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Sexuation and Ethics – Some Reflections on the Side [*en marge*]

Radu Turcanu

To use a witticism reported by Freud, I would say that between the universal of the all-phallic register and the jouissance called feminine by Lacan, to which I associate the “well-saying” [le ‘*bien dire*’] and its singular address, there is only one step: the not-all.

The “well-saying”, that of the ethics of psychoanalysis, would then be a not-all-saying, a “half-saying”. This first implies, without being confused with it, a singular address, as in "the style is the man to whom one addresses oneself" (where Lacan modifies Buffon's formula "the style is the man ") ; but also the body, *sexuated* from its enjoyment. The singularity of the address, one by one, thus resonates with this “not-all” where, in the absence of the exception, of The Woman, it is also about a woman and another woman...

In *Television*, Lacan opposes the ethics of the “well-saying” of psychoanalysis to an ethics of the bachelor, that of the all-phallic register, where "for all x" or "for any subject" the phallic, humanising function imposes itself from the exception. Its modality is that of belief (in the exception) and necessity.

This is why this phallic universal which regulates the circuits of jouissance is that of the aftermath (whether happy or not) [*des lendemains (qui chantent ou pas)*], as well as of hope(lessness) [*(dés)espoirs*]: for example, that the exception is not going, at the end of account, abandon the subject and leave it prey to ‘dehumanisation’.

However, this universal cannot completely hide its totalising roots - a bit like in "*Kant with Sade*". For the master signifier and the treasury of signifiers imply circuits that do not escape a kind of going around in circles (see Lacan's theory of discourses). It is there, moreover, that its less glorious effects make their bed: segregation, racism, discrimination, etc. Hence the increasingly virulent protests against this all-phallic, “patriarchal”, “totalitarian” order, etc.

The register of the not-all-phallic and feminine jouissance is the contingent response to this grip of the all-phallic on the subject. When one is neither a mystic nor a poet, there is only the discourse of the psychoanalyst to carry this challenge to the all-phallic, where new functions are assigned and, to

the master signifier: that of production and remainder; and to the object a cause of desire: that of agent and motor.

Thus, this register of the not-all phallic that the discourse of the psychoanalyst promotes would be that of the “treatment” by the well-saying of the all-phallic and its consequences, which are not always happy. It is a matter of the well-saying which is a function of chance, not in relation to the signifier, but the address, one by one. This is what is put in place in the analytical dispositive.

With the all-phallic, the address of the saying [*dire*] struggles to become clearer, even when one leaves the universal and leans towards the particular. Because one can always classify, regroup, even individualise; one can thus “speak well” but the address of the “well-saying” is missed, “one by one”.

One must not, however, dream: neither the “speaking well” of other discourses, nor the “well-saying” of the psychoanalyst's discourse can say the sexual non-relation. Except that the discourse of the psychoanalyst can locate it: in a “no-hope ... of being said”.

This is the reason why the “well-saying” is off-topic [*hors-sujet*] and outside-sense [*hors-sens*]. A not-all-saying which thus bears on the saying itself, as a true (or real) hole in the signifying structure, as demonstrated by the Borromean knot.

Here are two short moments of a “not-all” saying, depending on the singular address. I missed the mystical affair but, with psychoanalysis, sometimes I find an address and even a way to say it well: with an infant for example. Not happy, this one who exasperates his parents, who are however very attentive to him. In front of these incredulous parents, I sit down on the ground in front of the little one and, being his dupe, I explain to him for a few minutes, without hope and without any fear of ridicule, “the mirror stage” or “logical time”. Well, when my saying finds this singular address, the other responds, in his own way and with his improbable posture, off-topic, but in a way that can be grasped by those present. It is through his whole body that this address of saying vibrates, which signals the passage from tears to laughter in this child and which confirms, why not, the ephemeral manifestation of a “well-saying” between us.

Or this analysand who seems to have grasped that, when addressing her companion, in a decided way, “I want the moon”, between the answer “be more precise, darling” (missed address), and a vibrant “let’s go” [*c’est parti*] (confirmed address), there is definitely only one step/no: the step/no of the dupe [*le pas de dupe*]. Faced with the analyst's silence, thus comes her

"free" association, carried by bursts of laughter: "Who does he think he is?"

Translated by Chantal Degril – Reviewed by Susan Schwartz