



Psicologia em Estudo

ISSN: 1413-7372

ISSN: 1807-0329

Universidade Estadual de Maringá

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Psicologia em Estudo, vol. 28, e53702, 2023
Universidade Estadual de Maringá

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4025/psicolestud.v28i0.53702>

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THE ONE AND THE FUNCTION OF SEX ACCORDING TO PSYCHOANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT. Based on the constitutive ambiguity of the One that Lacan promotes from logic and mathematics in the seminars *O saber do psicanalista e ...ou pior*, between 1971 and 1972, the article seeks to support the theory of sexuation developed in that period and clarify that such conceptualization resumes the Freudian subversion of the drive polymorphism. If the drive does not have any instinctual determination as to its object, it appears that this same misunderstanding is revealed as the impossibility of proportion and sexual relationship [*rapport sexuel*] for the speaking being, who grammatically positions themselves in the structure of language from this impasse. Thus, the bifidity of the One, between set and element, sameness and difference, particularity and universality, ex-sistence and relativity, real and symbolic, rewrites the (sexual) difference according to psychoanalysis. Sex, therefore, is the very absence of any reference other than the constitutive opacity of the signifier, it is the fundamental evasion of the being from the truth.

Keywords: Sexuality; psychoanalysis; significant.

O UM E A FUNÇÃO DO SEXO SEGUNDO A PSICANÁLISE

RESUMO. Segundo a ambiguidade constitutiva do Um que Lacan promove a partir da lógica e da matemática nos seminários *O saber do psicanalista e ... ou pior*, entre 1971 e 1972, o artigo busca fundamentar a teoria da sexuação desenvolvida nesse período e esclarecer que tal conceituação retoma a subversão freudiana do polimorfismo pulsional. Se a pulsão não tem qualquer determinação instintual quanto a seu objeto, constata-se que esse mesmo equívoco se deslinda como impossibilidade de proporção e relação sexual [*rapport sexuel*] para o ser falante, que se posiciona gramaticalmente na estrutura da linguagem a partir desse impasse. Nesse sentido, a bifididade do Um, entre conjunto e elemento, mesmidade e diferença, particularidade e universalidade, ex-sistência e relatividade, real e simbólico, reescreve a diferença (sexual) conforme a psicanálise. O sexo, portanto, é a própria ausência de qualquer referência que não seja a opacidade de princípio do significante, é a evasão fundamental do ser à verdade.

Palavras-chave: Sexualidade; psicanálise; significante.

EL UNO Y LA FUNCIÓN DEL SEXO SEGÚN EL PSICOANÁLISIS

RESUMEN. Basado en la ambigüedad constitutiva del Uno que Lacan promueve desde la lógica y de la matemática en los seminarios *O saber do psicanalista e ...ou pior*, entre 1971

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y 1972, el artículo busca apoyar la teoría de la sexuación desarrollada en ese período y aclarar que tal conceptualización reanuda la subversión freudiana del polimorfismo de la pulsión. Si la pulsión no tiene ninguna determinación instintiva en cuanto a su objeto, parece que este mismo malentendido se revela como la imposibilidad de la proporción y la relación sexual [*rapport sexuel*] para el ser hablante, que se posiciona gramaticalmente en la estructura del lenguaje desde esta cuestión. Así, la bifidez del Uno, entre conjunto y elemento, igualdad y diferencia, particularidad y universalidad, ex-sistencia y relatividad, real y simbólico, reescribe la diferencia (sexual) según el psicoanálisis. El sexo, por lo tanto, es la ausencia misma de cualquier referencia que no sea la opacidad de principio del significante, es la evasión fundamental del ser de la verdad.

Palabras clave: Sexualidad; psicoanálisis; significante.

Introduction

Sex, in its essence as radical difference, remains untouched and sets its face against knowledge
Jacques Lacan (2006, p. 351, our translation)⁴.

The acephalic drive, theorized by Freud, from very early on in psychoanalysis already mismatched not only the supposed normality of the heterosexual couple, but rejected any instinctual aim and problematized the search for harmony. The genital is not innate, it is constructed, the individual story tells and highlights the singularity. Although Freud preserved the genital organization as a goal of development, the radical nature of the drive was further ahead than his conclusions, which usually occurs with great discoveries (Le Gaufey, 2014). The source, impulse and goal of the drive stand out, in the *Três ensaios sobre a teoria da sexualidade*, in relation to its object: “[...] we are led to loosen the bond between instinct and object that exists in our thoughts. It is likely that the sexual instinct is, at first, independent of its object, and perhaps it does not even owe its origin to its attractions” (Freud, 2016, p. 38).

