
Bruno Cancellieri and ChatGPT

On the failure to share attractions and repulsions

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Important note

The text of this essay was generated by ChatGPT based on my prompt: *I would like to write a psycho-philosophical essay entitled "On the failure to share attractions and repulsions." Can you suggest a table of contents and introduction?*

ChatGPT proposed a table of contents consisting of nine chapters—each divided into three parts—plus a preface and an introduction.

I then asked ChatGPT to write the texts for the various chapters, which I have included here and which correspond perfectly to my ideas on the subject, ideas that ChatGPT already knew in general, as they had been the subject of previous interactions between us.

Bruno Cancellieri

Preface

We live in an age that attaches enormous importance to opinions. Opinions are discussed, defended, attacked, and organized into camps. It is assumed that social conflict is primarily a conflict of ideas.

Yet, if we look more closely, we discover that ideas are often only the visible surface of deeper dynamics. Even before articulating a position, we are already oriented: something attracts us, something repels us. Our arguments do not arise in a vacuum; they are rooted in emotional inclinations that precede reflection.

Western philosophy has long privileged reason as an ordering faculty. Psychology, in turn, has investigated desire and aversion as individual dynamics. Rarely, however, has there been systematic reflection on what happens when these inclinations are not reciprocated by the other.

Yet our relationships are constantly affected by this tension. We get excited about something that leaves those around us indifferent. We feel repulsion for what others accept with serenity. We expect, often tacitly, that others will feel the same way we do. When this does not happen, the experience is not neutral: it can generate disappointment, distance, and sometimes resentment.

This essay stems from a simple but insistent observation: the failure to share attractions and repulsions is not a marginal detail of human coexistence, but one of its deepest and least discussed fractures.

It is not just a matter of different tastes. Attractions and repulsions define what we value and what we find unacceptable. They structure our identity, delimit our world, and guide our choices. When they are not shared, what falters is not just a superficial agreement, but the feeling of inhabiting the same symbolic space.

Talking about this issue therefore means questioning the nature of bonds, the genesis of conflict, and the fragility of harmony. It means asking ourselves to what extent the community is founded on an implicit emotional convergence and how inevitable divergence is.

This essay does not propose a definitive solution. It does not promise impossible harmonies. Rather, it aims to reveal a dynamic that operates silently in everyday relationships and collective conflicts.

Understanding the structure of our attractions and repulsions, and accepting their partial non-coincidence with those of others, may not eliminate distance, but it can perhaps transform it from a reason for condemnation into an opportunity for awareness.

If the desire to share is one of the most powerful forces in humans, then confronting its inevitable imperfection is one of its most difficult lessons.

1 Introduction

The loneliness of inclinations

It is not ideas that separate us first. Before opinions, before arguments, before moral theories, there is something more basic: what attracts us and what repels us.

Every human being is traversed by invisible vectors that orient their gaze, select what matters, and discard what appears irrelevant or intolerable. These vectors do not arise from a conscious decision. We do not choose what attracts us, nor do we deliberately decide what disgusts us. Rather, we discover that we are already oriented.

Our experience of the world is structured by these primary inclinations. They determine what we love, what we desire, what we avoid, what we condemn. In this sense, attraction and repulsion constitute the affective architecture of existence.

And yet, this is precisely where one of the deepest conflicts in relationships arises: what is obvious, natural, even necessary to me may be opaque or insignificant to the other person. What excites me may leave them indifferent; what repulses me may be accepted with serenity or even pleasure.

The failure to share attractions and repulsions is not simply a disagreement of tastes. It is a destabilizing experience. Because implicit in our deepest inclinations is a silent request for confirmation: that what we feel is recognized as legitimate, understandable, shareable.

When this confirmation is lacking, we do not merely perceive a difference. We perceive an ontological distance. The other suddenly appears to inhabit a different world, governed by emotional laws that do not coincide with our own.

This essay aims to explore the psychological and philosophical roots of this distance. Not to eliminate it—perhaps it is uneliminable—but to understand its structure, consequences, and possible forms of coexistence.

