



WHAT IS MODESTY?

- V -

THE FAULT

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so necessary for pleasure...

It is known why the human coupling escapes the immodesty, if it is accomplished under the required conditions of discretion. To circumvent the obstacle of the language, the partners will have arranged, in their discourse, the suitable transition, which makes it possible to arrive at the stages of caresses and "letting go" of the embrace.

All the scenarios exist. Old couples, who are familiar partners, use an often repetitive scenario of approach, shaped in their intimacy, with very few words. There are sometimes certain regret: *"he no longer tells me the things that he told*

me formerly... "

But a new liaison puts the lovers through the test of the language. When, between people, this "glimmer of possibility", and the hope of an erotic conquest are revealed, each partner becomes the tempter. However, their courting display is **strongly influenced by the social codes.**

The explanation resides in the fact that the human display must also obey a ritual. In all cases, the "strategy of approach" obeys a well established "symbolic beaconing system".

One knows by which very precise "elective omissions", and detours of language, the partners overcome the modesty inhibition, "*so necessary for pleasure that it must be preserved, even in the times intended for the abandoning of it*"...

A fundamental point must challenge us: the pleasure being fully enjoyed thanks to the exit of speech, the partners will have undergone this "absence of significant" **which is a condition of the enjoyment of love.** This linguistic absence, this incursion outside of the symbol and the law, always produces identical effects. They are never innocent. **It would be an error to believe that the culpability is reserved for the victims of aggressions or indecent acts.** The culpability can cover many forms. Can one be unaware that it is never absent?

A pleasure always stolen from the Word.

If one is never consciously victim of the consented love, if the suspension of the language circumvents the modest inhibition between the partners, if it is well "*on modesty that the most flattering conquests are won*", the fault subsists, consubstantial with the pleasure of the sex. This fault, one will agree, has an old History. Its name is "**Original Sin**" and we must now interrogate this vast question.

From the moment that the human has need for the personage of the other to make love, the exchange must bring into coexistence a bodily communication and a communication by speech. The accomplishment cannot avoid this antagonism, conducting, always and necessarily towards a non symbolized and non symbolizable act. **Can a human being combine these two needs which are to speak and to enjoy?**

Convinced that he thus defied Death, a psychotic patient was not mistaken when: he affirmed to want to reach the extreme of himself "*by continuously speaking during the climax*".

The opposition of the sex and speech installs in the human an authentic **ontological cleavage.** For this reason, seen by the religions, the power to redeem this fault does not belong to the creature: it belongs only to the Creator.

Put aside the psychosis, an "inner sight" is always present, which censures a pleasure concealed by the Word, i.e. **the absolute form of the Law**.

Divine sight, of course, since the Origins; maternal eye at one time, but which, in the marital room, still intimidates certain new brides in front of the photograph of their mum...

But how much more frequent, more real and more astonishing, in our time which believes itself to be "liberated", the marital eye which, at the last moment, will ruin the pleasure, or make the female partner take flight, the lover escape, in the imminence of an adventure overflowing with desire.

It is thus seen that, if the victimisation of the offended person is obviously in clear connection with insult, physical violence and humiliation, it is not the same with the sexual guilt feeling. This, various in its demonstrations, is an autonomous phenomenon, **without direct relationship to the happy or dramatic conditions which surround a sex act which is always marked by the fault**.

Utility of the Original Sin

A cultural mythology, which is lost in the mists of time, efficaciously, relieves the human being of this fault. Thus, under the name of "Original Sin", a problem of such importance to the human destiny finds its therapy. This consists of dramatizing it (to playing out the drama of the human being) by anticipation of any inner struggle.

The biblical text is known: yielding to temptation, the primordial couple tasted of the fruit of a prohibited tree, that of **Knowledge**. It follows that, installed in modesty, humans become aware of their sexual condition (**and not the reverse**). The price was heavy to pay: they lost their immortality.

6 the woman saw that it was good to eat, the fruit of this tree! How good it was to behold! It seized one with the desire to act with sagacity... she thus took a fruit and ate of it; she also gave some to her husband close by and he ate... 7 So their eyes were opened and they became aware of their nudity: they bent leaves of the fig tree to be make loincloths...

This myth, by its density, largely exceeds the sexual theme.

As any cultural history, it has a power of signification which **assembles into a totality the apparent diversity of the relations of the human being to himself, to society and to cosmos**.

With its structuring force, it installs the factors of coherence of the individual

being, and of the society to which this individual belongs. In an extreme concision, the Genesis joins together all these functions. A hidden sense largely goes beyond the field of the sexual life; it touches other contradictions of comparable nature, and which affect explicitly: the access to knowledge, the acquisition of the knowledge.

