

Yaron Gilat : Practice Among Many – A Dam for Jouissance (LRO 288) : 20th March 2021

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Practice Among Many – A Dam for Jouissance (1)

In relation to the psychotic subject, *practice among many* (La pratique à plusieurs) may initiate three effects (2, 3). First, generate a division, as the one we speak of when we speak of the divided subject. Second, create a knot, in the sinthomatic sense. And third, the topic of the current text, construct a threshold, a littoral.

Practice among many can be perceived equivocally: as a corporeal practice, an action shared by many and as a practice that takes place in the space among many, even creating a space of “between.” Di Ciaccia claims there is more than one form of working among many. It may be that these various forms depend not only on the one-founder, but also on the manner and type of space extending among the many. This space depends on, or is a function of, the settling points of the plural in a topological structure, just as we speak of the plurality of stars in the universe, in a multi-verse actuality. The positioning of each and every individual in relation to others expands and shapes the space of the “between.” But this happens in retrospect. That is, it is not predetermined. It appears only in the Nachträglichkeit mode. Approaching the matter from the viewpoint of philosophy and of physics may shed more light.

Sir Isaac Newton perceived space (and time) as an object that exists independently of human consciousness and in fact of anything at all. It was given there in advance, as a kind of receptacle which does not move in itself, but everything moves within it, and the masses, the stars for example spread into it. Newton saw space (and time) as an absolute space, an empty

container that is there and gradually fills up. This means, space and time have an absolute a-priori existence.

Immanuel Kant also perceived space as a-priori, but not as an absolute existence. Unlike Newton, Kant thought that space does not represent any feature of things as such. That is, space (and time) is not real but ideal. The Kantian conception of space holds that it is an a-priori observing ability inherent in our very reason. Without this ability to observe, objects in space cannot be defined and recognized as distinct. That is to say, the alleged objective observation of space is related to human subjectivity; by the power of the oneness of reason, space is essentially a feature of the human spirit. Accordingly, space is an a-priori image that precedes experience and is the basis of every human observation. Kant's argument is that in order for us to have an idea of the bodies within a space, for them to be given to us, we need space in advance. So, for Kant, as for Newton, space is a-priori, but unlike Newton's conception, it is not absolute. Rather, it is related to subjectivity.

In the face of those two great thinkers who both emphasized space as a-priori, one as an absolute a-priori and the other as a subjective a-priori, the one who revolutionized the perception of space was Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, a contemporary of Newton. Leibniz's insight regarding space was later validated by Albert Einstein's theory of relativity. He did not accept space as an absolute a-priori. For Leibniz, space is relative and is not predetermined. Rather, it is a result of events. Unlike Newton, who perceived space as an emptiness anticipating and awaiting bodies and events to fill it, Leibniz's universe is created and expanded as a result of events that occur. That is, the events and bodies that appear, precede the formation of space. In terms of astrophysics, the universe is not an infinitely predetermined space as Newton imagined, but a dynamic consequence of masses that propagate into nothingness. The positioning of the masses is what will determine the cosmic space, its form and its boundaries.

Thus, in relation to *practice among many*, the many who act and position themselves in relation to each other, are the ones who create the "practice between." It is not given there in advance. It requires prior consent to position oneself relative to the other(s) and the mere events that take place henceforth condition the establishment of the *practice among many* in retrospect.

Georges Perec, in "Species of Spaces and Other Pieces" (4), writes: "Space is a doubt. I must mark it, mention it constantly, it is never mine. It has never been given to me. I must conquer it." Space is no longer an objective entity but a process in formation, as multiplication, constantly in a state of becoming. In this way, of events that take place, the practitioners and the psychotic subject create the space between the many of the practice. This space is not Winnicott's transitional space – a potential space between reality and fantasy within which therapy takes place – but the space that in effect marks a limit, a margin, a domain or a zone. What is created, essentially, constantly in change and formation, is a boundary of the universe of the psychotic subject. A demarcation, a threshold, in an attempt to delineate the jouissance of the psychotic.

In the psychiatric institution we mostly encounter schizophrenia, in which, unlike paranoia – where jouissance is in the other (for example the persecuting other or the loving other as in erotomania), jouissance invades the body and overflows the schizophrenic patient as he stands in front of his organs, as Lacan says, without the help of an established discourse. Thus, it is possible that by means of *practice among many*, this delineation, the creation of a

space that creates a threshold, a littoral, which was not there before, is what operates as a dam in the face of the flood of jouissance.

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1. This text is a part of a presentation held in Hebrew on March 20th 2021, within the GIEP-NLS under the name “A Conversation Between Institutions – Practice Among Many.”
 2. Di Ciaccia, A. (1994). “De la fondation par Un à la pratique à plusieurs,” Préliminaire, 9-10, p. 17-22.
 3. Di Ciaccia, A. La pratique à plusieurs à l’Antenne 110 de Genval, 2002.
 4. Georges Perec. Espèces d’espaces. Paris: Galilée 1974.

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