If sharing is one of the implicit foundations of social life, then the failure to share fundamental inclinations represents one of its most critical issues. Understanding this perhaps means understanding something essential about conflict, loneliness, and the fragility of human bonds.

2 Attraction and repulsion as original structures

Before judgment: the bodily yes and no

Before any moral evaluation, before any conceptual formulation, the body has already responded. There is a yes and there is a no that do not pass through deliberation. They are micro-movements: an imperceptible approach, a tension towards; or a contraction, a retreat, a stiffening.

This bodily yes and no constitute the first form of relationship with the world. We do not initially think about the world: we feel it. And in feeling it, we select it.

Newborns do not make judgments; they lean or retreat. But adults are no different in their fundamental structure: they have simply learned to cover their primary movements with words, explanations, and arguments. Behind the phrases "I disagree" or "I like it" lies an immediate bodily experience.

This original level is often invisible to us. We represent ourselves as subjects who choose, when in reality we react. Judgment comes later, as a formalization of the yes and no that have already occurred.

The body is the first place of orientation.

The biological root and symbolic form

Attractions and repulsions have an obvious biological basis: the organism tends toward what promotes survival and away from what threatens it. Pleasure and pain are primary signals.

However, in humans, this biological root is soon transfigured. The object of attraction is not only food or protection; it can be an idea, an image, a lifestyle. The object of repulsion is not only poison or physical danger; it can be a behavior, an attitude, a value.

Biology provides the structure of movement; culture multiplies its objects.

Attraction and repulsion thus become symbolic forms. We react not only to sensory stimuli, but to meanings. A word can arouse enthusiasm or disgust. A gesture can appear noble or repugnant.

In this transition from the biological to the symbolic, the bodily root is not lost: it is sublimated. Moral disgust, for example, retains the visceral quality of physical disgust. Indignation is a bodily movement even before it is a rational stance.

Human beings inhabit a world of meanings, but they experience them with their bodies.

Desire and disgust as orientations of the world

Desire and disgust are not simple reactions; they are organizing forces. They draw a map.

What we desire becomes our center of gravity. Around it, we organize our time, attention, and energy. What disgusts us becomes a boundary: it delimits what we exclude, what we do not want to integrate into our lives.

Each individual lives in a selected world. Two people who inhabit the same physical reality may inhabit emotionally different worlds, because their map of attractions and repulsions is different.

These forces determine not only tastes, but also existential trajectories. Professional choices, friendships, loves, and ideological affiliations are often the result of a long, silent work of desire and rejection.

In this sense, attraction and repulsion are original structures: they precede theory, they precede narrative identity, they precede the image we have of ourselves. They are the invisible lines of force that make the world habitable—or unbearable.

Understanding them means approaching the point where human beings are not yet self-justifying, but simply living orientation.

3 The pre-rational nature of inclinations

The illusion of free choice

Human beings like to think of themselves as the authors of their own inclinations. We say: "I chose this," "I don't like it for good reasons," "I decided to walk away." But if we observe more closely the moment when an attraction or repulsion arises, we discover something less voluntary.

Inclination happens. It is not deliberate.

We can choose how to behave in relation to what we feel, but we rarely choose what we feel. Desire arises before the decision to indulge it; disgust emerges before the choice to repress or express it.

Freedom operates in a secondary space: that of management, not that of genesis. We delude ourselves into thinking we are sovereign over the origin, when in fact we are mostly administrators of movements that are already active.

This observation undermines the idea of completely autonomous subjectivity. Our fundamental preferences are not the product of a pure act of will; they are the result of layers of experiences and emotional imprinting.

Free choice exists, but it comes into play downstream, not upstream.

Emotion, impulse, evaluation

Between the stimulus and conscious judgment, there is an often invisible sequence. A stimulus arouses an emotion; the emotion generates an impulse; only then does evaluation intervene.

Emotion is the first signal: a vibration, an affective tone. Impulse is its dynamic translation: approaching, moving away, speaking, remaining silent. Evaluation is the attempt to interpret what has already happened.

