

The social Link of the Ecole Une

Eric Laurent – 12/03/00

In the Declaration of the Ecole Une, the member of the School is defined in a positive way. He does not claim "any extraterritoriality privileges, but is rather activated in the daily life and the intellectual life of his time in order to pass on that which, in lacanian politics, is likely to be transmitted to all and to have an influence on it." This addresses everyone. Yet what is the link linking the members to one another? Is it the love of thy neighbor? If the analytic social link has a sense, it is right to reply to the objection that psychoanalysis raises regarding the love of thy neighbor. Everywhere else, in the last instance, it is believed that that which constitutes a social link must originate in that kind of love, under this enunciation or another. Psychoanalysis has showed exactly that it is "myself" that I love in my fellow-being (1). Contemporary civilization makes a certain use of this truth. It proposes a remedy to the excessive weight of the commandment by the cynical outlet of the collective project. Those are the two alternatives produced by the wedding of the ideal and the tyranny of narcissism.

To psychoanalysis, the way out of the dead ends of self-love lies rather in the dimension of the object, that of the cause. This is what allows Lacan not to be taken aback by the word "service". In the Ecole he wished (a School he unceasingly defines since 1967), he did not hesitate to say; "We want comrades to provide service, not people who build their position" (20). The questioning of the love of thy neighbor does by no means lead to some kind of cynicism where the simple juxtaposition of diverse positions that each one would like to reach, would be the only thing left afloat as forms of desire. It is the orientation recalled in the Declaration of the Ecole Une that verifies that in our community there exists "the feeling of sharing the same references, the same fate in psychoanalysis, and to constitute a unique and same world movement."

The relation to the analytic cause may be defined as the link authorized by desire. This would be *the law of desire*. This law is paradoxical.

The two levels of the law and the "outside the law"

The first level of the paradox of law lies on the fact that "it is the law that makes the sin". This principle, enounced by Saint Paul and often commented by Lacan, may be enounced in different ways. It may be said that the enunciation of the rule implies the transgression, or even more, that the norm calls for trespassing. It is one of the forms of realization of "the perverse ways of desire".

In a second sense, beyond the enunciation of different rules, beyond any contractual enunciation, law is a closed covenant with language. It supposes the "natural community" of those who miss the reference. Language does not succeed in aiming at anything else but "the being of the trace of a nothingness". Thus is established a community of those who share in the jouissance of this *tyche*, this missed encounter.

The first level of the knotting between law and desire designates language as an artifact. That is language insofar as its laws bear witness to the realm of the fundamental rule of permutation. By means of this principle it is possible to reach and affect the most established meanings. This is what allows for the social link of the School to re-invent itself. It is the level of the effect of sense already produced by the Ecole Une. It is that of its ex-sistence.

This level of the "laws of language" permits an approach to the point of experience of the missing of the reference. It is the point of experience of the real that is located "outside the law". The *pas* collects this point such as it is detached at the exit of an analysis. The whole analytic discourse is thereby polarized. This is one of the ways to read Lacan's contention that "one can content oneself to be Other like everyone else, after a lifetime spent in wanting to be it in spite of the law."

In present conceptions of the laws of language, such as exposed by post-Chomskian linguistics, these two levels are organized differently. There is the level at which rules are rewritten, and the level where only experience allows to account for irregularities. Post-Chomskians have brilliantly solved the dead ends of formalization, the resistance of language to its reduction to rules, by the resource of an appeal to memorization of experience in order to account for outside-the-rule cases. Steve Pinker succeeded in going a long way in using the perfectly known example of irregular English verbs to support his point of view.

To us, memorization is the memory of the trace of nothingness which "saving the duration of that which passes, engenders the thing" (4). To them, it is the memory of a point outside-the-law, of which only memory can give account. To them, as to us, the "outside-the-law" is located in this horizon of the "laws" of language.

The social link of the Ecole Une and the inside-out (envers) of contemporary globalization.