‘There is no sexual relationship’: Le Gaufey (2014) condenses the Lacanian aphorism into this framework of Freudian thought, even though Lacan did not explicitly do so; that is, if any object serves the only drive goal, satisfaction, there is nothing prescriptive about the globality and genitility of that object. The other sex remains to be invented for the speaking being: “In the conception of psychoanalysis, therefore, also the exclusive sexual interest of the man for the woman is an issue that requires explanation, it is not something evident in itself, based on a fundamentally chemical attraction” (Freud, 2016, p. 35).

Sexual interest is a problem, says Freud. The limitation of the catalog of drives is linked to the real attested as impossible, promoted in the attempt of the speaking being to realize the sexual proportion/relation [*rapport*] (Lacan, 2003a). This place to be filled, this void to be circumvented with the significant possibilities of each one is equivalent to the absence of the Other to unite with the subject. In *Encore*, Lacan (2010, p. 255) will therefore say that “[...] the Other is the One-missing”. The (-1) of the Other is this outline, which is radically distinguished from Being, from the supposed sexual essence that fantasy seeks to articulate.

In the simultaneous seminars Lacan held between 1971 and 1972, *O saber do psicanalista* and *...ou pior*, the question of the One is massively worked on. Starting from

⁴Session of May 19, 1965 of the seminar *Problemas cruciais para a psicanálise*. “O sexo, em sua essência de diferença radical, permanece intocado e se recusa ao saber”.

the “[...] curious avant-garde” (Lacan, 2003b, p. 544) located in Plato’s *Parmênides*, that is, the separation between the One and the Being that exposes a structural gap, Lacan (1997, p. 102) relies on logic and mathematics to support the One through mathematical writing, renewing the question mainly due to the mathematical progress of set theory, insofar as it “[...] attempted to account for the function of the One”.

Approached in different aspects and implications — set, class, element, difference, attribute —, the One ends up in its sameness, which is verified by two-way correspondence, from the perspective of set theory, as a lack. Thus, in the series of integers, “[...] each number cardinally corresponds to the cardinal number that precedes it, adding the empty set to it” (Lacan, 1997, p. 103). Lacan draws attention to the belated logical interrogation of mathematics, when the One thus arose “[...] as an effect of lack” (p. 103).

Truth, existence, universality, number, signifier: it is through this epistemological penetration into psychoanalysis that such notions renew their bases and allow the formulation of the aphorism of these seminars. Number theory and signifier theory therefore share the same reason. *Há-um* synthesizes the ambiguity of the One, between set and element, sameness and difference, particularity and universality, ex-sistence and relativity, real and symbolic, rewriting the (sexual) difference according to psychoanalysis. On this threshold, truth is doubly conjugated, says Lacan (2003a), but never completely.

This article considers the ambiguity of the One in these seminars to extract the grounds for sexual difference according to this period of Lacan’s teaching.

The role of sex in psychoanalysis

Lacan (1997) questions what plays the role of the One in discourse, also called, in seminars 19, the place of the semblant, the hole of the signifier and “One’s jouissance” (Lacan, 2003b, p. 548). ‘Unology’ is therefore opposed to ontology (Lacan, 1997, p. 97); the positivization of being in Aristotelian metaphysics is replaced by the stripping away of existence in relation to universality. The focus is on the “Real linked to the *One*” (Lacan, 1997, p. 105), that is, the uniqueness of the sexual impasse, the impossible of identity and the attribute that coerces the subject to decide in the structure. Thus, Lacan postulates that sex is real and dual.

It is about knowing what I return to because it seemed to me that I had opened the thing. It is the relationship of all this that I am re-enunciating, that I remind you with a brief touch, truths of experience, ‘it is a question of knowing the function of sex in psychoanalysis’. In this regard, I think, in any case, that I have reached the ears, even the deafest ones, with the statement that deserves to be commented on, that there is no sexual relationship. It surely deserves to be articulated. Why does the psychoanalyst imagine that what makes the core of what he is referring to is sex? ‘That the sex is real, there’s no doubt about it’. And its very structure is the dual, the number ‘two’. In any case, there are only two, the men, the women, it is said, and we persist in adding the Auvergnats! It is a mistake. ‘Within the realm of the real, there are no Auvergnats’ (Lacan, 1997, p. 98-99, emphasis added).