We often reverse the narrative order. We say we evaluated and then reacted, when in fact we reacted and then evaluated. Consciousness constructs retrospective coherence.

This does not mean that reason is irrelevant. Rather, it means that it works on material that is already oriented. Emotion is not a disturbance of rationality, but its preliminary condition. Without an affective tone, nothing would appear worthy of attention.

In this sense, inclinations are the ground on which reason builds. If the ground changed, the buildings would also change.

The unconscious as a selective matrix

Beneath consciousness operates a selective matrix. We do not perceive everything that is available; we perceive what resonates with our internal configuration.

The unconscious is not only a repository of repressed content; it is also an active filter. It selects, amplifies, and attenuates. Two individuals exposed to the same event may react in radically different ways because their sedimented affective histories are different.

Attractions and repulsions are often signs of this invisible selection. We feel attracted to what confirms or completes an internal pattern; we reject what threatens or destabilizes it.

This matrix is not immutable, but it is resistant. Changing deep-seated inclinations requires more than rational conviction: it requires a transformation of the underlying emotional structure.

Recognizing the existence of this matrix means abandoning the pretense of total transparency to ourselves. We do not fully know why something attracts or repels us. We can investigate the reasons, but we often discover that they are rooted in layers that precede explicit memory.

Inclinations, therefore, are not the result of lucid deliberation, but the expression of an already active orientation. Rationality is not the origin of movement; it is its belated interpreter.

Understanding the pre-rational nature of inclinations does not mean denying freedom, but placing it in its proper place: not in the emergence of yes and no, but in the way we choose to live with them.

4 The social construction of preferences

If inclinations have a pre-rational root, this does not mean they are isolated. No human being develops their own system of attractions and repulsions in a relational vacuum. Every affective configuration is the result of an intertwining of bodily structure and symbolic environment.

Preferences are not just born: they are formed.

Family, language, culture

The first community of resonance is the family. Children do not only learn words; they learn emotional tones. They discover what excites their parents, what irritates them, what disgusts them, what moves them. Even before understanding the reasons, they internalize the intensity.

In this sense, emotional education precedes explicit moral education. We are not only told what is good or bad; we are shown what is worthy of enthusiasm or disapproval. The tone of voice, the look in the eye, the silence, the tension in the body convey hierarchies of value.

Language reinforces this organization. Words are not neutral labels: they carry implicit evaluations. Saying "ambition" or "greed," "prudence" or "fear," "freedom" or "selfishness" is not indifferent. The available vocabulary guides the categories through which we feel.

Culture amplifies this process. Every society constructs systems of collective attraction: models of success, aesthetic ideals, figures to admire. At the same time, it constructs objects of repulsion: stigmatized behaviors, devalued roles, marginalized identities.

The subject grows up within this magnetic field. Their personal inclinations develop in dialogue—sometimes in harmony, sometimes in conflict—with these forces.

Internalization and identification

The decisive process is internalization. What is initially external becomes part of the internal structure.

The child does not simply obey; it identifies. It takes on the preferences of significant figures as its own. It desires what they desire, rejects what they reject. This identification guarantees belonging: sharing inclinations means being recognized.

But internalization is never a perfect copy. The subject reworks, modifies, and sometimes distorts. The preferences received are integrated with personal experiences, generating unique configurations.

Sometimes, identification produces stable conformity. In other cases, it generates latent tension: the subject feels that the internalized inclinations do not fully coincide with their original feelings. This can give rise to silent conflicts, feelings of inauthenticity, or sudden rebellions.

Preferences, therefore, are not simply learned: they are incorporated. They become part of our way of perceiving the world.

The role of imitation

Alongside identification, there is a more widespread and less conscious mechanism at work: imitation.

We desire what we see others desiring. The object acquires value through the gaze of others. Collective admiration confers attractiveness; widespread disapproval generates repulsion.

Imitation is not a flaw of maturity; it is a structural dynamic of sociality. Without imitation, there would be no cultural transmission or symbolic cohesion. However, it can produce a standardization that masks the fragility of personal inclinations.

