

AN ESSAY ON EROTIZATION OF THE MORALS*

Bogdan Bogdanov

How at ease I would be if I believed that contemplation and everyday activities are actually different issues. But neither is contemplation cleaned out of actionness, nor is everyday move among belongings and people unimpregnated by contemplation. We are alike in all acts of ours. And yet, there is a variety of contemplation that most accurately represents the mode of our being in the world – the one “polluted” with a sort of rhetoric or artistry, the one trailing after itself the viewpoint of inadequately “disembodied” subject.

In the inner text of my “self”, I am endlessly engaged in pinning down myself and the others. I am saving myself the dilemmas of this pinning down by correlating myself and the others to settled classes. Now, a line assigns me to the mature men who take care of a family; the next – to the large group of people, happily working; and then, a third one, – to the even larger group of ones who are kept well for they have never encroached on another’s property. And I do not inquire myself about the reason why this never-encroachment is a firm line to such an extent. My concern is to join to one or another ideal group and to save myself the risk of being different. In particular, it is the moral norms that keep me affiliated to the bosom of community. The less real means of grouping together are available in a social milieu, and the more mobile the person is in it, the more imperative the morality is. On the strength of moral norms I am related in the light of group’s welfare to the others and to the whole of the world. True, they affirm my identity by lending a group ratio to it. It is even inadequate to say they are weaving me into. More precisely, I am woven all over by these classifications as a rag animal, put in motion; as a puppet on wires, pulled from outside.

The norms of social milieu demeanor, implicated and explicated, are expression of my ideal affiliation to the others, mode of transfer and transition outwards – well-trying devices not to be too detached. They control my doings in the consequence of “must” and “must not”, leave me a free hand in some respects and restrict me in others. By constantly assigning my place in the complex human space, human norms keep me out of the outside chaos, but of the inside one too, carried by the threat of my own otherness.

And what fatigue, at the same time, of the normative judgments recurring abstract “self”! Ultimately it fails. We incessantly repose trust in our own unique eidos and arduously strive to shape its expression. Perhaps this endeavor would yield results if my and your multitudes of otherness were not blended in my consciousness and we were not, over and over again, turned into a denoting sign of other’s otherness. There is no other way but me regarding you as a means of my designation in my endless search of similarities and dissimilarities, during which at times I am like you - the same tangle of viewpoints, - at others we are utterly distinct, juxtaposed monolithic elements. Yet, I am to confide in hope that at the ideal completion of this order I’ve come into grasp and appropriation of myself.

But what does coming into grasp and appropriation of myself mean? For I am not just an abstract cognitive or moral “I”, but a complex mobile relation between “I” and the multitude of my otherness, shaping my “I” - consistent and impure of the outward. We are convinced we are

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constituted by the looks of the heavy signifier – the body, concealing the innermost signified of our soul. But both do not coincide. This condition encumbers our world orientation and is a source of incessant uneasiness. And since your looks is easier to be accessed than mine, I inevitably transfer to you this uneasiness and offhand make use of you as a sort of screen in the complex act of coming into grasp-appropriation of my own otherness.

Objects and belongings around me serve the same purpose. I seek their appropriation just like I seek yours. Coming into grasp and appropriating their otherness, I am dealing with my own otherness in a mediated way. Belongings appropriation gets me settled in new classes, furnishes me with additional signs to be grasped and with a new type of experience to take hold of my slipping out otherness. It is a matter of viewpoint if my passion for a sort of “it”, my move out, is a means of my move in, to my “self”, or vice versa. In any case, in the course of this incessant appropriation I am annoyed not by the result but by the lack of repose in the relation of signifier and signified of some kind.

I do never stick only to an object grasping viewpoint. I want to appropriate it, to possess it, to turn myself into termination of its grasping; to transmute from the empty “self” of a given viewpoint into the engendered, set somewhere, consistent “I” of the issue; to retrieve the body I have provisionally deprived myself of, forward looking grasping; to retrieve the belongings and the whole object human milieu of “consistences”, engendered to comply with the necessities of my instrumental disembodiness that is to be incessantly lent consistence in new, and new body associations.

The more plastically the belongings are adjusted to the living body mobility, the more erotically they predispose the one looking for repose in his/her new identification through them. The new garment – what a magic! As an object it is something suspended that can be disintegrated. It is something unset but directed towards setting; ready to stick to the living body and lend it the otherwise necessary valences. A play of two parties connected, but retaining their distinction. The garment is erotic to such an extent for it is a means of transformation. Swelled up looks, it is a symbol of differentiation in the apparent-substantial discrimination and excellently substantiates the drama of the looking for the innermost. The stripping and revealing of the substantial, at least within the borders of the European culture, are ultimate intuitions of this type.

