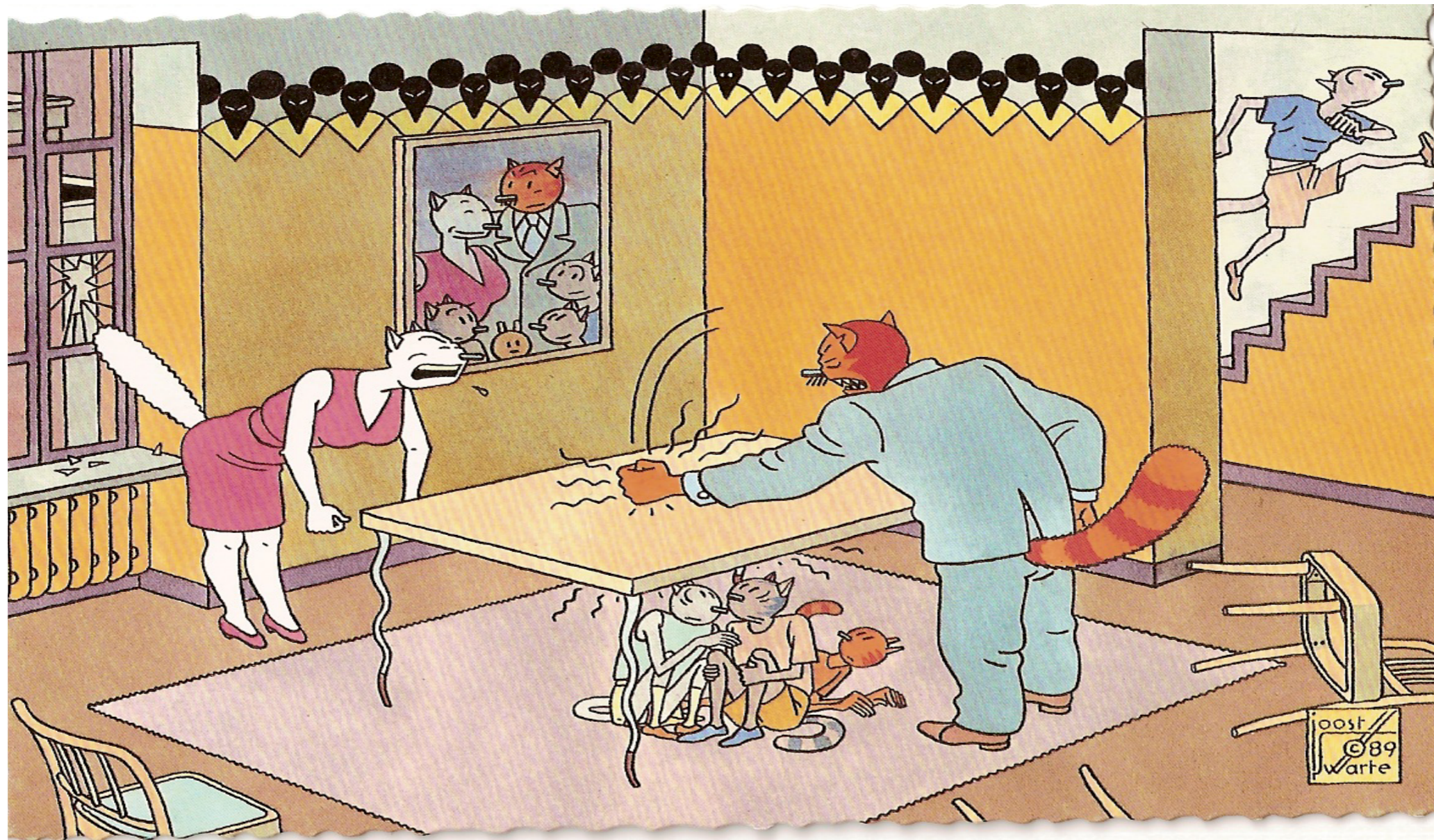


Creating Dialogical Space in Working with Domestic Violence.

