central feature of the manner of living that defined our lineage. Yet, we see the other and care for him or her only to the extent that we have lived in the biology of love and intimacy, and have cultivated seeing and caring for the other as part of our living as caring human beings with other human beings. Moreover, it is as we live in recursive reflective conversations that allow us to look at our desires and see whether we like them or not in the context of other desires, that we can have ethical concerns and ethical behavior by caring for the consequences of our desires on others. That is, we belong to an evolutionary history in which to live in language and in reflective conversations has been another central systemic feature of the manner of living that defined our lineage. Yet, it is only to the extent that we have lived in reflection by releasing our attachment to our desires, so that we become open to look at the consequences of what we do and act according to whether we like or do not like those conse-

quences, that we can reflect on the consequences of our actions on others and thus have ethical concerns. Furthermore, to have ethical concerns we have to operate in respect for ourselves, accepting the legitimacy of our desires while releasing our attachment to them, so that we may reflect on the consequences of our actions and be responsible about them in the domain of our living with others without denying ourselves in the process. Yet, to do so we must live in self-respect and respect for the other, that is, in the biology of love.

We are not speaking of an ethical imperative. We are speaking of the biology of ethics, of what in our living as human beings makes our ethical concerns possible. We do not have to be ethical, but if we live in the biology of love as human beings, we sooner or later begin to have ethical concerns in relation to those other human beings whose living matters to us. We are not recommending love, nor are we recommending ethical behavior, but only if we live in the biology of love and have ethical concerns, can we indeed live as social human beings who do not become trapped in the culture of domination and submission or in the culture of indifference.

Love is our grounding, nearness our fundament, and when we lose love and nearness we try again and again to recover them because without them we disappear as *Homo sapiens-amans* even if our bodies may still remain *Homo sapiens* as zoological entities. Even health, our psychic and physiological health, depends on love and the acceptance of the body nearness of other human beings, and a word in love or a touch intended as a caress, may reestablish a lost physiological and psychic harmony. If we do not realize this, if we do not see that ethical concerns arise in love, and we believe that they belong to the domain of our rationality, in our desire for a harmonious social life we begin to use rational arguments or even force to secure something that looks like ethical behavior. As we lose respect for our emotions we begin to use rational arguments to hide, deny, or justify them. We do so in a path that progressively leads to the negation of the other through manipulation as we

become *Homo sapiens aggressans* in the expansion of the patriarchal passion for control. We know all this, but we forget it in the delusion of omnipotence through a misunderstanding of intelligence as we think of it as an instrument of control and manipulation. But now that we are aware that our own behavior determines what we are and what our children become, we can choose: do we prefer to conserve a lineage of *Homo sapiens-amans* or a lineage of *Homo sapiens aggressans*? (See also Bunnell 1997, Bunnell and Sonntag, 2000.) This choice is a matter of emotions, that is, it is a matter of desire - what do we indeed want to conserve?

These reflections seem to fall outside biology, but they do not, because they deal with the essence of phylogenic drift - namely they deal with the constitution of lineages through the systemic reproduction of a manner of living basically defined by the preferences that the living systems have at every instant in the course of their living.