

Love: A Question of the Border

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“What the neurotic questions anew is nothing other than the border – a border that nothing can in fact suture – that opens up between knowledge and jouissance”.¹ How is love related to this?

The hysteric represses sexual jouissance; in this sense, she distances herself from the split, from the irreducible gap of real castration. In the case study of Dora, Freud describes how Dora remained, for two hours, in rapt silent admiration, in front of the Sistine Madonna.² This example allows us to say that the hysteric finds object *a*, the object cause of desire, in the lack of the Other, and thus knows nothing about herself. In other words, it can be said that through the other woman, the hysteric evades the split associated with the encounter with sexuality and with her own body. Lacan emphasizes that this phallic jouissance is the jouissance of the idiot³, of the organ.⁴ As such, it has no connection to love.⁵ However, he points out that this is not the case with regard to the *not-all*.

A woman's jouissance is connected, on one hand, to the phallus and, on the other hand, to the signifier of lack in the Other - a signifier that relates to both love and desire, and with them to the Other who speaks words of love and also to the Other who does not exist, to solitude. The jouissance beyond the phallus enables bodily enjoyment that is not limited to an organ, whilst also compelling an encounter with the void - the real beyond the phallus. In other words, one might say that sexuality may confront a woman with a split, which appears as the absence of the Other, the Other that she constitutes for herself. It can be a moment of separation, a moment of rupture between being and the real.

In satisfying the demands of love, the jouissance one has from a woman divides her, making of her solitude a partner, while the union remains at the threshold.⁶ Love for a

¹ Lacan J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVI: From an Other to the other*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. B. Fink, Cambridge: Polity, 2004, p. 291.

² Freud, S., “Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria” (1905), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume VIII*, London: Hogarth Press, 2001 p.96.

³ Lacan J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore, On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. B. Fink, Norton, 1998, p. 81.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁶ Lacan J., “L’étourdit”, *Autres écrits*, Seuil, Paris, 2001, p 466.

woman - who consents to be an object of jouissance⁷, who agrees to be divided⁸ is described in *L'étourdit* as a love that can both sustain the subject, and delimit the real encounter of the One. Sometimes it enables her to encounter the real of her body. Thus "the union remains on the threshold" in the sense that there is a division between being and the real where the two exist simultaneously, side by side, in a state of incompleteness.

Love maintains something of the boundary.

⁷ Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XIII: Transference*. ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. B. Fink, Cambridge: Polity, 2015, p. 170.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 156.