Essential contradictions

The myth organizes that which the conscience is unaware of. Also let us say that it conceals what is unknown but not what is unknowable. Its dramatic screen gives a "emblematic force" to certain essential contradictions; this thematizing equips it with a trans historic effectiveness. In the case which concerns us, rules of constitution of the human thought appear. We will observe the rejoining of:

- the inhibition of the body in front of the language,
- the inhibition of knowledge in front of reality,
- the inhibition of the knowledge in face of the object.

The myth does not directly reveal the permanent structures of the human experience. It translates and interconnects the data which organize the reports of the thought with the world, with other people and with oneself.

It is obviousness that, with respect to sexuality, the Genesis doesn't move away the fault. The transgressed interdiction is immediately sanctioned and the price is death. But what is, in fact, this interdiction?

- knowledge? It was prohibited to the primordial couple and placed them in rivalry with their Creator;
- sexuality ? It betrays them;
- the fruit gathering ? henceforth they will produce their food.

It is necessary to think that the subversive phenomenon is at the conjunction of these three data, of which it reveals common characters.

In any event, this fault is a transgression of the divine word by the primordial couple. Severity is extreme but it is **the human condition which carries the weight of the fault and not the single individual.**

In the same movement, sexuality becomes an obligation. The man must "grow and multiply", i.e. **continues the action of the Creator and in this way obtains part of his power.** This injunction, formulated here, has a major importance because it applies to a legalization: it opens the passage to a rehabilitation of sexuality in the language. We lead here to another data as paradoxical as it is fundamental: the sexuality, **which is accomplished only outside of the language, must essentially have a sense.**

The need for an interior language

At no time the human being must, nor can, allow the sense of his acts to be dissolved. Where this vacancy is inevitable, one knows the price to be paid.

The sexual act does not need to be named in order to exist, but the individual and social sexual reality is always present in thought. Such a great part of oneself as the reproduction of the beings, cannot escape the thought.

An inner verb takes part in the appropriation of our own body, of our own sex. It ensures the appreciation of the act and of its pleasure.

Mainly, this verb is a secret language but, in a final paradox, **it is indispensable to the sexual functioning**. It inserts the person into an identity; and this identity in a cultural syntax. It is therefore a condition of the existence of the subject. All that is known about mental pathology shows how serious, in this field, are any defects of symbolic system.

As in the Oriental erotic arts, our sexual education organizes an initiatory language on love, to give a meaning to the sexual act. But (contrary to the Orient) our "sex education", by the play of linguistic taboos is emptied of its emotive contents. A scientific vision takes the place of the eroticism which it never encounters.

This explains why certain technical innovations circumvent this gap. Scientific sophistications create footbridges of access to bodily significant. We think of erotic messagery, of pornography in video or in the Web, of especially female magazines. These repeat the same topics, the same Articles, in answer to an obvious need.

But, contradiction obliges, that even most precise sense, is obligatorily off-set. In all cases, from the moment that we are enter into a linguistic expression, the explicit reason of the act can no longer be the desire of the body. In all cultures the act becomes the realization of such or such performance, such or such figure, alibi, conversion of finality, **an always diverted direction, by where the pleasure is authorized**.

The erotic "positions", figures, "perversions", "catalogues" of the conquests, or the quiet appeal to the individual phantasms, introduce signifiers. By these signifiers, **that which is communicating separates from that which is communicated and founds a sense**. And there is no other appropriation of the world than by the mediation of the signs.

When the language liberate the sex

We are faced with the paradox of a human activity, whose acting out contradicts in

speech, but of which the individual cannot have access, if he is not preliminarily equipped with an adequate language. The thought, like the word, handles the signs of the language. And one knows, it is finally the language which liberates the sex. **One reaches the "forbidden fruit" only by means of some signification:**

- " to grow and multiply " for man in the faith,
- to put to the test his performances for the " macho ",
- of her seduction for the " vamp ",
- while the pervert verifies his ritual.

One can now understand, more thoroughly, **the effects of the symbolic confiscation system**, about which we have already spoken, and which affects the victims of insult or sexual violence. It is clear that the violence imposed on the victim, does not enter any of these significant categories, which normally culturally validate the sexual life. It is more correct to say that there is insult when the undergone act does not enter into any of these multiple "meanings of sense ", that we have just referred to.

The victim, in himself, cannot legitimate the undergone sexual communication by the play of the intimate and personal scenarios, which we have spoken of, and which apply to a ritual.

To summarize this, we will say that the term of rape assumes his full meaning, when the act, imposed by the violator, can connect itself with none of the significances by which the other, the victim, recognizes his sexual identity.

It is precisely this outlaw character, **which excludes the victim from this collective atonement of the sexual culpability**; paradoxically more the victim than the violator who, as for himself, is included in a well specified identity category.



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