Justine van Lawick



Dynamic of Domestic violence

Children in the middle!!

Children that witness the violence of their parents

Fighting parents scare the child, violence even more

Child looked for comfort, but the parents themselves are in danger or a source of danger

Children tend to feel responsible and guilty

Children get confused about the meaning of attachment and love

Development of emotion regulation is hindered

Triggers

- Cluster A *injustice*: betrayal, a child, animal or vulnerable person is maltreated, your partner has an affair (jealousy)
- Cluster B *disrespect*: violent behaviour, unwished touching, attacks, scolding, pestering, disqualifying, shame, humiliation, in traffic: dangerous driving, bumper sticking,
- Cluster C *neglect*: not getting attention, being misjudged, ignored, not being seen, heard, understood. Being abandoned.
- Cluster D *powerlessness*: opposition, objection, nagging, blaming, unjust reproaches, your wishes are not met, victim behaviour, bureaucracy, authoritarian behaviour

We can all be violent

Two year old children use violent behaviour regularly, they bite, kick, pull hairs, beat with objects.

(Tremblay, 2000)

Domestic Violence in the Netherlands 2007-2010

- **9% of Dutch population victim of serious forms of domestic violence in the last 5 years**
- **40% reports light incidents of domestic violence**
- **50% of Dutch population reports no experiences with domestic violence**

Men, women, perpetrators, victims

60% of the victims are women, 40% are men

83% of reports to the police concern male perpetrators, 17 % female

Self report survey: 60% women report violent behaviour towards the partner, 40% men report violent behaviour.

Perpetrators and victims

2/3 of perpetrators also victim

1/3 of victims also perpetrator

Significant statistic correlation between positions of victim and perpetrator.

Offering systemic treatment seems to be indicated
(van der Veen & Bogaerts, 2010)

)

Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus)

Self reports on conflict behavior in couples:

78 questions, 50% I did....against my partner and 50% my partner did.....against me.

From scolding to injure and using weapons

Research and meta-research in USA and UK (Archer, 2000: metastudy 60.000 couples) shows that women can be as violent as men in couple conflicts

Criminal Statistics

Criminal statistics from police (80% of perpetrators are men) do differ a lot from outcomes of research with the 'Conflict Tactics Scale' research.

Hypothesis: Different outcomes, different groups

Couple dynamics

M. Johnson (1995/2000):

Intimate terrorism (around 15-20%)

Situational couple violence (around 80-85%)

(in the Western World)

definition 1.

Intimate terrorism: CONTROL

When a person uses his/her physical or psychological power to threaten or hurt the other person in order to create fear and to have his/her own way against the wish of the other person

definition 2.

Situational Couple violence: LOSS OF CONTROL

When conflicts escalate and walk out of hand,
not intentional

Perpetrator treatments

Perpetrator treatments that are based on the hypothesis: *violence is acted out by men who wish to dominate and oppress women*, is not effective in diminishing recidivism

meta-analyses: Babcock & LaTaillade (2000)
Babcock, Green & Robie (2004) Feder & Wilson
(2004) Feder & Wilson (2005)

**VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR IS MORE CONNECTED
TO THE EXPERIENCE OF POWERLESSNESS
THEN TO POWER**

The dichotomy perpetrator versus victim

Therapists tend to identify with victims

Victims are supported, perpetrators are punished

Violence problems in families are so complex that perpetrators often are victims as well and victims can also be perpetrators.

Searching for guilt closes down and amplifies violent behaviour, asking for responsibility opens up useful resources

Why conjoint therapy?

Most partners do not want the relationship to stop but want the violence to stop

In conjoint therapy the destructive dynamic and differences in power can be in the center of treatment.

There is space for complexity and multiplicity of voices

Power, gender, meanings, history, fears and longings connected to the escalating conflicts can be reflected on, this opens up a dialogical space where existing resources can be reached

Always couple therapy?

