

Plaisir d'amour ¹

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In both the French and English titles of the NLS congress— painful love appears as plural; the painful thing about love is that it repeats as though in a loop. Constant failure, constant missed encounters, because the structure of the speaking-being constantly places stumbling blocks in the way, banishing love into the realm of the happily ever after of fairy tales.

But painful love also calls for its opposite - the pleasure of love. As the lyrics of the French song say, “*Plaisir d'amour ne dure qu'un moment, chagrin d'amour dure toute la vie*”, the joy of love is short-lived. This brief moment of joyful love strongly recalls Freud's notion of the “episodic phenomenon of happiness.” ² Freud also writes, “[w]e are so made that we can derive intense enjoyment only from a contrast and very little from a state of things.” ³ It is about change, about difference. Does the moment of love's pleasure therefore require painful love, because we primarily enjoy the contrast? Is painful love a condition for the moment of love's joy? Yes, that is how I read Freud. However, the reverse is not guaranteed, that love's sorrow will also bring about the bliss of love; there is only the possibility of it.

Time is experienced subjectively. In moments of terror, time can seem to stand still, but in the same way, in happy moments, no hour strikes. In the suffering of love, pain seems to halt time or at least slow it down. And in the case of the joy of love?

In his text *Introduction of the Erotics of Time*, Jacques-Alain Miller states, “[a] love which doesn't believe itself eternal is hateful.” ⁴ Love is not further differentiated here as joyful or painful. My interpretation of this quote is that a love that believes it is eternal does not ask itself the anxious question about the duration of this love; it does not primarily deal with a point in an uncertain future. If I assume this love to be eternal in the moment of the joy of love, then the present moment of love also expands. In this way, the moment of *plaisir d'amour* takes up with, forms a counterweight to the suffering of love.

¹Plaisir d'amour (Pleasure of Love) is a classical French love song written in 1784 by Jaen-Paul Martini. It took its text from a poem by Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian, which appears in his novel *Celestine*. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plaisir_d'amour

² Freud, S., “Civilisation and its Discontents” (1930), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XXI*, London: Hogarth Press, 1964, p. 76.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Miller, J.-A., “Introduction to the Erotics of Time” *Lacanian Ink* 24/25, 2005, p. 22.