

Love and Discourses

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Love is at the heart of analytic experience: Freud discovered its importance early on via his concept of the transference and Lacan interrogated love from the outset. Central to Freud's approach to the understanding and treatment of neurosis was the love of the father, a love not always easy to bear for the neurotic subject. Lacan began to shift the question of love towards the field of the relations between *parlêtres* but never lost sight of the importance of love for the discourse of psychoanalysis.

Lacan ceaselessly questioned the vicissitudes of love in contemporary experience, taking as his starting point, like Freud, that love is intimately correlated with civilization. Everything in the domain of love, including the drives, object-choices and identifications, were ordered by the function of the father, and were corralled into the field occupied by the Oedipus Complex.

Lacan called this function of the father the Name of the Father, but he soon encountered its limitations. This had consequences not only for psychoanalytic discourse, but also for understanding disorders in the field of love. When the Oedipus Complex and the Name of the Father had full reign, the question of love was dominated, although not unproblematically, by how to respond to the love of the father, which in turn allowed the subject to respond to the other sex. Now that this universal function of the Name of the Father has largely evaporated, we are not only confronted with various and new avatars of love; we are also confronted with the fact that love, and thus the transference, must respond to the real, as this latter is not ordered or dominated anymore by the Oedipus Complex or the Name of the Father.

Psychoanalytic discourse, and love at the heart of it, have had to forge a new alliance with the real and jouissance, to make room, or at least create the conditions, for what is genuinely hetero or Other for the subject.¹ Is love a new way of knotting the real to the symbolic? If that is the case, what is the status of the imaginary in this? In *Seminar XXI*, Lacan says: "Love is the

¹ Salman, S., "Love," *Scilicet, The Ordinary Psychoses and the Others under Transference*, Paris: NLS, 2018, p. 194.

imaginary specific to each of us.”² Love is the response to the hole in the symbolic, making a knotting between the real, the symbolic and the imaginary.

However, this cannot lead to a universal law. Rather, it must be invented by each *parlêtre* in his or her analysis, an invention that belongs singularly to him or her. Also, in analysis love can strike, and when it does, there is the possibility a response can be forged to the impossible writing of the sexual relation. In this way love is a solution that is also painful because its roots are firmly planted in the non-rapport of the sexual relation. The so-called analytic solution of love does not allow the impossible to bear to be entirely lifted, it does not allow for a “happy marriage” between the real of the drives and the *parlêtre*’s partner in love. This reminds us of what Freud wrote: “Has one ever heard of the drinker being obliged constantly to change his drink because he soon grows tired of keeping the same one [...] On the contrary the relation of the drinker to his drink is the model of a happy marriage.”³

For most post-Freudians, love became possible only when the partial drives became unified by the maturation of the genital drive. For Lacan this was never the case, as for him love is related to a remainder, to something that can never quite fit in with discourse. Hence, love is also painful. In the film *Barbie*, castration emerges related to a “thought of death,” then sexuality pierces through the fantasy of a non-sexual world in which everything was perfect and harmonious, creating a hole in this fantasy, causing symptoms to emerge. It is exactly the fact of human sexual experience and love having a relationship to pain that the current discourses of science and capitalism try to obfuscate. Both science and capitalism promise solutions of jouissance for the subject. This promise of jouissance leads to a dependence on it (addiction). This is what Eric Laurent termed the *Un-jouissance*, i.e., the auto-erotic enjoyment of the One who repeats his modality of enjoyment *ad infinitum*, without any variation of change.⁴ The proviso here is that this jouissance is available, often produced by science, for example look at the algorithms used by dating apps, and that it is paid for on the free market. In the discourse of capitalism, the subject is directed towards external solutions to human discontent. These solutions are on the place of truth, S_1 ’s, Ones, disjointed Ones, a whole swarm of them, present in our environment. This is why Jacques-Alain Miller refers to what Lacan says in *Seminar*

² Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire, Livre XXI, Les Non-Dupes Errent*, lesson of 18 March 1974, unpublished.

³ Freud, S., “On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love,” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XI, London: Hogarth Press, 1957, p. 188.

⁴ Voruz, V., “Love and the Ego,” *The Lacanian Review*, Issue 5, 2018, p. 160.

XXI, “that a psychoanalysis requires that one love one’s unconscious. It is the only way to make the rapport exist, to establish a rapport between S_1 and S_2 , because in the primary state we have only disjointed Ones, we have scattered Ones.”⁵

So, psychoanalysis requires that one love one’s unconscious, in order to make, not the sexual rapport, but the symbolic rapport, exist.⁶ Love is here a pathway to knowledge in the unconscious where it can account for jouissance, to reach, as a final mark, a remainder that can only be circumscribed. Love remains rooted to the remainder as real. And, again, that is why love is painful. It is therefore no wonder that the discourses of science and capitalism foreclose it because this painful love does not function well as a lure or a promise.

⁵ Miller, J.-A., “A Fantasy,” *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, Issue 34, “Paradigms of Jouissance,” 2019, p. 172.

⁶ *Ibid.*