When assessment shows a high frequency of severe violence with a controlling, intimidating perpetrator and a scared, fearful victim, safety has to be organized before couple therapy starts

Contextualising violence

Individual resources: (dis)abilities, talents, personality, gender, belief systems, personal experiences and trauma

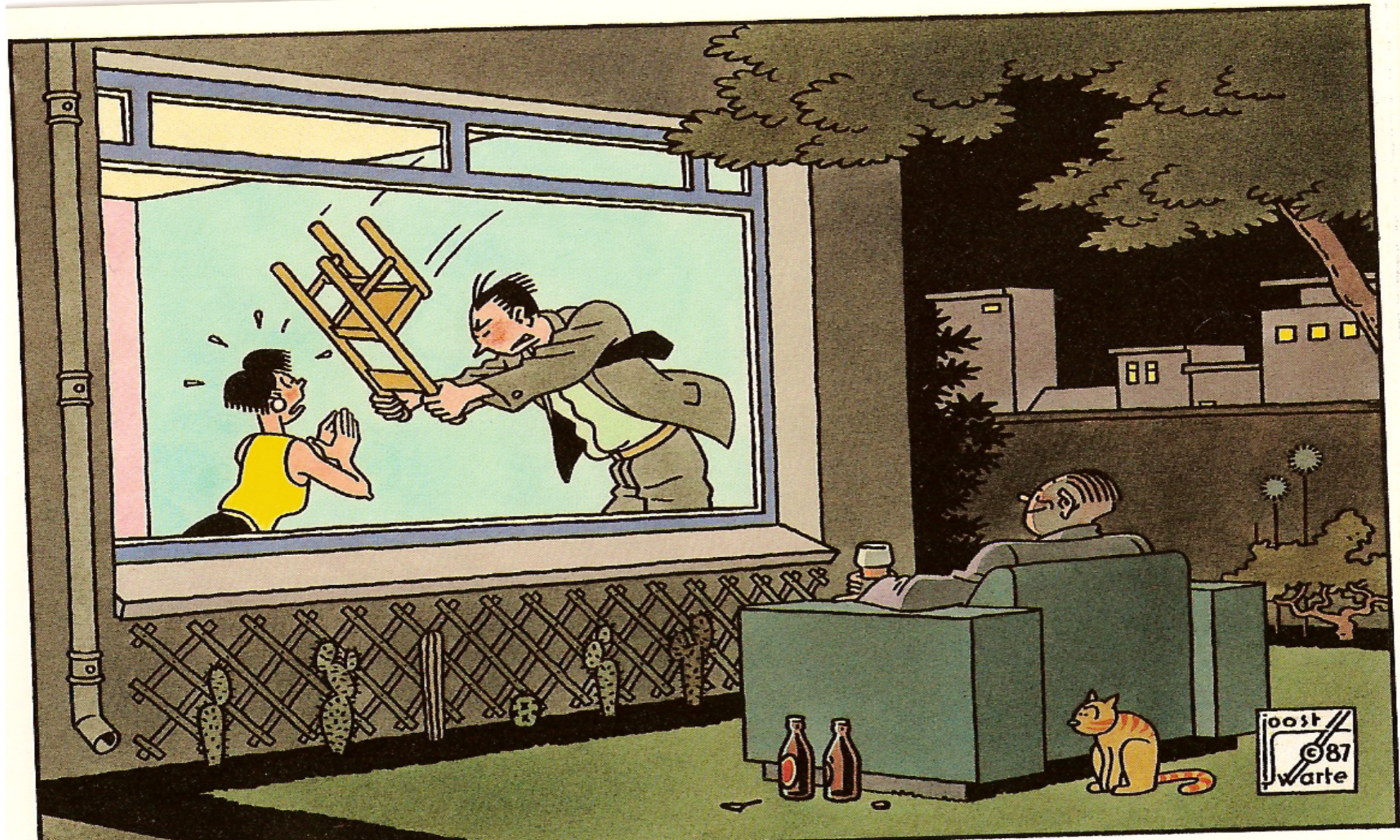
Gender and Power: differences in power; beliefs about gender