Just like the concealing and revealing of the body, a being beset among belongings might be impregnated by the intuition of substance seeking. Almost every human action acquires the character of a multitude of otherness appropriation, justified by the actor’s necessity to come into contact with substances. The same occurs in the common act of food consummation. Because of our memory and consciousness, our doings never run dry with our immediate act of doing. The intuition of substance seeking is not interwoven in anything else so complicatedly, as in our directness towards living human bodies to be grasped and appropriated. Image of the mobile subject, the body is an enticing symbol of the objectness and of the concealed in it substance. In relation to the appearance of the garment, the body is the substance in itself. But in it substantial and unsubstantial loci are discernible too. The especially affected by substantialness turns into that down below, mobile and variable, fastidious homunculus, which enters there, where it is impossible for us to enter; and the inside, connected with outlets, moist and dark, which erotically attracts or rejects and throws into hypochondria. The mind’s exhilaratedness by the presence of bodiness to be grasped, and the dread of the morbid withering away, of the decaying flesh, are like the two sides of a coin.

In any case, human body is the most erotic of all erotic objects for the concurrent action of multifarious combinations of exterior and interior, and for the multifarious pervasion and appropriation options it offers. These options are engendered by the encounter of the natural

bodily characteristics with the characteristics of the human consciousness which confuses the sexual object with the ideal objects of the innermost, substantial other, and of the hereafter. Erotic is a product of this confusion and in this sense it is human and philosophical issue.

But the otherness can stick to no matter what body. Different are the worthy of erotic incursion bodies. Young woman's body attracts the man for its otherness in the suchlikeness. But it hasn't an erotic impact in its entirety, neither by one and the same bodily parts. In some cases the mature body better represents the otherness that underlies the erotic emotions. The dead body can be bearer of the erotic; such as the animal's body, our own body, the body of the other of the same sex and even the non-body of belongings. Confusing is the diversity of correlations among different signifiers and the signified otherness of the erotic object's sign; and all these in the name of the impetus to an innermost, in which artfully are interwoven one's own, another's otherness and the objectness!

It is easier to enlist the narrow scope of the opposite sex young body signifiers and the erotic object-non-body, than to render an account of the sought in the erotic act otherness needed for my coming into appropriation of consistence. This otherness seems inexhaustible, disintegratable to very many guises. At the same time, it is given to me as a whole. It is precisely the specificity of the erotic act as an activity of acquiring of a whole what makes for its appeal. The woman, a human being like me, but different to certain extent, paradoxical eliminates this want and makes me more complete in reference to the human. Erotic activity is a sort of debate on the borderline between the one and the whole. Simultaneously, the beloved woman is a sort of a more definite "you", representing all the rest of "you", but the otherness in itself too. She is an image of the inside and substance, of nature and earth, in one way or another of belongings too, of objectness; she is a mediator who makes more acceptable the otherness of my own body. For otherwise, I have to admit, I'm afraid I'm not existing, I'm not stuck to. Without her I turn out to be precariously disembodied and void.

In the temporal oneness of the sexual act the drive to subordination and getting rid of myself are related complicatedly, as well as the necessity the other to be subdued and disintegrated. I'm not surprised that the first type of drive is hypertrophically concretized in the masochist's erotic, and the second one – in sadist's pleasure in maltreating the other. In both cases this seems the only substance appropriation option left for them.

The erotic ratio goes along with all human activities to the extent they lay outwards the subject of the action and in principal represent drive to the other and the otherness. Philosophizing, any address to an audience and political activity, training, collecting, obsession with belongings, art making, trust in God and ritual participation, all can be erotic. Erotic is created not only by the principal outwards impetus, but by the constant necessity to cope with the inner problem of me, for being a body, I turn out to be something other than it, and again, turned out to be a non-body, I need to come into possession of consistence and to regain the sense of reality. To this purpose erotic is nothing else but an effective activity of paradox drive to new bodiness that satisfies our drive to substantialness and objectness.

I'm not sure if I could draw this sketch if I wasn't deeply impressed by Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedo* and by Bataille's *L'Erotisme*. As it comes to the questions considered and the form of exposition, the contribution of other texts is worthy to be noted too – i. e. Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations* and Martin Buber's *Ich und Du*. But to define another's in my contemplation probably I am into further reading. Is it possible to set my experience off another's in general? And whether another's belongs to someone or, in its flow, it attenuates its own and the pertaining to all?