

Marco Focchi : The European space: its articulation, its passions : 7th January 2019

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TOWARDS European Forum of Psychoanalysis - Love and Hate for Europe
Saturday 16th February 2019 in Milan, Italy

The European space: its articulation, its passions

BY MARCO FOCCHI

Philosophical, historical, literary or artistic thought can wonder about what Europe is, where it comes from, what are the myths and the narratives on which it is based. On the basis of the experience of psychoanalysis we ask ourselves about passions, love and hate for Europe. We know that these two affects, like a thread woven of two different colors, are never separate and are never reduced to a single line. Love and hate refer to each other, evoke each other, imply each other. We have to face up to this *hainamoration*. [1] We want Europe, we think that nations are historically outdated, we wish to expand our space beyond languages and borders. But what is the implication of our aggregative drive? What is hidden, as a secondary color, in the visible color of our desires? Where does our thread get caught? Up to what point can we approach the otherness of the other? How much can we really bear it? Is there not a threshold at which the Europeanist inspiration that makes us want the same thing turns into contention? To what degree do we want the same thing in order to share it and how much in order to tear it from each other?

Or we are sovereignists? We want our borders well defined, we feel secure only in the enclosure of an identity uncontaminated by the barbarian, the beggar whose gesture of reaching out his hand appears to us as the intrusion of a dangerous invader. To what degree, however, are we not fascinated, magnetized at the same time as intimidated, by something we do not know but which absorbs our attention until it becomes an obsession?

Let us not forget that the third passion mentioned by Lacan, that of ignorance, is part of the transference. It puts us in the disposition of wanting to know, or not wanting to know, and turns out to be fundamental in the movements of the other two passions: I seek you out because I want absorb your mystery (but how much will I tolerate it?); I reject you because I do not know who you are (but while rejecting you my being reaches out towards you, even though I'm afraid of knowing you). [2]

In the articulation of the topics of the Forum we will explore the extension of these themes. Will we put Europe in confrontation with its Other (the Orient? The impermanence of Chinese thought against the solidity of the logos? The interior Other that emerges in the very divisions of Europe, from the Visegrad Group to Brexit?). From which dialectic, from which comparisons, from which divisions and from which solidarity does the idea of Europe emerge?

What space does it constitute? What are the forms of its law, the different cultures by which it is animated? How does its multilingualism work? But above all, what is the relationship between borders and languages? Which are the languages and which are the dialects? We can no longer say, like Max Weinreich, that a language is a dialect with an army and a navy. We are too aware of the implication of subjectivity in language to reduce it to a question of mere institutional representation. We know well that for the *parlêtre* vital issues are at stake in the language that cannot be exported in a purely formal dimension.[3]

It is not by chance that through the themes of borders, languages and rights, political issues come into play, with passions and even drives in conflict among themselves. Sovereignism and globalization are the poles of a historical contest where the space in which we live is at stake, where the places of speech and desire are made.

Psychoanalysis has plenty to say about this. Its contribution is essential.

The identities and the differences that will be constructed in this space will define a Europe different from the one in which we now live, on the threshold of a reversal in which the eras are transformed. What is Europe after the Second World War? After September 11th? After the Arab spring? After, or rather, in the middle of the struggle between the forces that want to build it up and those who want to break it down?

Psychoanalysis has something to say about the overwhelming passions that these topics trigger. For us it is time to make our voices heard in the debate with all those who care about the possibility of a policy oriented in such a way as to keep the opening of the unconscious alive.

Marco Focchi

Possible References

1) 'Love and hate refer to each other, evoke each other, imply each other. We have to face up to this hainamoration'. :

See Seminar XX : 20th March 1973 at Seminar XX Encore (1972–1973) : From 21st November 1972 : Jacques Lacan, www.LacanianWorks.org /4 Jacques Lacan (19721121 or Index of Jacques Lacan's texts.)