For the psychoanalyst, sex is linked to the impossibility of the symbolic to forge its own finishing, to multiply substances, to the radical incongruity of the One to the local imaginary that entangles it, to the cultural impotence in giving consistency to the rational; sex is the very absence of any reference other than the constitutive opacity of the signifier, it is the fundamental evasion of being from the truth. There are men and women it is said; there are *queers* too, and the intersex that blurs the boundaries of scientific discourse. Sexual indices change and perhaps one day anatomy will no longer define the uses of gender in language (Soler, 2018). Psychoanalysis is part of the plurality of knowledge about sex that today tries to account for the rearrangements in the coordinates of the most diverse

sexual experiences (Ambra, Silva Jr., & Laufer, 2019). More and more multiplicities are added to the identity flags that claim political participation, which is fundamental in the social space where the imaginary of the distinction of minority groups is what allows the fight for rights. Eidelsztein (2019) argues that psychoanalysis is in favor of difference, difference of what it is not, which does not exempt us, secondarily, from participating in the revision or rejection of certain identity closures aligned with the sufferings and exclusions of our time.

Metaphorically, it can be said that Lacan (1997, p. 94), in his time, condenses the possibility of the supposed plurality of identity through the popular imaginary about the Auvergnese, to warn that, nevertheless, sex is real, that, for the analytical discourse, "[...] the position of the signifier is essential as such [...]" which "[...] is outlined by an experience". Thus, a psychoanalysis is "[...] the location of what is understood as obscured [...] by the fact of a signifier that marked a point of the body" (p. 95). Imprecision from which "[...] the dose of jouissance" (p. 95) of neurosis is extracted: the empire of the master signifier is articulated, therefore, to the One that 'tears apart' the sexuality of the speaking being: "[...] sexuality is at the center of everything that goes on in the unconscious. [...] since it is a lack, that is, that in place of whatever one could write about the sexual relationship as such, impasses of jouissance are substituted" (p. 22).

Impasses of the One that organizes speech such as "The Real is what commands the entire function of significance" (Lacan, 2003a, p. 25). Regarding the psychoanalyst's knowledge, Lacan (1997, p. 96) questions what he teaches about the function of sex, insofar as "[...] nothing but the One is taught". Thus, if the hysterical discourse places love at the foot of the wall and produces knowledge through its division, it is because love serves to speak; the "[...] talking [*parlage*]⁵" of the analysand tries to turn love into a sexual relationship, a discovery of the analytic experience (Lacan, 1997, p. 99).

The issue of sexual sharing is, however, old. To approach it, we need to distance ourselves from the common sense of our time and make our fantasies falter in the face of conceptions that go back to other times, in order to realize the logical difficulty of the subject, underlines Le Gaufey (2015). The problem touches on basic notions of human cognition, and attempts to discriminate between the sexes over the ages expose that sexual difference "[...] mixes [...] two qualities that understanding considers to be heterogeneous: the discrete and the continuous" (Le Gaufey, 2015, p. 34).

Given this, the scientific discourse seeks to bipolarize sex by its attributes, according to different perspectives and motivations depending on the context and time (Laqueur, 2001). In the West, the female biological body was only conceptualized in the eighteenth century; the specificity of their organs, orgasms and fluids was until then in continuity with the androcentric gradient (Laqueur, 2001). Thus, if today science distinguishes separate anatomies and defines two entities that want to be independent, the common discourse is also nourished by the discreet opposition that genetics would contribute to chromosome 23 as evidence of sexual individualization (Le Gaufey, 2015). However, defining sex by the biological binary, whether by genes, hormones or genital anatomy "[...] is an oversimplification. Often, the sex chromosomes are not evenly distributed among the cells of the embryo. Inequality results in men with XX cells in some organs and women with XY chromosomes" (Varella, 2019).

To think of sexual difference through the mythical animal model, in which there are as many on one side as on the other, is to build a metaphysical system from the notion of individual in its natural concreteness, according to Aristotle, who imagined that it was

⁵Condensation between *parler* (speak) and *partage* (partition).

enough “[...] to say that ‘some’, ‘some’ only, not all, are like this or like that to distinguish them; that is by distinguishing them from what they are, if they are not, for example, that is enough to ensure their existence” (Lacan, 2003a, p. 95, authors emphasis). Hence the impediment to conceiving a ‘not-all’ in classical logic. Thus, “[...] it is also necessary first to settle the following, that not even the idea of the individual in any case constitutes the *One* [...]”; as for the sexual relationship, one does not go “*One by One*” (p. 132).