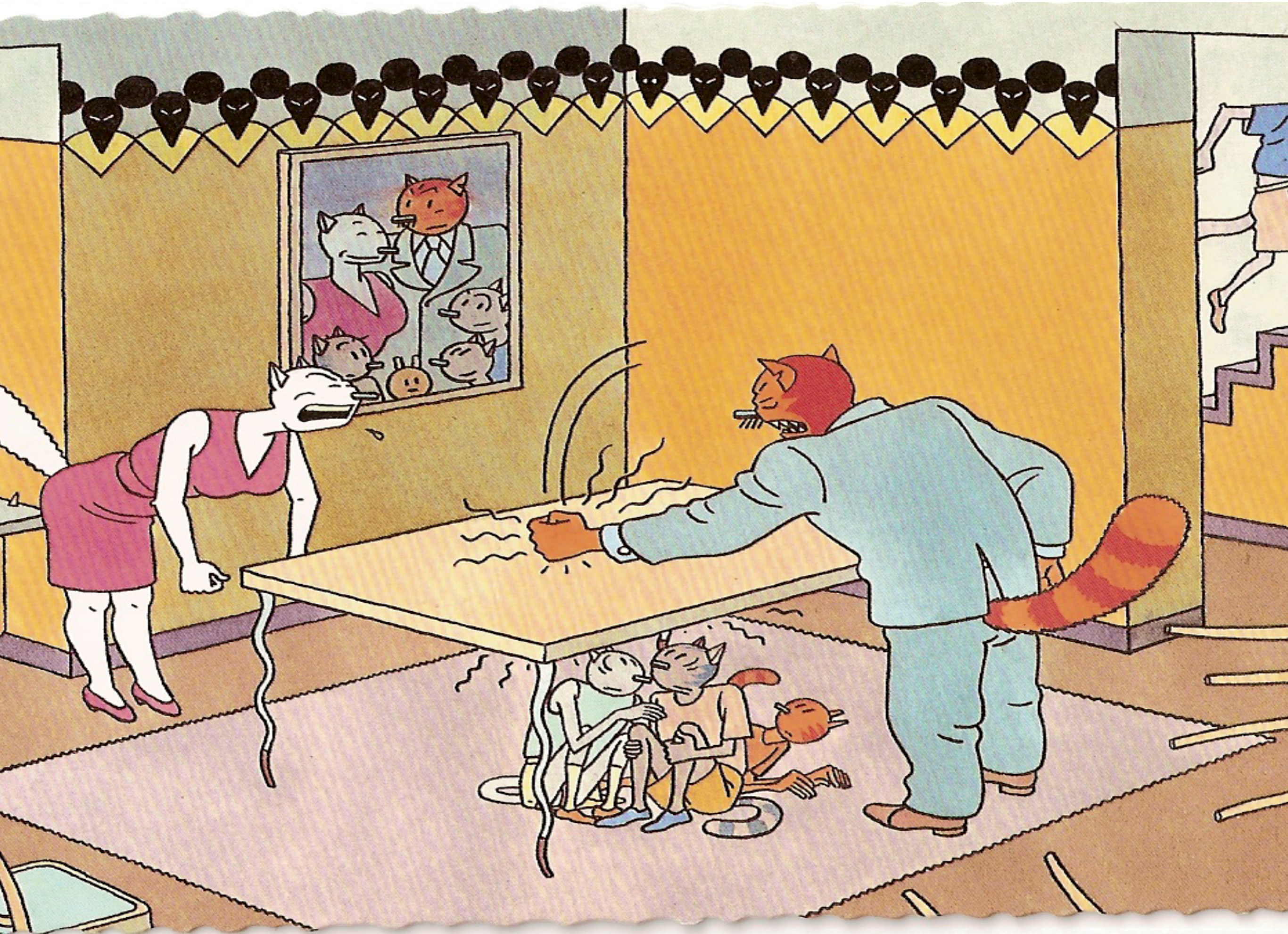
Family: relationships, children, history, old parents, illnesses

