

“is this love?”

Presentation of the Theme

Psychoanalysis is a social bond. What one calls love may also function as a bond. Discourse establishes social bonds because speaking produces the semblance of a relation between two bodies, each one alone in its jouissance. With this orientation to the real of the One all alone, Jacques Lacan refers to the fact that there is no pre-established program between two speaking bodies as a sexual non-rapport.

Love takes various forms in Lacan’s teaching. Following Freud, he considers it the engine of transference and in Seminar VIII he speaks of the fusion of two passions, love and hate, with a neologism, *hainamoration*. As soon as we speak of love, hate lingers in its shadow. Hate is a rupture that welds bonds like love. In Seminar X, Lacan posits love as a way to do with jouissance: “only love allows jouissance to condescend to desire.” Finally, in his last teaching, love is cast as an invention, solution, knotting.

‘Is This Love?’ is a theme, subordinated to a question. A question is a starting point for analysis and thus, with this title, we take up the question of the love from the beginning of analysis to its end. The title transposes its reader to the position of the analysand, the one who questions, the one in question, whether you are one yet or not. Indeed, one cannot hold the position of the analyst without first being forged in the fires of analysis.

We invite you to consider love and hate as they are variably articulated in your clinical practice. Today we are well aware of the ever-multiplying forms and identifiers of amorous relations. At the same moment, hate speech proliferates. We are often reminded of the fall of the Name-of-the-Father. Its supposed universal ideals are shot through, porous, leaking, no longer holding the way they perhaps once did.

So now what? Love might serve as a solution, a knotting for the speaking body. But amidst the cacophony of signifiers that increasingly struggle to grasp the body, does love still hold a privileged place in today’s social bonds? Current popular modes of linking involve resumé-like profiles intimating the correctness of a match, amidst a sea of un-matched likes. However, “match” is a term suited to the correctness or similarity between two, an imaginary pairing that does not need love to operate and most often fails to establish a social bond. And with the rise of chosen singledom, lower birth rates, and the emergence of explicitly pragmatic, a-romantic marriages, we recognize yet again the distinctive, anti-poetic trait of market-based efficiency, a fray in which the semblants of love undoubtedly falter, if not evaporate.

Yet references to love remain ubiquitous. Recording and visual artists, poets, and filmmakers continue to be the progenitors of its citations. Analysands too, keep speaking of love, even if what prevails is the discourse of what ‘works’ and ‘doesn’t work’ in relationships. Fortunately, the currency of psychoanalysis is what doesn’t work. Where it doesn’t work, one may invent. But is there love?