Existence must be taken as ex-sistence, a neologism that Lacan (2003a) introduces on March 15, 1972. The *One* of the subject ex-sists to the symbolic chain: emptiness that precisely promotes symbolization and saying, making the truth nothing other than the signifying articulation itself. Language advances the truth and gives it a structure of fiction (Lacan, 2019).

Freud still sought to objectify the sexual and resolve the issue through the theoretical qualification of the unconscious material, sometimes leaning towards the essentialist ‘dualism’ that tried to instantiate what concerns the masculine and what concerns the feminine, sometimes admitting an irreducible ‘duplicity’ of these qualities, as extremes between which there would be mixing (Le Gaufey, 2015). Thus, if anatomy is destiny, an obligatory stop for the psychic work of difference, and if ovule and sperm are in some way differentiable from a biological perspective, how then can we conceive that, psychologically and sociologically, according to their vocabulary, “[...] pure masculinity and femininity remain theoretical constructions of uncertain content” (Freud, 2011, p. 298). Where to situate the “[...] repudiation of femininity” (Freud, 1975, p. 287), an obstacle at the end of the analysis, tributary to what, since the *Três ensaios*, had already been established, that is, the libido deals only with the male sex, where did it come out that phallic primacy does not differentiate the girl from the boy at all? On this point, Le Gaufey (2015) observes that Freud participates in this effort, albeit flawed, in going from sexual relativity to the substantiation of two sexes, from which the problem of difference is formally articulated in these terms: would difference be a relative or would it be a consequence of the particular substance of each entity?

Freud was unable to resolve the question of difference, proportion, sexual relationship. In ‘Análise terminável e interminável’ (1975), far from what Real, Symbolic and Imaginary would allow Jacques Lacan to move forward in this transferential impasse (which leads to profound shocks in the epistemological plane), he resigns himself to this: “The repudiation of femininity may be nothing more than a biological fact, a part of the great riddle of sex” (p. 287). The subversion of the drive was beyond what he could articulate in the clinic.

Thus, by radiating the great enigma of sex to other knowledges and metonymizing the logical question at stake, Lacan works on the saying ‘there is no sexual relationship’, extracted from Freud’s statements about sexuality, according to the finding that sex is real and dual. There are no men and women in their supposed identity purity, there are no Auvergnese language can only imprint ‘ambiguity’ on bodies, not ‘binarity’. The *One* prevents us from accessing the *Two*:

[...] the *One*, when it is truthful, when it says what it has to say, we see where this leads, in any case, to the total refusal of any relationship with being.

There is just one thing that stands out when he articulates, and that is exactly it, there are no two. I told you, it’s a saying. And really, you can find confirmation of what I say, close at hand, when I say that the truth can only be half said; because they just need to break the formula. To say this, he can only say either there are [y en a], as I say *Yad'lun*, or not two [pas deux], what is interpreted is immediately interpreted by us, there is no sexual relationship. (Lacan, 2003a, p. 128-129).

The logical foundations of difference, according to Lacan's approach, do not, therefore, take the dual of sex for the imaginary sexual pair. Our understanding of the issue must fit into the negativity efforts that characterize his teaching.

There is One

Sexual relativity, whatever it may be, converges to the One: the hole in the argument in the logical proposition, as in the formulas of sexualization, isolates the sameness from the ex-sistence that can be determined according to the quantifier in play. The participation of x in the symbolic field is, in any case, isomorphic to the empty and fleeting operativity of the absolute One, insistence of the real of the drive in the heart of the language.

Lacan (2003a, p. 104) states that the motive of "[...] the theory of sets is entirely based on that the One that exists, of the set, is distinct from the One of the element". On April 19 and May 4, 1972, he deepened this ambiguity of principle of set theory, insofar as any element is equivalent to the empty set, since this is also considered an element. Theory of set, in this sense, is the interrogation of the One. The question is, therefore, the same as that inscribed in the logicization of the sequence of integers in the Fregean way that is so dear to Lacan: what is transferred from 0 to 1 and performs repetition, that is, why and how *there is One*, "[...] a question that is central to truth" (Lacan, 1997, p. 120).

In the foundations of arithmetic according to Frege, Lacan relies on the ambiguity of zero, at the same time an absence and a presence, to exemplify, by way of logic, the reflexivity of the symbolic. That is, the absence of a referent is precisely what gives symbolization its inertia. It is from the lack of object under the concept 'unequal to itself', which can only have a null extension, that Frege postulates the concept of number 1, 'equal to zero', when he equates this void to itself, making zero an object, that is, introducing it into the field of truth, which is the registration of identity: number is a named unit, it is defined by identity to itself; and the elision of zero from the field of truth serves precisely to preserve it, indicating that it can only sustain itself through identity, the domain of the signifier and meaning (Miller apud Lacan, 2006). Its semi-saying is condensed, therefore, in the expression *there is One*, the circular duplicity of signification, which gives the dual and the real of sex according to the analytical discourse.