Financial resources: Debts, housing, (im)possibilities

Culture: inclusion or exclusion

different images to keep an open and curious mind





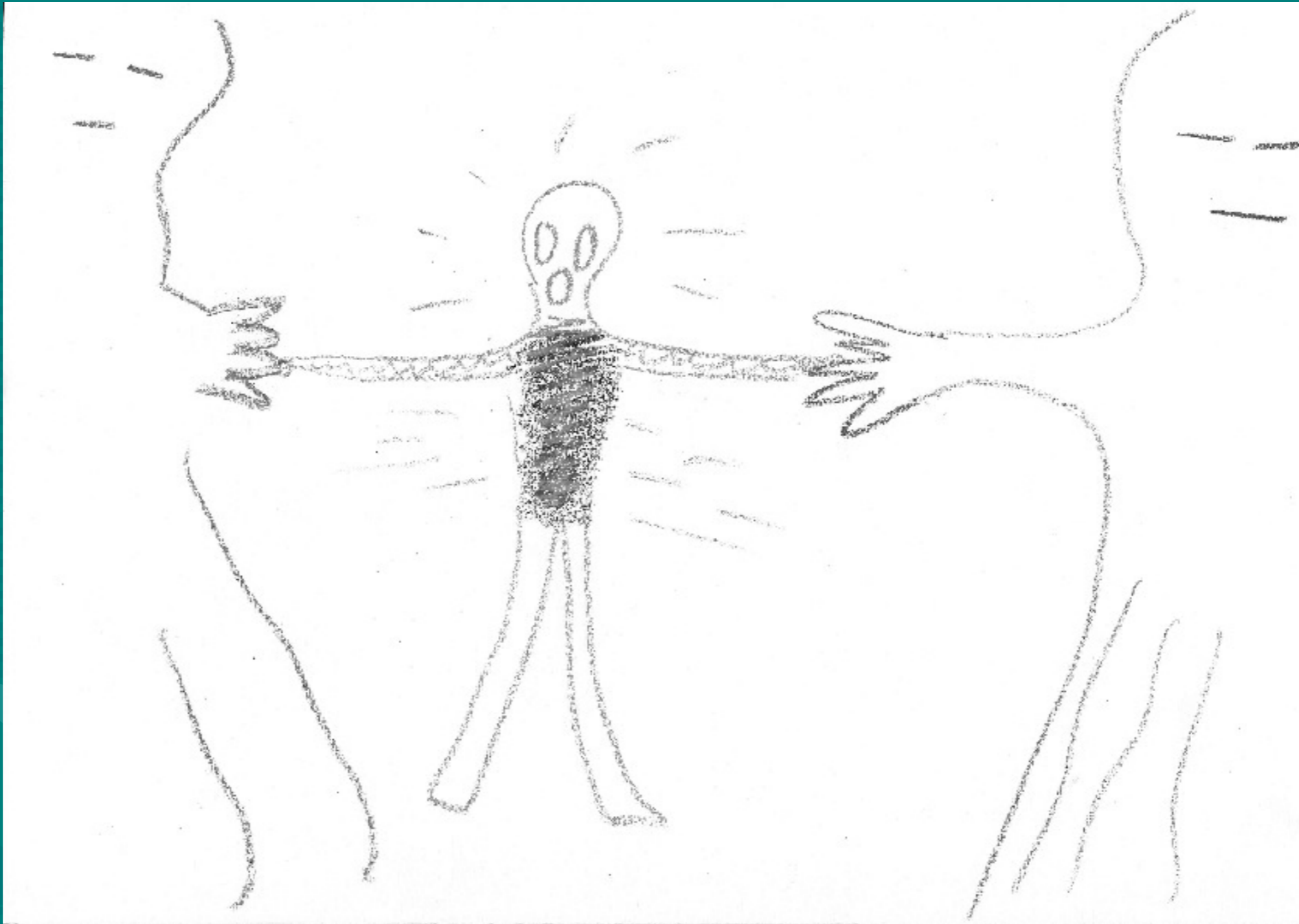
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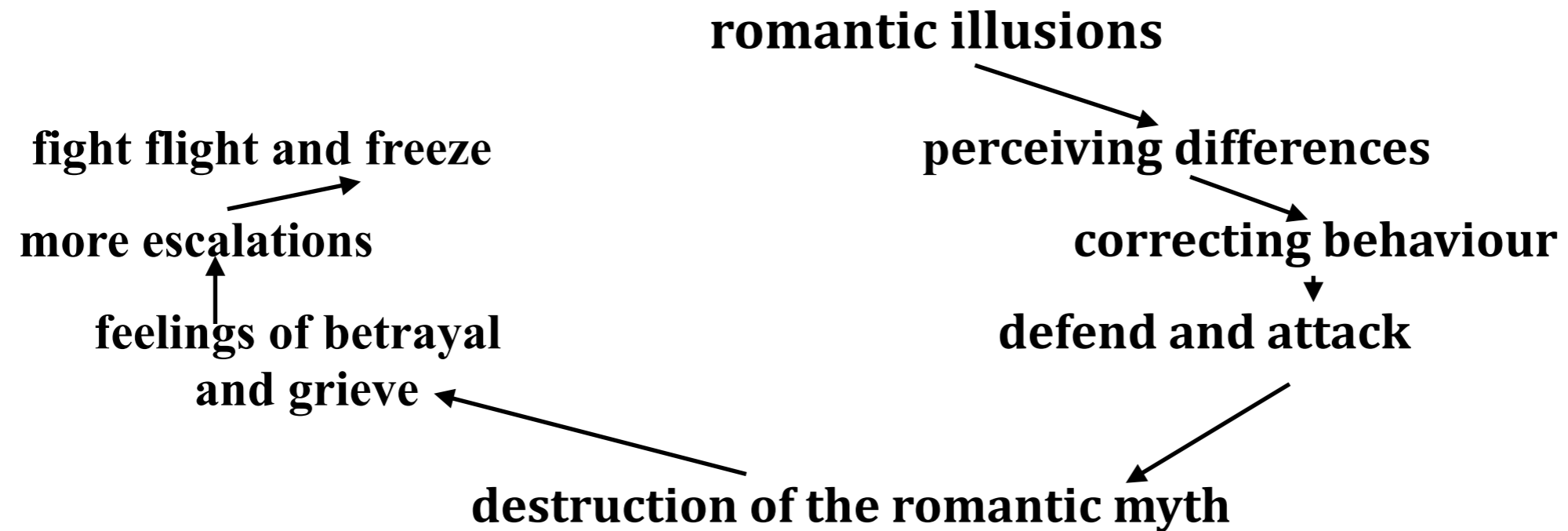




