

The Temporality of Love

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Passion that does not believe itself eternal is hideous

Honoré de Balzac

The barred subject is deprived of a signifier to represent it and emptied of jouissance. Along with the emergence of the subject of the unconscious, the illusion of fulfillment is born; the hope that what has been lost will be found again within the Other. Each time the event of love takes place, is because the subject believes in a promise of union and fulfillment. It is as if the emergence of truth is suspended and remains pending. Love is haunted by the illusion of the timeless, eternal and unchanging object which evokes Divine love. J.-A. Miller refers to the crucified Christ, who endures suffering until he reaches the point of thinking that he has been abandoned by the Father. At this point, the myth of the resurrection of bodies is essential, since it depicts the final abolition of time.¹

But while the unconscious does not know time, the libido does. There is a temporality at the level of love of desire and pleasure. *I love* or *I am loved*, but for how long? While every love aims at the eternal, every enjoyment of the object leads to a decrease in the value of that object. Freud stressed that “...sexual impulses which are uninhibited in their aims suffer an extraordinary reduction through the discharge of energy every time the sexual aim is attained. It is the fate of sensual love to become extinguished when it is satisfied.”²

What characterises the erotic encounter is heterochrony and temporal disharmony, as the impasses of love reveal to us. Marguerite Duras in *Dix Heures et demie du soir en été* [10:30 on a Summer Night]³, shows that we better grasp what love is, at the

¹ Miller, J.—A., “Introduction à l’erotique du temps.” *La cause freudienne* 56.1, 2004, pp 61-85. See also “Introduction to the Erotics of Time” *Eroticism, Lacanian Ink*, 24/25, ed. J. Ayerza, trans. B. P. Fulks, The Wooster Press, 2005, pp.21-22.

² Freud, S. “Group Psychology and the analysis of the Ego (1921).” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XVIII. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953, pp 111-116.

³ Duras, M., *Dix heures et demie du soir en été*, Editions Gallimard : France, 1960. English translation, *10 :30 on a Summer Night*, Grove Press : US, 1961.

moment when it ends, when it sometimes touches death⁴, either in the form of the death drive and the passage to the act, or in the form of devastation, mourning and melancholy.

We can assume that whenever the promise of eternity is shaken, discontent arises. In other words, every time the partner ceases to function as the envelope of the real, the subject gets a glimpse of the naked truth. These are the moments when the wager of love is lost, clogging the path of desire and equating the subject with an object in the jaws of jouissance. The subject's relationship to castration sets the tone for this encounter with the real.

Could we suppose a love that is not so painful?

In his article *Possible Love*, Pierre Ebtinger refers to the love that is on the side of life, the love that does not betray itself by filling in the lack that makes it vibrate.⁵ For such a state to exist, the subject must consent to the lack, insofar as this lack is both revealed and sustained in the encounter with a partner. Listening to the testimonies of the Analysts of the School we trace the paths they followed to weave the *know-how* to deal with love or else, to the *know-how* to deal with one's symptom.

In the case of psychosis where the lack is missing, could we consider love that does not disturb the most intimate bond of the feeling of life, to be less painful? Could this love be a compensatory-make-believe of the Name-of-the-Father?

⁴ LaSagna, P. "The Love Event." *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, 40, 2023, pp 59-67.

⁵ Ebtinger, P. "Possible love." *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, 40, 2023, pp 81-94.