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# Panic Ethics

## Do values value in emergencies?

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***Emilio Mordini***

***Centre for Science, Society and Citizenship***

***emilio.mordini@cssc.eu***

# The Panic Model

The Panic Model is shaped on herd panic, say, the stampede.

Basically is related to mass evacuation, to escape



# Panic is characterized by

- 1) Irrational behavior
- 2) Emotions overweigh rational decisions
- 3) Selfishness
- 4) Failure
- 5) Contagions



# Origins



- 1) Similarities with herd reactions
- 2) Anecdotal evidence
- 3) Military Panic



# The Panic Model is disregarded by scholars

- 1) No empirical evidence
- 2) Altruism not rare
- 3) Rational decisions
- 4) Finalistic behavior



# Usually people don't panic

## Why they don't panic

- 1) AFFILIATION
- 2) SHARED FATE  
(stranger affiliation)
- 3) SHARED IDENTITY
- 4) IDENTIFICATION /  
empathy

## Why they could panic

- 1) Disgregation of social  
ties
- 2) Belief in individual  
escape
- 3) Diverse identities
- 4) Projective identification



# Protective Factors

## Altruism

- 1) Helping helps
- 2) Basically disasters tend to be absurd events, which overcome mental capacity for holding
- 3) Helping allows to give a sense to the event
- 4) Helpers (rescuers, peers, other people involved in the emergency) are the “pharmakon”

## Norms

- 1) The old “Women and Children” first
- 2) Norms and procedures are the other pillar which prevent the crowd collapsing
- 3) No matter what norms, even unethical norms are protective



# Pathological Factors

## Wrong Communication

- 1) Media Hype
- 2) Hollywood Movie Effect
- 3) False reassurance
- 4) Don't panic

## Panic of authorities

- 1) They expect that people panic
- 2) Conflicts and confusion with different agencies involved





# Conclusions



WHERE IS ETHICS?



# The parable of the Good Samaritan

""A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down the road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. [Levites were important participants in temple ceremonies.]



# The parable of the Good Samaritan

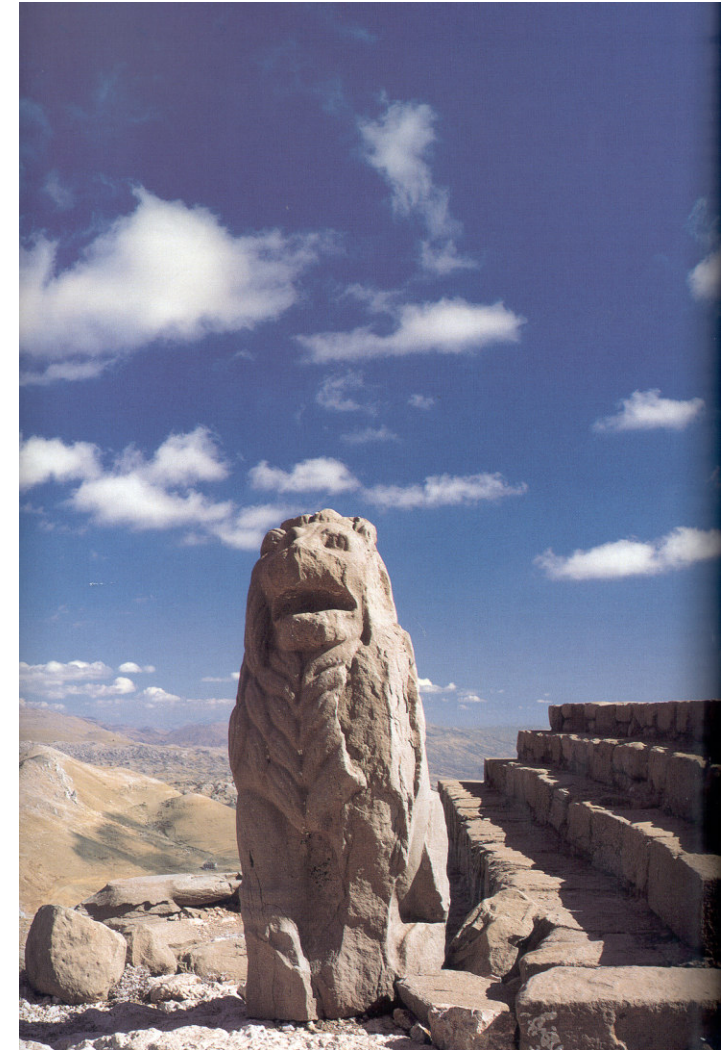
"But a Samaritan [a religious outcast], as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion and went to him and bound his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two dennarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back." Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to him who fell among the robbers? He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:29-37, Revised Standard Version)



# The good Samaritan experiment

Subjects in this experiment were students at Princeton Theological Seminary. As each subject arrived, he was informed that he was to give a talk that would be recorded in another building. Along the way to the place for the talk, the subject encountered a "victim" slumped in a doorway. The question was under what conditions would a subject would stop to help the victim.

(Darley, J. M., & Batson, C. D. ,1973,. "From Jerusalem to Jericho': A Study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*)



# The good Samaritan experiment

Half of the subjects were assigned to talk on the Good Samaritan Parable; the others were assigned a different topic. Some of the subjects were told they were late and should hurry; some were told they had just enough time to get to the recording room; and some were told they would arrive early. Judging by their responses to a questionnaire, they had different religious and moral orientations.



# The result of the experiment

- The only one of these variables that made a difference was how much of a hurry the subjects were in. 63% of subjects that were in no hurry stopped to help, 45% of those in a moderate hurry stopped, and 10% of those that were in a great hurry stopped. It made no difference whether the students were assigned to talk on the Good Samaritan Parable, nor did it matter what their religious outlook was.



# Rescue ethics

There is an ethical tenet that obliges to save people when this obligation is not supererogatory (say, when it does not imply to sacrifice themselves, heroism cannot be mandatory)

Yet ANY obligation can be considered supererogatory when one makes a priority of something different from human beings (be religion, science, career, money, etc.) and when there is no clear societal account of what values do value.



# Helpers



- **Helpers are those who are able to make thinkable the unthinkable** and then fill the gap between chaos and order.
- **Helpers think what is unthinkable**, they are the collective mind who thinks what is unthinkable for all other people.
- This skill is particularly necessary to counteract the inability to think, perhaps the most seriously pathological reaction to the new forms of crisis (**"In a crisis, you don't have time to think"**).





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- *"I will read, and you shall listen; - and so we will pass away this terrible night together."*

- THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER
  - by Edgar Allan Poe, 1839



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Emilio Mordini, MD, DPhil  
Professor and Director  
Centre for Science, Society and Citizenship  
Piazza Capo di Ferro 23 - 00186 Rome - Italy  
Phone: +39 0645551042/3 - Fax: +39 0645551044  
Email: [emilio.mordini@cssc.eu](mailto:emilio.mordini@cssc.eu)