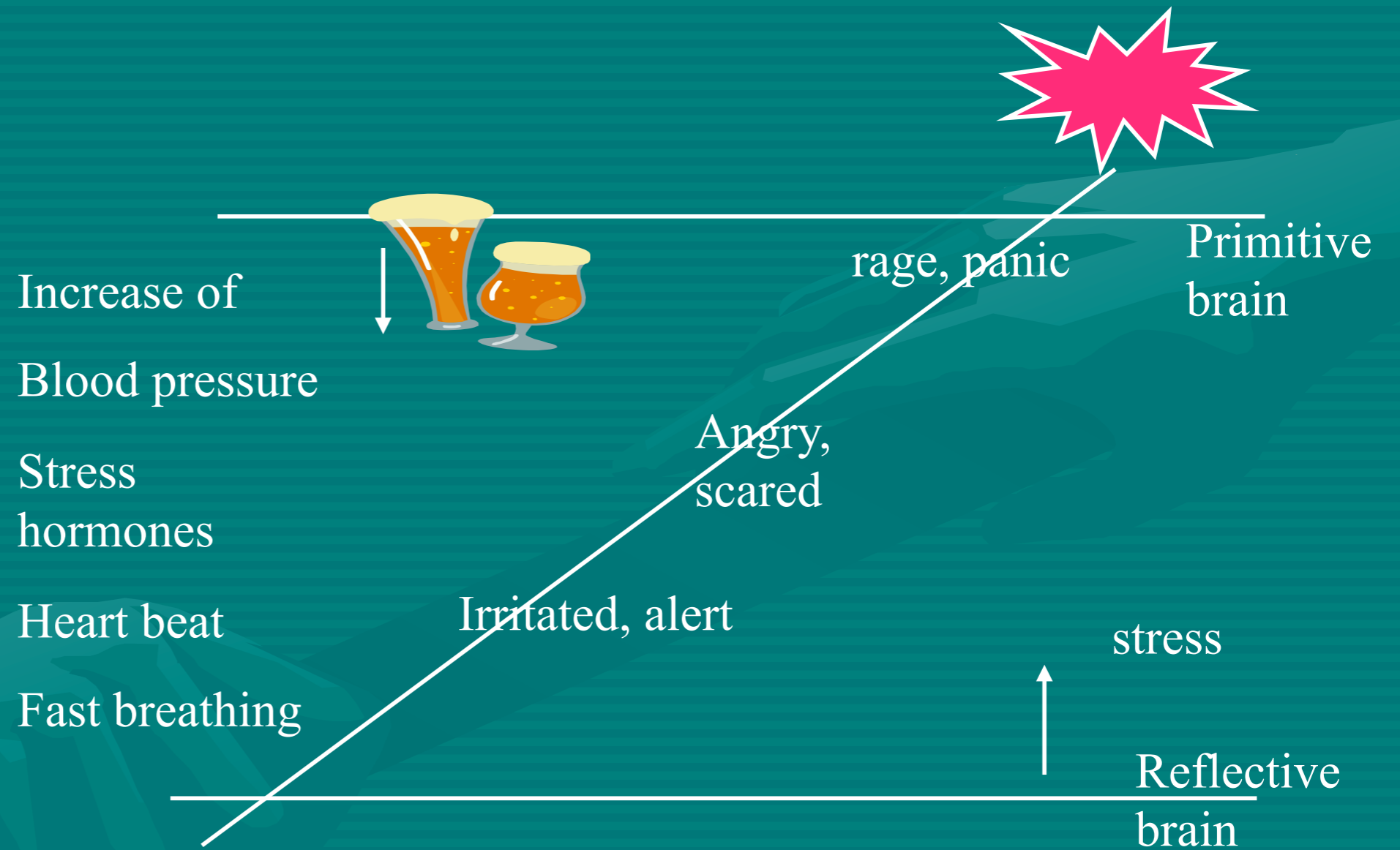
Torn apart



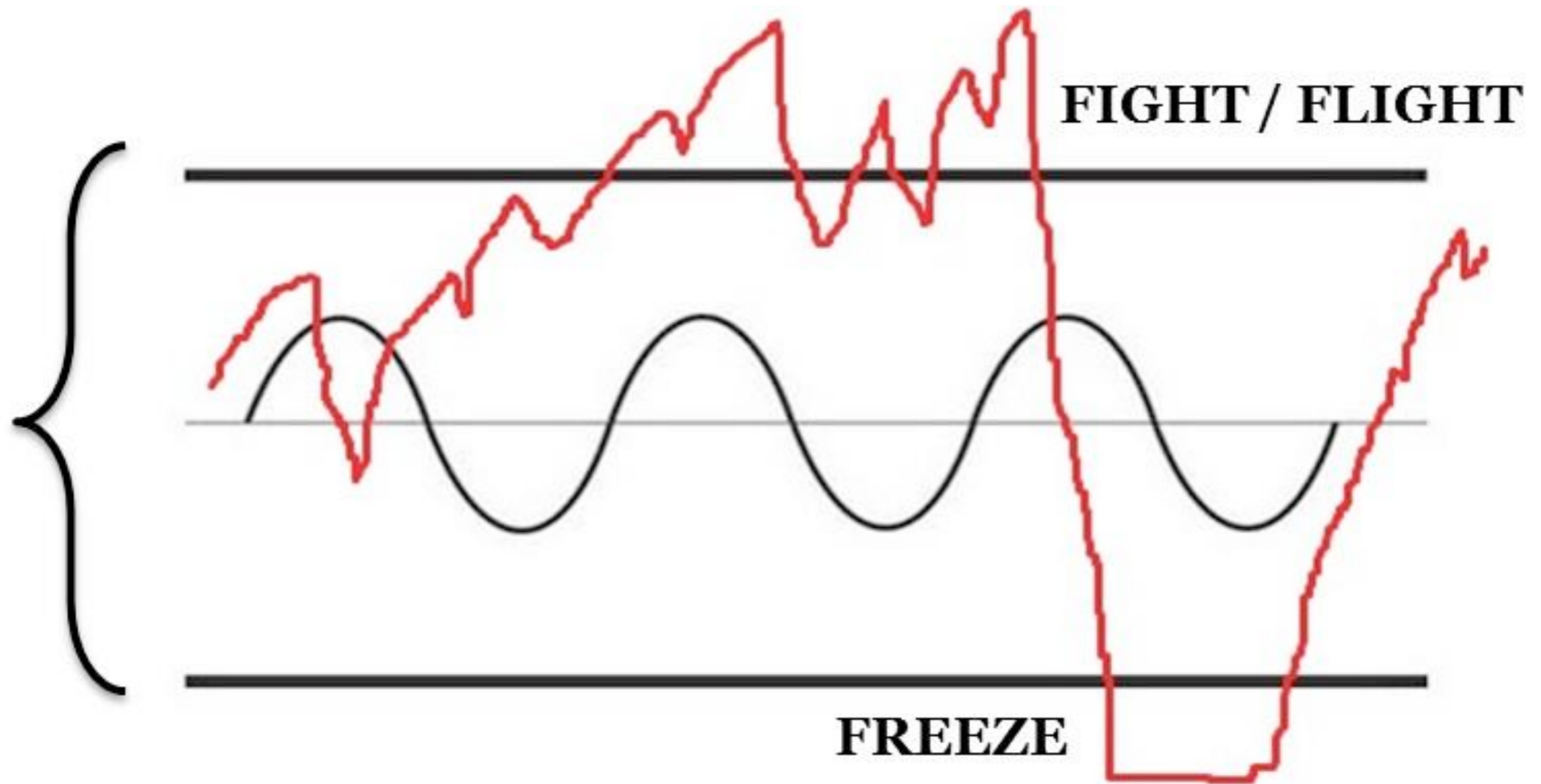
Spiral of violence



Escalation



window of tolerance (Siegel, 2012)



Escalating language: monologues

Try to convince the other

Not listening

Hearing reproaches in everything the other says

Attack and defend

Generalizing: Involving other incidents and other persons

Black and white, always and never

Stereotyping, caricaturizing

The other as an enemy

Controlling

Body language: stress, loud, closed, threatening.

De-escalating language: dialogues

Trying to understand the other

Asking more about the experiences and thoughts of the other

Empathizing, mentalizing

Accepting differences in feeling, thinking and opinions

Accepting different subjective truths

Not knowing

Space for multiple voices

No control

Body language: relaxing, open, soft voice, safe

Destructive cycles

Blame and blame

Blame and retrieve

Retrieve and retrieve

trauma





dialogical perspective

**Multiple voices and complexity in
stead of monologues and
simplifications**