Sometimes we believe we desire something "for ourselves," when in fact we are reproducing a dominant orientation. Similarly, we may reject an object not because it repels us in an original way, but because its acceptance would threaten our belonging.

Imitation creates apparent convergence. But when the imitated inclination is not fully integrated, an internal discrepancy can emerge: the subject realizes that they are outwardly adhering to something that does not move them inwardly.

The social construction of preferences is therefore a complex process: rooted in the primary relationship, structured by language, sustained by identification, and spread by imitation.

Our attractions and repulsions are neither purely individual nor totally collective. They are the point of intersection between a personal history and a social field.

Understanding this genesis means recognizing that what we perceive as "natural" is often the result of a long, invisible process of relational modeling.

5 The incommunicability of attractions

If attractions are original, pre-rational, and socially shaped structures, it becomes understandable why they do not spontaneously coincide between individuals. And yet, their failure to coincide is never experienced as a neutral fact. It is often perceived as a fracture.

Attraction carries with it a silent expectation: that what is luminous to me may also be luminous to the other.

Why what attracts me does not attract the other

Every attraction is the result of a unique story. Behind what excites me there is a constellation of memories, associations, identifications, confirmations received or denied. The object of attraction is only the visible tip of an invisible stratification.

When the other person does not share my enthusiasm, they are not simply expressing a different taste: they are manifesting a different emotional configuration. Their system of resonances is built on other experiences, other internalizations, other models.

Attraction is not an objective property of the object; it is a relationship between the object and internal structure. By changing the structure, the resonance changes.

Yet, in moments of enthusiasm, we tend to forget this. The object appears to us to be clearly attractive, almost intrinsically so. Failure to share this view is then perceived as a lack of sensitivity or depth in the other person.

We do not understand that what is the center of gravity for us may be a mere marginal element for others.

The failure of argumentation

When faced with a lack of sharing, we often resort to argumentation. We explain why something is beautiful, interesting, important. We list qualities, provide reasons, try to persuade.

But argument rarely generates genuine attraction.

Reasons can be understood without producing resonance. The other person may recognize the coherence of the argument and remain indifferent inside. This gap is destabilizing: it shows that logic does not create desire.

Argumentation acts on the cognitive level; attraction arises on the emotional level. You can convince someone that a work is historically significant, but you cannot force them to be moved by it.

When argumentation fails, frustration can emerge. The enthusiast feels unrecognized; the interlocutor may feel pressured. Communication becomes rigid.

The failure of argument reveals a structural limitation: not everything that is experienced can be conveyed through discourse.

Affective misunderstanding

The failure to share is not confined to the level of the object; it tends to shift to the level of the relationship.

Those who do not share my attraction may be perceived as distant, cold, unable to grasp what is essential to me. In turn, they may perceive me as excessive, obsessive, incomprehensible.

This gives rise to affective misunderstanding: we no longer discuss the object, but the quality of the other person. The divergence of inclinations is translated into personal judgment.

This transition is almost automatic. Since attraction is part of our identity structure, its lack of echo is experienced as a failure to recognize ourselves.

It is not the object that is rejected, but our experience of the object.

This is where the existential dimension of incommunicability manifests itself. The distance is not only about different tastes, but about the impossibility of sharing the same field of emotional meaning.

The incommunicability of attractions is neither total nor inevitable in every case. There are spontaneous convergences, unexpected resonances, deep affinities. But precisely because such moments are rare and precious, their absence weighs heavily.

Understanding this dynamic means recognizing that human communication is not just an exchange of information, but a search for resonance. And resonance cannot be imposed: it can only happen.

6 The loneliness of repulsion

If the incommunicability of attractions generates frustration, that of repulsions produces something more acute. Unshared attraction can be experienced as simple difference; unshared repulsion, on the other hand, tends to turn into moral tension.

Disgust has a clearer, more defining quality. It indicates not only what I would like to bring closer, but also what must not enter my personal space.

When this boundary is not recognized by the other person, the experience becomes destabilizing.

Moral disgust

Disgust, in its original form, is a bodily protective reaction. But in humans, it extends to the symbolic level and becomes moral disgust.