2) 'Let us not forget that the third passion mentioned by Lacan, that of ignorance, is part of the transference. It puts us in the disposition of wanting to know, or not wanting to know, and turns out to be fundamental in the movements of the other two passions: I seek you out because I want absorb your mystery (but how much will I tolerate it?); I reject you because I do not know who you are (but while rejecting you my being reaches out towards you, even though I'm afraid of knowing you).':

See Seminar IV : 9th January 1957 at Seminar IV The Relation from Object [*La Relation d'objet*] & Freudian Structures (1956-1957) : from 21st November 1956 : Jacques Lacan at www.LacanianWorks.org /4 Jacques Lacan (19570109 or 19561121),

Paragraph 5 of the Seminar IV translation group : I will specify the thought:. This is founded, for one sex as for the other both sexes, on a misdeal [*maldonne*]., And this

misdeal is founded on the ignorance - it is not a matter of misrecognition, but of ignorance - of the fertilising role of the man's semen and, on the other hand, of the existence of the female organ as such. Note : misdeal may be a reference to 'poker' &

p282 of Alan Sheridan's translation of The Meaning (or Signification) of the Phallus : 9th May 1958 (Munich) : Jacques Lacan. See www.LacanianWorks.org /4 Jacques Lacan (19580509 or Index of Jacques Lacan's texts)

This ignorance is suspiciously like méconnaissance in the technical sense of the term – all the more so in that it is sometimes quite false.

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if anyone can find a closer quote from Jacques Lacan, I would be interested in knowing of it

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Seminar XX : 21st November 1972 : from pI 5 of Cormac Gallagher's translation : I put that forward very gently in saying that feelings are always reciprocal. It was so that it should come back to me, huh!

- So then, so then, and love, and love, is it always reciprocal?

- But yes, but yes!

This is even why the unconscious was invented. It is so that we might see that the desire of man is the desire of the Other. And that love is a passion which may be the ignorance of this desire [Footnote 14], but which nonetheless leaves it its full import. When it is looked at more closely we see its ravages. [Footnote 14, p4 of Bruce Fink's translation, Ignorance is, according to Lacan (and others, including Plato), the strongest of the three passions : ignorance, love, and hate. On the three passions, see, for example, "Direction of the Treatment, An alternative reading of 'le désir de l'homme, c'est le désir de l'autre' earlier in the sentence would be "man's desire is for the Other's desire."

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The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power/ The Rules of the Cure and the Lures of its Power : 10th July 1958 : Jacques Lacan. See this site /4 Jacques Lacan (19580710 or Index of Jacques Lacan's texts)

p525 of Bruce Fink's translation, p263 of Alan Sheridan's translation, p49-51 of Cormac Gallagher's translation, which follows :

9. Let us nevertheless articulate what structures desire.

Desire is what manifests itself in the interval that demand hollows out on this side of itself, inasmuch as the subject in articulating the signifying chain, brings to light the lack of being with an appeal to receive its complement from the Other, since the Other, the locus of the word, is also the locus of this lack.

What is thus given to the Other to fill, and what strictly he does not have, since he too lacks being, is what is called love, but it is also hate and ignorance.

It is also, as passions of being, what is evoked by any demand beyond the need that is articulated in it, and it is certainly what the subject remains all the more deprived of to the extent that the need articulated in the demand is satisfied.

What is more, the satisfaction of need appears here only as the lure in which the demand for love is crushed, by sending the subject back to sleep, where he haunts the limbo of being, by letting it speak in him. For the being of language is the non-being of objects, and the fact that desire was discovered by Freud in its place in the dream, from all time a scandal for all the efforts of thinking to situate itself in reality, should be lesson enough for us.

To be or not to be, to sleep, perchance to dream, even the so-called simplest dreams of the child (as "simple" as the analytic situation, no doubt) show simply miraculous or forbidden objects.

10. But the child does not always fall asleep in this way in the bosom of being, especially if the Other, who has her own ideas about his needs, interferes, and in place of what she does not have, stuffs him with the choking pap of what she has, namely, confuses her caring with the gift of her love.

It is the child who is fed with most love who refuses and plays with his refusal as with a desire (anorexia nervosa). A dimension where one grasps as nowhere else that hate pays love back in its own coin but where it is ignorance that is not forgiven.

When all is said and done, by refusing to satisfy the mother's demand, is not the child insisting that the mother should have a desire outside him, because this is the path that he lacks towards desire?

3. We know well that for the parlêtre vital issues are at stake in the language that cannot be exported in a purely formal dimension.

Session of Seminar XXIII : 16th December 1975 : Jacques Lacan, at www.LacanianWorks.org /4 Jacques Lacan (19751216 or 19751118 or Index of Jacques Lacan's texts)

pIII 13 of Cormac Gallagher's translation, www.Lacaninireland.com : On the other hand, the enjoyment described as phallic is situated there, at the conjunction of the Symbolic with the Real. It is in as much that in the subject which is supported by the parlêtre in the sense that this is what I designate as being the unconscious, ...