

DO NOT CONFUSE THE REAL(S) Divertimento on Love, Politics and Psychoanalysis

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“Oh the grand old Duke of York,
He had ten thousand men;
He marched them up to the top of the hill,
And he marched them down again.
And when they were up, they were up,
And when they were down, they were down,
And when they were only half-way up,
They were neither up nor down.”

“How many miles to Babylon?
Three score miles and ten.
Can I get there by candle-light?
Yes, and back again.
If your heels are nimble and light,
You may get there by candle-light.”

Babylon is thought to be also known under the name of Babel, ‘The Gate of God’ (*Genesis XI, 1-9*), itself known for its tower, its (un)fortunate plurality of languages and a failed attempt to get (closer) to God.¹ In trying to reach God, chaos, rupture, conflict occurred, supposedly because Men did not speak the same language (anymore). Failure at the level of communication? More importantly: disruption at the level of the tongue [*lalangue*], at the level of the rapport between *jouissance* of Being, the speaking being and (a), surplus of *jouissance*.

Nevertheless people gather, cluster, congregate. How is it that a ‘group’ can form? Is it necessarily through a God-The-Father?

Psychoanalysis has delineated a few bonds between people ² — to say nothing of the discourses which will be alluded to later on.

— ‘Natural’ bonds i.e. parental or oedipal bonds (see *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud, 1921).

— ‘Administrative’ bonds, procedural bonds based on the difference between people and functioning, between subject and place which operates with the \diamond , the losange, the dynamic device of rotation, circulation.

— ‘Analytical’ bond(s) — if it exists and this is my wager — reason for a School and not for a professional association. Such a bond certainly requires practice, as it is not so ‘natural’ (i.e. not so based on identifications or on reality/fantasy, not mainly/only grounded in the symbolico-imaginary).

Obviously this is what is at stake for us.

My hypothesis is that bureaucrasy occurs when the analytical bond does not count enough. Bureaucracy is a retreat (‘procedures for the their own sake’); which also means that we need an organisation of places of accountability and decisional power. Absence of organisation and accountability will not give a better access to the analytical bond, it will more than likely simply inflate the oedipal bond.

Going back to Babel, that of psychoanalysis (different countries, cultures, languages, various theoretical streams, orientations, Schools, Associations, Institutes...). Babel is a state of war (so many in the name of God/Good/Love; some also more crudely in the name of tribe, nationality...). Are we, in psychoanalysis, in a state of war? Some signifiers flying around seem to answer positively: ‘reconquest’, ‘militant’, ‘soldier’ even, and all sort of other military metaphors.³

Let’s accept the signifier ‘war’; but not without trying to circumscribe it in a suitable way for psychoanalysis — or give *carte blanche* to any *jouissance* in the name of the Cause.⁴

I will use Heraclitus’ aphorisms on this.

‘War is the father of all things, of all things it is the king...’⁵

“It must be known that war is universal, that struggle is justice and that all things are engendered by contest and thereby necessitated”.⁶

So ‘war’ is where creation takes place — and creation is on the side of life and Eros. How is it then that ‘war’ is so *deadful*? In order to grasp that, we have to resort to the words that Heraclitus used. The word for ‘war’ as a creative process is *polemos*. The word for ‘war’ as a destructive process is *hubris* (excess, not far from *jouissance*). I read in this opposition the difference between the being of discourse and the being of things.⁷ *Hubris*, destruction would start when someone wants to make the logos a thing, a substance, a reified thing and not a process, a position, a mode of rapport. Note that in the time of Heraclitus only free men had the right to wield arms — i.e. war was also a question of honour.

The relationship of each subject to war will depend on the dialectic between *Polemos* and *Hubris* — between the ego-ideal, the superego and the *jouissance* of being killed, in analytical terms.⁸

The war of love is not the love of war.

Another way to approach that question of war — staying in Greece but that of Italian Renaissance Painting — is to have a look at the important mythological theme of Mars and Venus, Mars, god of war, the fight to the death, Venus, Goddess of love, the out-facing seduction, mother of Cupid, Eros.

Take *Mars and Venus* by Botticelli⁹ : “injured by the eternal wound of Love, Mars finds refuge in Venus’ bosom”, says one, “victory of love over belligerent violence” or “defeat of sensual desire by love of God guided by desire for knowledge”, says another in the spirit of the Renaissance. And a third voice will argue that it is a painting of peace, a painting of rest, after love, a spunky peace, the repair of strength. As it is not our intention to discuss interpretation of this famous painting, we will content with noting that Botticelli chose the moment at which Mars is asleep and Venus awake — that can only resonate to a psychoanalytic ear in eliciting another aspect of our question. Is war the only way of conquering? Is not love another? Do you not conquer the love of someone? Are all conquests (*conquest*) equivalent?¹⁰

Stressing the part of love regarding (re)conquest should not surprise as we know very well how much love (eros) is an important factor in the existence of groups.¹¹

In such a vast field lets pick up the ‘love of the neighbour’, the Christian command to love your neighbour as (you love) yourself. Freud was rather horrified by such an unbelievable demand. Is Lacan’s position on this similar? Let’s elicit the duplicity, the equivocation of this enunciation in rephrasing it as follows: “Dare to love your neighbour as yourself.”