It is no longer a harmful substance, but a behavior, an attitude, a choice that seems intolerable. Moral disgust retains its visceral dimension: it is immediate, unargued, often accompanied by a feeling of symbolic contamination.

What disgusts us seems to threaten not only our well-being, but our identity. This is why the reaction is intense.

The problem arises when the object of our disgust is accepted or even valued by others. At that moment, the difference no longer appears neutral: it appears as a fracture in the shared fabric of the world.

If what is intolerable to me is normal to someone else, then we inhabit divergent value systems.

Indignation as a call for alliance

Indignation is often an attempt to bridge this fracture. It is not just an expression of anger; it is an appeal.

When I am indignant, I am implicitly asking for confirmation: "Don't you see what I see?" Indignation seeks alliance. It wants to transform individual repulsion into a shared position.

This is why the indifference of others is particularly difficult to tolerate. If the other person does not react, does not take sides, does not share my repulsion, my indignation intensifies.

Indifference is interpreted as complicity or insensitivity. Neutrality becomes suspicious.

In reality, the other person may simply have a different emotional threshold or a different hierarchy of priorities. But in the heat of the moment, this possibility is obscured. The lack of alliance is experienced as perceived betrayal.

Relational disappointment

When repulsion finds no echo, deep disappointment can arise. Not only for the object in question, but for the relationship itself.

We realize that what is a boundary for us is not so for the other person. This discovery changes our perception of closeness. If we do not share what we consider intolerable, how similar are we really?

Relational disappointment arises from the gap between implicit expectations and emotional reality. We expect those close to us to share at least our fundamental repulsions. When this does not happen, a sense of isolation arises.

Sometimes disappointment turns into judgment: the other person is seen as morally deficient. Sometimes it turns into withdrawal: we reduce our emotional investment to protect ourselves.

The loneliness of repulsion is quieter than that of attraction, but often more corrosive. While unshared enthusiasm can be dismissed as a difference in taste, unshared disgust calls into question deep compatibility.

Understanding this dynamic means recognizing how much our repulsions are linked to the need to belong. We don't just want to avoid what disgusts us; we want to know that we are not alone in rejecting it.

When this confirmation is lacking, it is not just a judgment that falters: a part of our relational security falters.

7 Couples, friendships, communities

Human relationships are not based solely on declared principles, explicit values, or common interests. They rest on quieter ground: a certain convergence of attractions and repulsions.

This convergence does not need to be total, but it must be sufficient to generate stable resonance.

Sharing as the foundation of the bond

Every meaningful bond arises from an implicit recognition: "You feel something similar to what I feel." This emotional similarity creates familiarity. It is not just a matter of thinking the same way, but of vibrating in a compatible way.

In a couple, sharing attractions guides the common project: what excites both partners becomes a space for construction. Sharing repulsions delimits what is excluded from the relational field.

In friendship, emotional resonance is often even more decisive. Differences of opinion can be tolerated, but it is difficult to maintain deep intimacy if what is central to one person is irrelevant or incomprehensible to the other.

In a community, the convergence of inclinations produces cohesion. Shared ideals, common enemies, and converging value models generate a sense of belonging. The community is, in part, a structure of collective attractions and repulsions.

The bond, in all its forms, therefore implies a certain emotional harmony.

When asymmetry becomes conflict

Divergence is not destructive in itself. Every mature relationship contains differences. The problem arises when asymmetry becomes systematic and affects core issues.

If, in a couple, what is a primary source of meaning for one partner is marginal for the other, a progressive imbalance is created. The enthusiasm of one finds no echo; the repulsion of the other finds no respect. The distance grows not because of traumatic events, but because of repeated micro-misalignments.

In friendship, asymmetry can cause a subtle erosion. One of the two may begin to perceive the other as always "out of tune." Dialogue becomes impoverished; certain topics are avoided; emotional investment is reduced.

In the community, widespread asymmetry produces polarization. Groups with divergent emotional maps perceive each other as incomprehensible or threatening. The conflict is not only ideological, but perceptual.

