

Desire, Jouissance and Fantasy : 4th May 2019 : Éric Laurent (interview)

Interview by Iara Bianchi for *De Inconscientes*®,

Full interview at <https://deinconscientes.com/deseo-goce-y-fantasma-eric-laurent/>, Date of interview not given,

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By [Éric Laurent](#) | May 4th, 2019|[LRO](#)

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The 'desire of desire', as it is posed, clearly has no defined object. The 'desire of desire' is precisely an abyss, an opening, an endlessness. The 'desire to harm' has a very precise object. It seems like a contradiction: *does desire have an object or does it not have an object?* This is exactly the point: in order to clarify these difficulties, impasses, etc., a distinction was made between 'desire' and 'jouissance'.

In Freud the category of 'desire' was a notion that opened up the paradoxes of an object that is always elsewhere, that flees, is displaced. It is desire for something else. It is the displacement of desire.

'Jouissance' in contrast is fixed, fixated. To do harm is not a desire, to harm is a mode of jouissance. When the subject is sadistic he enjoys the effect produced by harm, that is, helplessness. There are even some sadistic subjects beyond all limits that hurt the other to the point where he begs for death; obtaining this may be the point of jouissance of a sadist. There are some criminals who confess this, who testify to what they were looking for... This appears in the testimonies of victims who escaped: how the guy looked in the eyes of the poor girl who he had assaulted, threatening to strangle her, seeking to capture the moment in which the subject begs for death, in which she lets herself die. This is a specific form of jouissance, it is not a desire.

And indeed, when a subject comes to analysis he or she has fixations of jouissance. Subjects who have very "perverse" fixations of jouissance do not come to psychoanalysis because they do not ask for anything. They know what they want in life, they know this is what they enjoy.

The problem is that it is very difficult for them to achieve, so they spend their lives inventing ways to achieve it, but not wasting their time talking about this with a psychoanalyst. In order to have the project of embarking on this experience, the experience of an analysis, there has to be at least a tension between desire and jouissance, there has to be a possibility of displacement. This means that the subject can be fixated but at the same time has to have a desire for something else.

This tension also has to be maintained because the ‘desire of desire’ is another definition of neurosis. Neurotic subjects, to take up a Freudian category that is not very current in psychiatry nowadays, which works rather with catalogues of items, but anyway... Subjects who fit into the Freudian category of the neuroses spend their lives with this empty longing: ‘a desire of desire’, and the instrument through which they ‘desire desire’ is what Freud called the ‘fantasy’.

The idea is that you have to cross the fantasy, traverse it. It is not about ‘desiring desire’. At the end of the day, one has to find a mode of jouissance that is livable, satisfying and which allows one to live a dignified life, rather than staying in the day-dream, a little ideal, of being a ‘being of desire’.

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