Of course we could rely on narcissism and easily demonstrate that loving our neighbour is just ‘ordinary’ imaginary love, just a way to be loved by them. This would be a harmless view despite a few ‘unfortunate’ outbursts of aggressivity if there was not at the core of such a love the ‘hate of oneself’ (need of punishment...) that is only a step away from the hate of God — hate of the failure of Necessity, hate for the inconsistency of the Other.

An analysis can be expected to circumscribe, i.e. to write a rim around that part of the subject which is neither lovely nor necessary; the part that we could call (*a*), part of strangeness — not as *agalma* but as *kakon*.¹² Perhaps there is a possibility for a (new) love after having ‘approximated’ one’s *kakon*? How differently does ‘love of neighbour’ resonate then? What kind of love when someone has grasped something about its part of contingency — which is another name for its singularity?

Is a community possible for those who approached and perhaps detached themselves from the hate/love of themselves or hate/love of God? Beyond both, is there a possible community for those who know something about it i.e. for those who found a way to detach themselves (with a writing) from the very passion for ignorance?¹³

To what other purpose should a School of psychoanalysis put itself? A School of and for psychoanalysis i.e. with psychoanalysts and non-psychoanalysts. A community to maintain alive that stake *vis-à-vis* ignorance.¹⁴ The real (of the unconscious) is what is at stake. The real only comes up bit by bit, not in One. Dissolution (as concerned with the end(s) of psychoanalysis), as a concern towards the real, aims at avoiding the One-all. Dissolution is an extreme figure of *Polemos*, the *Polemos* relevant to psychoanalysis, i.e. the *Polemos* for the particular.¹⁵ Dissolution or knotting/deknotting has in mind the tyranny of narcissism (with a special mention for the narcissism of small differences) and the access to a knowledge about otherness, *odderness* which possibly opens another kind of community.

Can we answer F.Bayle who asked (in 17th century France) “is a community of atheists possible?”? A community of experience, that of psychoanalysis? What love, if any, operates there? A love for what? For the real, for S(A)?

No, not a love *for*, ...but a love *from* the real. If the impossible is a name for the real, one way to wage war — honourably, i.e. not to wage war for the *hubris* of destruction — is to be convincing, i.e. to convince of the unavoidability of a certain encounter, stake.

What does bring that sort of conviction — which produces consent — which has an effect of eros without relying on the One-all? An *Example* rather than a model, Art, Poetry, Mathematics or Logic, Laughter?

Something nimble and light to travel by candle-light.

1. Closer to kill It, to do without It or to be resplendent in the proximity of Its love? This does not seem to be a ludicrous question as God Itself took it seriously enough to introduce the diversity of languages (see *Genesis, XI 1-9*).
2. See, for instance, G. Lemoine, *Le lien*, in *La Lettre Mensuelle* 173, Nov.98.
3. Freud had a view on the subject, did he not?
4. 'Beyond' the Name-of-the-Father does not mean without it.
5. Aphorism 129 in *Heraclitus, Fragments*, French translation by M.Conche, P.U.F.
6. *Ibid.*, aphorism 128.
7. See *Panta rei*, 'Everything elapses' (aphorism 136) which situates Heraclitus' battlefield: *Logos*.
8. According to psychoanalysis the superego is somehow more lenient in women; it is therefore likely that women are not as prone to war as men can be.
9. At the National Gallery, London.
10. *Eros and Psyche* — Lacan in chapter XVI of his Seminar on transference warns us not to see this couple as the rapport between man and woman but between desire and soul - had a daughter, the granddaughter of Venus and Mars (according to some version, that of P.Quignard in *Le sexe et l'effroi* for instance), called *Voluptas*!
11. See the *affectatio societatis* promoted by J.-A. Miller (*Lettre Mensuelle* No 151), but also the general topic of transference (transference to someone, to a/The subject supposed to know, to work, to writings, to a cause) — and its use in psychoanalysis!
12. *Kakon*: not 'what I do not like about myself', imaginary version, not 'it's all my fault' or God's Fault, but the doomed, unbearable side of *jouissance*. *Kakon* linked to negative transference as *agalma* is linked to positive transference.
13. On love, hate and ignorance/knowledge see, for instance, J. Lacan, *Seminar XX, Encore*, chapters VI to VIII and the notion of 'hainamoration' that I suggest to translate as 'infatuation'.
14. Having approached the 'horror' does not, by any means, allow to indulge in it.
15. Denunciation, on the other hand, is not akin to dissolution as denunciation is always addressed to the guardian of the Ideal.

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