Asymmetry becomes conflict when it is experienced as a denial of identity. It is no longer a question of "you feel differently," but of "you do not recognize what is fundamental to me."

Adaptation and pretense strategies

To preserve the bond, individuals develop adaptation strategies. Convergences are emphasized and divergences are minimized. Anything that could cause a rift is kept quiet. One symbolically participates in the enthusiasm of the other without fully sharing it.

These strategies can be functional: they allow coexistence, reduce friction, and maintain a common ground. However, if they become systematic, they produce a form of pretense.

Fiction is not necessarily a conscious lie; it can be partial self-deception. One ends up acting out a watered-down version of oneself in order not to compromise the relationship.

In the long term, this compression can generate resentment or emptiness. The bond survives, but loses authenticity.

The problem is not the difference itself, but the way it is handled. If the divergence is recognized as structural and not as fault, it can be integrated. If, on the other hand, it is denied or forced, it tends to reemerge in the form of latent conflict.

Couples, friendships, and communities are therefore permanent laboratories of emotional negotiation. Every stable relationship is the result of a dynamic balance between resonance and difference, between authenticity and adaptation.

Understanding this balance means recognizing that sharing is the foundation of the bond, but it cannot be total; and that difference is inevitable, but it does not necessarily have to become a fracture.

8 The birth of resentment

Resentment does not arise suddenly. It is the result of a process of sedimentation. It is not the simple observation of a difference, but the emotional accumulation of differences experienced as repeated wounds.

When the failure to share attractions and repulsions continues over time, it can turn into a stable disposition. What was initially surprise or disappointment becomes a systematic interpretation of the other.

The expectation of agreement

Every meaningful relationship contains an implicit expectation of agreement. Not total agreement, but at least on points considered essential.

This expectation is rarely stated explicitly. It is assumed. We believe that those close to us share what is central to us, or at least recognize its importance.

When the expectation is not met the first time, it can be relativized. However, when the dissonance is repeated, the expectation does not disappear: it turns into frustration.

The critical point is that the expectation does not only concern the subject of the disagreement, but the underlying harmony. We do not only expect the other person to agree with us; we expect them to feel the same way we do at crucial moments.

It is this expectation of resonance that makes the lack of agreement so incisive.

The experience of perceptual betrayal

When the other person does not react as we expect to what is obvious to us, a particular form of fracture occurs: perceptual betrayal.

It is not intentional betrayal. It is the discovery that the other person does not see what is obvious to us, or sees as acceptable what is unacceptable to us.

This discrepancy is experienced as destabilizing because it calls into question the commonality of the world. If we do not even share the perception of what matters or what is intolerable, what is our bond based on?

Perceptual betrayal produces a sense of loneliness deeper than simple disagreement. It is not just a divergence of opinion; it is a divergence of perspective.

At this stage, trust in resonance is shattered. The other is no longer perceived as a reliable mirror of one's own experience.

From disagreement to moral judgment

The decisive shift occurs when the emotional difference is reinterpreted in moral terms.

At first, we say, "We don't think the same way." Then, "They don't feel what I feel." Finally, "There is something wrong with the way they feel."

The divergence becomes a deficiency. The other is perceived as insensitive, superficial, blind, or morally deficient.

This transition protects the subject's identity: if the other person is deficient, then my perception remains intact and superior. But the price is high: the relationship becomes charged with judgment.

Resentment is structured right here. It is no longer simple disagreement, but a stable attribution of defect. Each new divergence confirms the previous negative interpretation.

The circle feeds itself: the lack of resonance generates judgment; judgment stiffens the relationship; the stiffening further reduces the possibility of mutual understanding.

Resentment, therefore, is the crystallization of a failure to share. It is the moment when emotional difference ceases to be a contingent experience and becomes an interpretative category of the other.

Understanding the birth of resentment means recognizing how fragile the balance between difference and condemnation is. As long as divergence is tolerated as an inevitable structure, the bond can adapt. When, on the other hand, it becomes proof of guilt, the bond is transformed into a field of permanent moral evaluation.