In the Seminar on Lacanian Politic held on March 4, 2000, we relied on a note by Carlo Vignani, to emphasize that way in which the address to the Other is modified in globalization. Current changes in existing communities cause a "loss of the address". The autonomy of the global level entails loss of contact with the local level. The consequence is a multiplication of "local" levels not articulated to anything. Many authors describe the effect of "new feudal territories" being produced.

The subjective effect of the abundance of "multiple choices" causes instability phenomena in the public sphere. In political processes, we have assisted to the appearance of "the independent voter". This is the perfect unstable subject, always in the quest for the next illusory promise. It is the subject trying to identify his choice by hovering the mouse arrow over the Web page. It is always waiting for the next good buy at the competitor's site. "The independent voter" responds to the other, the "extreme" (radical) voter. The latter holds tightly to the past. He is strongly tempted to keep a strong hold on it so that nothing should move.

In our social link, the use that is being promoted concerning the Web and electronic lists functions inversely on these three points. If we follow the Venezuelan debate, we shall see how the list is not a web, but rather proceeds by a restitution of the address. If we follow the Spanish debate, we shall see how the most local communities recognize and articulate with one another by the global level, thus enlivening it. Let us follow the Italian debate, and we shall see how the use of the lists allows for "anti-feudal" decentralization.

The debates taking place in the various communities of the Schools undergoing changes allow us to more clearly realize the precise stakes of each one of them. The debate is nowhere near the zero-stakes game with a "winning opinion" and a "losing opinion", but rather adopts the shape of a cooperative game. It allows the development of a solution which was not present at the outset. This is the logical effect of the School felt by those who participate in it. There is no more at the arrival than there was in the total sum of the starting opinions.

The social link, the Witz and the experience

A social link is thus produced which, as opposite to the link produced by the discourse of the master, is based on a "long story". Careful storing of important documents allowing to follow the modalities of constitution of the School bears witness to this. The opening of Web sites, particularly that of the Ecole One, already enables for consultation of the archives forming the "long story".

At the Seminar on Lacanian Politics held on March 4, Jacques-Alain Miller indicated how the destinies of the School originate in the "desegregating" principle of the community it wants to constitute. Now, the non-segregating community is what everybody wants to invent. It is **the** great question of contemporary political philosophy to which we contribute by deed (en acte).

This contribution is possible only because Lacan created the appropriate institutional mechanisms, deduced from Freudian anti-humanism. This is quite a particular version. It is because we have developed an experience allowing us, by a certain use of the "laws of language", to approach the point of "outside-the-law" that they encircle. Our community may thus come close to the love of thy neighbor in *the good way*. We center our experience in the missing of the reference, on the fact that at all levels of the experience, we are unequal to the analytic act. Each one can, at most, bear witness to the missing style proper to him. Our starting point is "what cannot be loved". It is an experience of the impossible. It produces a link which decenters the impotence to treat the real, that impotence than causes only nostalgia.

If the "long story" of the School allows it to unceasingly reinvent itself it is because, since the procedure of the *pas* and up to "the School as experience", we are inspired by this particular politics of the "experience of missing". This is the truth contained in Groucho Marx's saying that "politics is the art of looking for problems, giving the wrong diagnosis, and treating them by maladaptive means". This "saying", enounced at on of those rare moments when American politics really had the idea of effectiveness (The New Deal), has the merit of putting up an obstacle to the rhetoric of specialists in "political sciences". "The politics of Witz" is also that. The use of the "laws of language" must be centered in the "outside-the-law".

Notes

- (1) In 1960, in Brussels, in front of an audience composed of persons sensitive to Christian ethics, Lacan summarizes it so: "Not only in neurotic devotion but also in the extensive and tarnished form of altruism, whether educational or familial, philanthropic, totalitarian or liberal, (...). Nothing is astonishing in that man should invest nothing in this altruism besides his self-love".
- (2) "A procedure for the *pas*" (in *Ornicar?* No 37) is, as the editor indicates, a typewritten document being passed from hand to hand as an appendix to the "Proposition sur le psychanalyste de l'école" in its oral version.
- (3) Lacan, J., "L'Autre manque" in *Ornicar?* No 20-21
- (4) Lacan, J., "Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage" in *Ecrits*, Paris, Seuil, 1966, p. 279