

Why make children? (For ARTFORUM)

There is a biological answer to this question: because life tends toward multiplication. It arose a relatively short time ago (some four billions of years ago) on the beaches, that is in those places where the atmosphere, the hydrosphere and the geosphere mingle, and its tendency is to establish a biosphere by infiltrating itself between the three spheres already then in existence. Its tendency is to cover the whole of our planet. Now the biomass is not a more or less amorphous liquid as is sea water, and thus it cannot spread by simply increasing its volume. It is a viscous mass composed of tiny drops which contain, each, a complex nucleus that carries the program for this spreading. Therefore it can only spread by division of the drops which constitute it. Instead of "division", one may say "section". Life can only spread by sectioning, by "sex". Thus the biological answer to our question says: we make children because of sex, which is the method for biomass spreading.

But this is obviously not a satisfactory answer. We do not make children by splitting. The greater part of the biomass does so, (the "protozoaria"), but humanity does not. It belongs to that lesser part of the biomass with which sex is a more complicated matter. With that lesser part two drops mingle before they split, which seems to be an absurd idea. But it has its logic. When a drop divides, the program it contains cannot also be divided, because that would result in a progressive elimination of that program. The program must be copied, so that each drop might contain a full program. Now in the copying process many mistakes occur, and life "degenerates", meaning: the "genetic information" (program) de-forms. The apparently absurd strategy to have two drops mingle before they divide is meant to limit the amount of copying mistakes, and thus avoid degeneration. This is the origin of the famous (or infamous) "two sexes".

There is a further complication, however. In "metazoaria" like ourselves, that is: in lumps within the biomass which assemble many drops (cells), it is not two bodies which mingle before dividing. Each body contains specialized cells meant to mingle with equally specialized cells of another body. This is even more absurd. Because the bodies (the "organisms") with all their complex functions and problems have the sole purpose of transporting those specialized cells meant to mingle, and to divide later. The complex organisms (the "living beings") are nothing but more or less redundant protuberances which emerge out from the biomass, secrete those specialized cells, and then plunge back into the biomass and disappear from vision. The emergence is called "birth", the plunging back is called "death", and all this has very little to do with the tendency of life toward spreading. Life is not very concerned with living beings, with their birth, their biography and their death, it is only concerned with the specialized cells secreted by living beings. To put this more elegantly: life is not concerned with "phenotypes" (living beings) but with "genotypes", (specialized cells which mingle to divide later). To put it briefly: life does not like us. We are an accident in biological evolution.

Life does not care whether we die, a/s long as we make children (secrete cells to mingle with other cells), but we care. Althou life does not like us, we like it. This unresponded love of life of ours does not suit life. It wants us to make children (as many as possible), and then die (as soon as possible), but we refuse to do so. We even refuse to make children when this puts our life in danger. This is way life has a further strategy to seduce us to make children; orgasm. It is meant to have us make children even if we run the risk of dying while doing so. Orgasm is the best strategy so far devised by life in its struggle against living beings. But of course; we humans are cleverer than life is.

We like to live, and we like orgasm, but we do not like making children when this involves dangers. So we have invented a way to separate orgasm from the making of children. For instance pills and abortions. Long live life (let us live long), long live orgasm (let us have it as much as possible), and down with/ the dangerous making of children. Thus sex no longer serves multiplication of life, but it serves to improve upon the quality of life (meaning: ours). But there is a curious aspect to orgasm which needs consideration. It is meant to have us forget about death while making children. But he who says: "forget about death" is saying "forget yourself". Orgasm makes us selfless. Within orgasm two people forget about themselves and thus become merged one within the other. This is not in life's program. (It used to be called "love", but this word can no longer be used, because it has become kitschy and sticks to the tongue the moment one tries to pronounce it.) This is not in life's program, because it does nothing for life's tendency toward spreading. This selflessness shows how we humans may overcome our biological condition. "Omnia vincit amor" said the Ancients.

Thus the biological answer to our question "why make children?" is not a good one. There is a better answer. We make them for them to continue our struggle against our biological condition. For us, a child is not the bearer of a genetic information, which he received from some ancient beach, and which he is meant to transmit to some unimaginable future organisms. For us, a child is the bearer of cultural informations, in the elaboration of which we ourselves collaborated, and which he is meant to enrich by his own contribution. We make children, not for sexual, but for cultural reasons. Therefore the making of children has become a really human commitment only after its separation from sex, only after the invention of pills and abortions.

The methods for artificial (meaning: really human) making of children are only in their first stages. It has already become possible to deposit sperms at sperm banks, and virgins may withdraw them according to choice and fertilize their eggs with them. Soon, society will be full of such virgins which have had an immaculate conception. And those virgins will of course indulge in multiple orgasm for the pure pleasure of it. Soon, sperms and eggs will be collected from people, mingled in specialized apparatus, and artificial uteruses will bring forth well-chosen children. This will be the final liberation of women. Children will

then have become biological hardware for cultural software. And humanity will have become emancipated from child bearing for child care. A truly "pedagogical" humanity will have come about, one that has overcome its biological condition.

But before we adhere to this luminous utopia, a word of caution is in order. If orgasm thus becomes independent on multiplication (on "sex"), if it becomes "l'art pour l'art", will it not lose an important aspect? If two people forget themselves and become one in orgasm, and nothing comes out of it, (no child), is there not the danger of irresponsibility in this whole thing? And inversely: if children are born out of an artifice (and not out of that mutual selflessness), will they still be loved the same way children are loved which are born the old way? Whose are reactionary objections, and they smell of ancient prejudices, but they merit consideration. Because: to be fully human is not only to overcome our biological condition, but just as much to lift that condition on a human level, which is what "overcome" means: do away with it by keeping it on a higher level.