9 Misanthropy and withdrawal

When a lack of sharing no longer concerns individual relationships but becomes a repeated and generalized experience, it can produce a more radical transformation: distance is no longer an episode, it becomes a system.

The subject concludes not only that 'this person' does not feel the same way as them, but that 'people' in general do not share what is essential to them. This is where a misanthropic disposition can arise.

When distance becomes a system

At first, there are individual disappointments: unrequited enthusiasm, unshared repulsion, indignation left alone. If such experiences accumulate, the subject may begin to construct a global interpretation.

The difference is no longer perceived as contingent but structural. "I am surrounded by people who do not see what I see." This belief produces a redefinition of the relational field.

Distance ceases to be painful and becomes an organizing principle. One withdraws before even exposing oneself. Emotional investment is reduced to avoid new fractures. The expectation of resonance is lowered or eliminated.

In this way, distance becomes a defensive system. Harmony is no longer sought; its improbability is assumed.

The risk of lucid isolation

Withdrawal can take on an apparently lucid form. The subject perceives themselves as more aware, more demanding, less willing to compromise emotionally. Distance is interpreted as clarity.

At this stage, misanthropy can seem like consistency: not adapting to what is perceived as mediocrity or superficiality becomes a sign of integrity.

However, lucid isolation comes at a cost. By reducing the expectation of sharing, the possibility of unexpected resonance is also reduced. The field of relationships gradually narrows.

The subject preserves their emotional configuration, but exposes it less to transformative comparison. The absence of friction also reduces the possibility of revision.

Lucidity can thus turn into rigidity.

Contempt as a defense

When systemic distance becomes entrenched, contempt can emerge. Contempt is a form of protection: by devaluing the other, one protects one's own value system.

If others do not share my attractions or repulsions, I can conclude that the problem is not difference but their inadequacy. Contempt neutralizes the wound of lack of resonance by transforming it into superiority.

But this defense has an ambivalent effect. On the one hand, it stabilizes identity: it is not I who am isolated, it is others who are inadequate. On the other hand, it interrupts the possibility of mutual recognition.

Contempt simplifies the world by dividing it sharply between those who "see" and those who "do not see." This division reduces the anxiety of complexity but stiffens perception.

Misanthropy, in this form, is not simply hatred of humanity. It is often the consequence of a repeatedly frustrated desire for sharing. It is the result of a high expectation of resonance transformed into a conviction of its rarity.

Understanding misanthropy and withdrawal does not mean justifying them, but recognizing their internal logic. They represent a defensive solution to emotional fracture: better to reduce the field of relationships than to continually expose oneself to disappointment.

The question remains whether this solution truly preserves integrity or whether, in the long run, it impoverishes the human experience in its deepest need: that of being recognized in one's fundamental inclinations.

10 Is partial sharing possible?

If the full coincidence of attractions and repulsions is unlikely, and if their lack of sharing can generate resentment or withdrawal, then a decisive question arises: is a form of coexistence possible that does not require total emotional identity?

The answer cannot be naively optimistic. But it can be articulated.

Tolerance vs. commonality

Tolerance is often presented as a solution to conflict. However, tolerating does not mean sharing. I can tolerate what does not attract me and what does not disgust me, but tolerance remains a minimal attitude: suspension of judgment or restraint of reaction.

Commonality, on the other hand, implies resonance. It is an experience of harmony, of spontaneous convergence.

The problem is that many relationships seek commonality where only tolerance is realistically possible. When we demand identity of feeling, we transform inevitable difference into a source of frustration.

Recognizing the distinction between tolerance and commonality means scaling back expectations of emotional fusion. Not every divergence is a sign of incompatibility; it may simply be an expression of different structures.

Relational maturity could begin right here: accepting that some areas of shared life are based on resonance, others on simple respectful coexistence.

Accepting heterogeneity

Accepting heterogeneity does not mean relativizing everything. It does not mean denying the strength of one's attractions or repulsions. It means recognizing that they are not a universal measure.

Heterogeneity is structural because affective configurations are historically and relationally constructed. Each individual is the result of a unique trajectory. Demanding total convergence is tantamount to denying this uniqueness.

