

# The “Imaginary” Anatomy is Our Destiny!

Prof. Jacques André

“In the psychoanalytic sense the exclusive sexual interest of the man for the woman is also a problem requiring an explanation, and is not something that is self-evident.”<sup>[1]</sup> After all, why heterosexuality? We are not born homosexual or bisexual any more than we are born heterosexual. *We become that way*. To this list, we could add more variations: transgender, asexual, non-binary... All sexual choices result from a story, a psychogenesis. While Freud critiques all naturalness of object choice, he nonetheless adheres very closely to determinism. Even though the word “choice” is ambiguous, choice is not in any way at the free disposal of the subject, rather, it aims to broaden responsibility even at the subconscious level itself. Subconscious determinism especially contradicts natural determinism.

Heterosexuality lost its monopoly “the day” (some hundreds of thousands of years ago) when human sexuality separated from mating and reproduction, the day when drive and fantasy replaced instinct. Human sexuality is neither natural or unnatural: it is *denatured*, which isn't to say that sexuality is deregulated, rather, that which instinct no longer controls now belongs to the institution, it is the *socius*' responsibility: in all societies, lines of demarcation between obligation, permission and interdiction are drawn, and different cultures draw them differently.

As much as it involves an agreement on the denatured character of the human sexuality and the critique of hierarchical privilege accorded to heterosexuality, psychoanalysis is on the same plane with Gender Studies. But the divide spans the two perspectives right as the psychic question is imagined and still undeveloped. The unconscious is not democratic and will never become so – submission, domination ... it is marvelous how the unconscious finds pleasure in them. Equality, especially between man and women, is unknown to the subconscious, and adult sexual behaviour varies according to the time period and the culture. However, society and politics do not deal in the infantile sexuality, the object of psychoanalysis. Regarding the politics of Gender Studies: “unpacking gender” separates infantilism from the unconscious. It's uncertain whether psychoanalysis has something to gain by integrating the word ‘gender’ into its theoretical gamut; “psychic sex” is closer to the analytic experience, as “gender” clearly lacks a bit of “sex”. Equality between man and woman is a (relative) right in the world we live in, but the fantasy evoked through the belittlement of the woman, this timeless fantasy derived from the primitive scene, operating in tandem with the Madonna-whore duo, can be heard in the words of the patient. The same could be said for rape fantasies, fetishes, and many other fantasies. Hell is not other people, it lives at home.

The denaturation of sexuality does not go so far as to mean that one can clear themselves of their nature with a snap of their fingers. We are born as boys or girls, there is no other possibility. The intersex state is not a third alternative (though plenty of identity documents use this term, as Germany does), rather, it is an embryogenic pathology; a parent never desires a hermaphrodite child. One is born a boy or girl, *but one doesn't necessarily become that way*. Paradoxically, the person who pays most dearly for their psychic debt to nature is the transgender person, who may feel that they must have surgery to clear it. In the case of transgender people, the psychic sex becomes tyrannical in its demands, forbidding all object choice plasticity, especially in homosexuality.

In the construction of the psychic sex, the unconscious of the mother and/or father plays a decisive role. The newborn child's most primary identifications are those of whom the child is the object. We

are identified before we have the psychic means at our disposal to *identify ourselves*. Should the parents' unconscious desire to have a girl not abate, even though a boy is born, psychic sex will win over anatomical sex in the psycho-sexual life of the subject, whether it takes the form of homosexuality or not. The *imaginary* anatomy is our destiny. Unconscious psychic determinism is otherwise less able to shift than social determinism, even if the existence of the psychoanalysis and the hope of change upon which it rests leaves an opening for a margin of negotiation.

Homosexuality, bisexuality ... psychoanalysis incorporates the appropriate vocabulary. The clinical experience will at minimum insist that these words are made plural, as the singular lacks the diversity of the underlying psychic constructions. It is impossible to reduce homosexualities to the unique condition of *the same sex*. *Homos*, or the same: the word is often correct, when narcissism and its doubles game organize one's life, but this is one specific case among many. In his work *Leonardo de Vinci*, Freud proposes a psychogenesis of masculine homosexuality: loving a young boy, an ephebe, is to love as one has been loved by a particularly sensual mother, a Catarina or a Phèdre. This is a complex combination of a primary heterosexual love and narcissistic identification. But there are, of course, other possible psychogeneses, such as being a 'girl' in a sexual and romantic relationship, stemming from the unconscious parental fantasy. None of these unconscious constructions can serve as the archetype of homosexuality. The same goes for female homosexuality.

The accent on the word *homos*, the same sex, is also ill-suited in that it belies the complexity of the unconscious. It is forever confirmed by the analytic experience: no homosexual psychic scene, involving man or woman, exists in which the other sex does not impose its presence and its demands, imitated by a missionary anal position or a dildo, or, avoided like the plague. The psychosexual scene of homosexuality is perhaps even more *hetero* than the heterosexual scene, in that the other sex compounds the otherness present. The *ideology of gender* behind homosexual desire, which owes nothing to nobody, especially not to the other sex, does not hold up in analysis.

Bisexualities, too, suffer from the generalness of the theory. The shift towards Lacanian thinking attempted to reduce bisexuality to castration refusal, an idea that Freud did not share. Such a refusal was indeed heard (only doing One, uniting the two separate sexes, erasing the sex that one is not part of), though it is well away from doing away with the complexity of bisexuality, which is also a fantasy of the primary scene. The holder of such a fantasy is not only the passive witness of the "sexual night"<sup>[2]</sup>; they identify with the two protagonists, they *are* both. In a sense, psychic bisexuality can be understood as the unconscious destiny of the primitive scene.

An inevitable theoretical reference when considered with bisexuality: narcissism. The integrity and completeness that the subject dreams of finds precious support in bisexuality, where the two sexes are less so opposed than united, like two sides of the same coin.

Whether bisexuality relates to narcissism or castration, it espouses a movement towards the center, contributing to the construction of the self, even to its protection or defense. Another theoretical dimension, in which bisexuality participates in psychic plasticity, more so creates centrifugal motion. It is not by chance that bisexuality is often associated with the psychic conditions for creativity. It is the idea of a certain mobility that allows movement from one psychic sex to another. As part of the sex life, Freud's celebrated words resound: "I've come to regard any sexual act as a process in which four individuals are involved." Bisexuality does not deny that there are two sexes, it combines them. It does not disregard their differences, rather, it plays with them.

It is necessary to identify to what extent this plasticity bolstered by bisexuality is indispensable to the

psychic functioning of the subject. How else would the transferential voyage be possible? For a man to explore his feminine homosexuality, and for a woman to explore her masculine homosexuality?

---

[1]Freud (1905), *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Martino Fine Books, 2011.

[2]A translation of the title of Pascal Quignard's book dedicated to the primitive scene, *La nuit sexuelle*, Flammarion, 2007.

Translated by Benji Muskal