

S10-03

THE AESTHETICS OF BADNESS

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What are the aesthetic characteristics of badness? Is repulsion the only reaction to the wickedness, mess and disorderliness characterizing it? Or can it, depending on particular conditions, generate fascination? How does it challenge the clinical practice?

One of our analyses deals with the many meanings and uses of the term, in the moral as well as in the aesthetic sphere, referring to the breaking of the rules in both fields.

Besides an initial interpretation of badness, related to something which our mind cannot contain or make sense of, we also consider it as a legitimate aesthetic value. It is then the sublime and tragic categories that allow us to grasp the fascination and awe, the difficulty of judgment and the pleasure, due to the excessiveness, the disproportion, and the playing on the edge of the norms.

We examined the roles that the category of badness, as well as those of the sublime and tragic, play vis-à-vis the category of madness, on both the patient's and the therapist's side, on the diagnostic front and on the therapeutic one. To this purpose, we referred to some clinical and artistic, narrative and pictorial examples.