Accepting heterogeneity requires a transformation of perspective: the other is not deficient because they do not feel the same way I do; they are different because they are structured differently.

This shift reduces the temptation to make automatic moral judgments. Divergence can be perceived as a fact, not as a fault.

Such acceptance does not eliminate the pain of lack of resonance, but it mitigates its transformation into condemnation.

Emotional maturity

Emotional maturity does not consist in the absence of strong inclinations, but in the ability to live with their non-universality.

It means recognizing that the desire to be confirmed in one's attractions and repulsions is legitimate, but not always satisfied. It means distinguishing between the need for recognition and the demand for uniformity.

A deeper maturity also implies a willingness to question one's own reactions: is what disgusts me really intolerable or is it simply foreign to me? Is what excites me objectively shareable or is it an expression of my own history?

This self-reflection does not weaken identity; it makes it more aware of its own limitations.

Partial sharing then becomes possible: not because everything coincides, but because difference is not experienced as a structural threat.

Perhaps the highest form of bond is not perfect harmony, but the ability to remain in relationship while knowing that our emotional worlds do not entirely overlap.

In this sense, emotional maturity does not eliminate distance, but makes it livable. It does not erase the desire for resonance, but frees it from the claim of universality.

And perhaps it is precisely in this acceptance of non-coincidence that a more authentic space for encounter opens up: one based not on identity, but on mutual recognition of difference.

11 Conclusion

Towards a new ethic of emotional difference

Attractions and repulsions are not marginal details of psychic life: they are the lines of force that structure our way of inhabiting the world. They precede judgment, guide perception, and influence choices. And yet, precisely because they are so fundamental, they also become a source of fracture when they do not find resonance in the other.

Along this path, we have seen how a lack of sharing can generate frustration, indignation, resentment, and withdrawal. Not because human beings are incapable of tolerating difference in the abstract, but because what is at stake is not just any opinion: it is our system of affective orientation.

When the other person does not share what attracts or disgusts us, they are not merely disagreeing. They are revealing that they inhabit a world slightly different from ours.

The most immediate temptation is to moralize this distance. If you don't feel the same way I do, there is something wrong with you. This transformation of divergence into guilt is the point at which affective difference hardens into conflict.

A new ethic of affective difference should start right here: with the suspension of this automatic moral translation.

This is not to deny that legitimate repulsions or problematic attractions exist. It is not about absolute relativism. It is about distinguishing between what really threatens coexistence and what simply does not coincide with our structure.

This ethic involves at least three movements.

The first is the recognition of the non-universality of one's own inclinations. What is obvious to me is not necessarily obvious to others. This does not diminish my experience; it limits its claim.

The second is the acceptance of the plurality of affective maps. Each individual is shaped by a unique history of internalizations, identifications, and experiences. Heterogeneity is not an anomaly, but a condition.

The third is the transformation of the desire to share. Instead of demanding total coincidence, one can seek partial compatibility. Instead of demanding fusion, one can cultivate limited but authentic resonances.

Such an ethic does not eliminate the intrinsic loneliness of affective experience. There will always be a part of us that no one fully shares. But perhaps the task is not to cancel out this loneliness, but to recognize it as a structural element of being human.

Emotional difference is not only a source of conflict; it is also what makes encounter possible. If we were perfectly coincidental, there would be no otherness. And without otherness there would be no relationship, but simple repetition.

Accepting that others do not feel the same way we do, without degrading them or withdrawing completely, is a difficult exercise. It requires inner strength, the ability to self-reflect, and a willingness to embrace complexity.

Perhaps a mature community is not one in which everyone shares the same attractions and repulsions, but one in which their differences do not automatically become grounds for exclusion or contempt.

A new ethic of affective difference tends toward this possibility: not the utopia of total harmony, but the conscious practice of coexistence between non-coinciding emotional maps.

In it, distance is not denied, but inhabited. And failure to share is no longer necessarily the beginning of resentment, but can become the beginning of a more sober—and perhaps deeper—understanding of the human condition.

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