

## Nothing and Love

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In Lacan's expression from Seminar XII, responding to the dolorous love of Alcibiades for Socrates, "love is giving what you do not have [...]"<sup>1</sup>, we can be reminded, amongst other things, that the *agalma* we might each suppose of ourselves through love is but the flip side of the nothing which is object *a*.

In a recent lecture on love and anxiety<sup>2</sup> Véronique Voruz described the way that the object *a* in fantasy, indicated in the formula of fantasy, offers a sense of *being* to the subject which as such lacks any being, written as barred *S*. Of the *beings* created from the object *a*, *being agalmatic* is but one possibility, and any number of more painful beings may, and mercilessly do, take its place in love as it passes through the defiles of fantasy.

Lacan refers the troubles of Alcibiades with Socrates to that which *in vision is not vision*<sup>3</sup>, the gaze. For instance, to be the recipient of a certain telling glance, to offer one in return, might be for some the trait around which love is formed, but could no less be the term by which a lover's gaze might seem perhaps to wander, and so it goes...

My question is of the status of object *a* as the fantasy gives way through analysis, is traversed, and its consequence for love.

In his presentation at the Autumn Study-Days of the *École de la Cause freudienne* in 2006, Jacques-Alain Miller talked about *anxiety, constituent and constituted*, relating to the status of object *a* at the end of analysis. Miller notes that anxiety and its object are "not to be reduced to zero"<sup>4</sup>, but rather that it is to be done without on the basis that it is put to use. The anxiety which "messes up and causes mess-up"<sup>5</sup>, on the side of the object caught in fantasy, misrecognised as being, can, on a different slope, be put to use as a sign of the real. The name Miller gives to the object in this regard is "nothing-object" (distinct from object-nothing). This *nothing-object*, "...dictates the mourning to be done of all objects, the mourning in which the place from where the subject can assume the analytic act, is carved out [...]" That is to say, that the fall of the object *a* associated with the end of analysis, is not

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<sup>1</sup> Lacan, J., *Seminaire livre XII, Problèmes cruciaux*, ed. J.-A. Miller, Paris, Seuil & Le champ freudien, 2025, p.227.

<sup>2</sup> Voruz, V., *Of love and anxiety*, CSD17 Sixth Videoconference, 23rd February 2025, unpublished.

<sup>3</sup> Lacan, J., *ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> Miller, J.-A., "Anxiety Constituent and Constituted", trans. K. O'Meara, *Scribboh* 1, Feb 2017, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p.1.

its reduction to zero, but the fall of its misapprehension with regard to *being*, and the opening up beyond belief of its use as *nothing*.

We are not far in Miller's novation of the *nothing-object*, from a status of love which responds not to the supposed *being* of the object, but in the *nothing* of that object, close to the desire to "obtain absolute difference"<sup>6</sup>. What's left are relations of symptoms, which as Voruz noted in her presentation<sup>7</sup>, are not without their own troubles.

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<sup>6</sup> Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. A. Sheridan, New York/London: Norton, 1977, p.276.

<sup>7</sup> Voruz, V., *Ibid*