

Cause life is beautiful that way

Liat Bergman

“and you go on
toward your ocean,
the cigar biting your lips
the way love used to”

~ Charles Bukowski¹

At a certain moment of sharp pain related to love, I complained to the analyst: “Why the hell didn’t you warn me about love?” He replied: “It wouldn’t have helped.”

In *Seminar XX Encore* Lacan states: “Love is impotent though mutual, because it is not aware that it is but the desire to be One, which leads us to the impossibility of establishing the relationship between ‘them-two’ [...] – them-two sexes.”² Yes, love is structurally tied to pain. It comes with an hourglass — when it happens, it exists between two, each with its own singular jouissance. Lacan puts it plainly — there is no sexual relation. Agreeing to this — that’s the starting point for the possibility of loving. What else?

In Jacques-Alain Miller’s text, *Analytical Operation, Feminine Operation*, he poses a question that resonates with me: “Does the fact of knowing the condition of love destroy the possibility of love? Can love only exist as deception or, on the contrary, is knowledge compatible with falling in love?”

And at the end of the same text, he proposes: “To say it without using the word desire but to indicate a resolute desire, I have used the word ‘will’. A will to love.”³ I read this and find that something is missing for me. Something is missing in relation to love as binding. Not without its temporality knocking at the door, not without obstacles, and yet — what binds?

In the clinical session — Dor-a — a question arose regarding the case presented⁴: “What is operating there, which causes this patient to return again and again?” I translate the question to: what binds? Transference — love. What binds lovers in any continuous way?

The film *Life is Beautiful*⁵ by Roberto Benigni tells the story of an Italian Jewish man, Guido, during the fascist era. Guido and his son are deported to a Nazi concentration camp. In the camp, Guido creates an alternate representation of the harsh reality, pretending that they are participating in a sophisticated game. He succeeds in saving his son, who, upon liberation, reunites with his mother — but Guido is executed just before his release. The film’s theme song

¹ Bukowski, C., “The Race”, *Burning in Water Drowning In Flame, Selected Poems 1955-1973*, Ecco. 1983.

² Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore*, ed. J.-A. Miller, Paris: Seuil, 1975, p. 6.

³ Miller, J.-A., “Analytical Operation, Feminine Operation”. *Lacanian Review Online*. Available at: <https://www.thelacanianreviews.com/analytical-operation-feminine-operation/>

⁴ Dor-a is the name of part of the clinical section of Tel-Aviv.

⁵ Benigni, R., *La vita è bella*, Italy: Cecchi Gori Group, 1997.

is called *Beautiful That Way*, and both the film and the song refer to the choice of love and art as a way to bear life. It also captures something of the mystery embodied in Guido's invention.

In the film, choosing life is tied to inventing a game, not without the choice to embody and partake in a space that includes **representation** — or what one might also call **beauty**. This is essential to life. And I propose that it is also essential as a counter to any reduction that might “dry up” love, which, perhaps, is life itself.