In set theory, it is at the level of the actual infinite, aleph zero, that Lacan (2003a) locates the spring of unarity and the obstacle to symbolic bipolarity: the sameness of the One ($\emptyset$) in any set architecture gives cardinality of the numerical infinite and attests that the One is fundamentally constituted as a "[...] place of a lack" (Lacan, 1997, p. 103). Thus, "[...] this One, the nothing [*nade – monade*] insofar as it is at the beginning of the emergence of the numerical One, from the One of which the whole number is made, is therefore something that is posited as being, originally, the empty set itself" (Lacan, 1997, p. 107).

What Lacan postulates, then, is analogous to the first movement of institution of the signifier as a set, insofar as it is through a trait that counts-by-one a first multiplicity, even if it is mere emptiness, naming it as nothing. As a *Fiat lux*, the axiom of the empty set says, 'let there be the empty set', written $\emptyset$, from then on duly named, inscribing it as a signifier (Rona, 2010, p. 103, authors emphasis).

Named unicity, the void becomes operable like any set: "[...] as a function of closing a hole, the very name 'empty set' suggests, and in its case more than explicitly, the level of lack, or inconsistency, the greatest, suturing it with and through its own name" (Rona, 2010, p. 104, authors emphasis). The positive lack in the symbol is circled, but not filled; the uniqueness of this set is articulated to what the proper name pursues in vain: "[...] it is made to go and fill the holes, to fill them, to close them, to give them a false appearance of a

suture" (Lacan, 2006, p. 74). In the same way, non-existence is conceived only from the signifier that designates it, which in itself is already suturing insofar as the attestation of the lack goes hand in hand with the assumption that it can be filled in, thus preserving the coherence of the structure. In this sense, it is about non-existence, but "[...] not in the sense of not having existence, but of not being existence other than the symbol that would make it non-existent and which, indeed, does exist, is a number, as you know, generally designated by zero" (Lacan, 2003a, p. 48). The lack is accompanied by the possibility of complementation, just as zero is rejected because the principle of identity is safeguarded.

Thus, Lacan pairs the crucial problematic of number theory with the question of the signifier:

[...] what is felt to be this beyond language can only be mathematical, imagine, because of the number, that it is a matter of quantity. But perhaps precisely [...] the number in all its reality to which language gives access, but only by being able to link Zero and The One. Through this, the entry of this real would be made, the only one able to be beyond language, that is, the only domain in which a symbolic impossibility can be formulated (Lacan, 1997, p. 86).

Both the number and the signifier can only unfold signs from the same absence of foundation external to their own domain. Zero or emptiness, between symbolic and real, constitutes the same place of lack that sustains 'unary symbolization' and 'multiple imaginization'. Any significant 'swarm' (Lacan, 2010) is reduced to the fact that language only works in the gears of 0 and 1, that is, based on the non-existence that is at the foundation of logical necessity (Lacan, 2003a). Thus, Lacan (2003a) will say, on December 15, 1971, that what exists is the signifier — "You exist as signifier" (p. 31-32), but precisely to the extent that "[...] this has a meaning, a precarious meaning" (p. 31), that is, "existence is insistence" (p. 160, emphasis added). Cardoso (2010) specifies that this reiteration of the lack at the core of the symbolic takes place, metapsychologically, as drive insistence, inexistence of the supposed truth of the symptom (Lacan, 2003a, p. 136) that claims symbolization: "[...] the insistence of the One articulated to the drive is effectively the only substance proper and immanent to the register of language, this indeterminate (since contradictory) logical value is a pure signifying limit".

In the Fregean system, it is said that it is about the entry of lack into the field of truth, as a paradox of absent presence that promotes the cardinal sequence: "[...] this conquest remains precious to us insofar as it gives us 1 as being essentially [...] the signifier of non-existence" (Lacan, 2003a, p. 55). Thus, "Frege does not account for the series of integers, but for the possibility of repetition. Repetition arises at first as a repetition of 1, as the 1 of non-existence" (p. 58). The One of the numerical unit is, therefore, a repetition of the One of the unique non-existence accounted for in the symbolic unfolding: $\emptyset$ makes, therefore, "[...] something organized from the void" (Rona, 2010, p. 106).

The proper name of the empty set represents the lack, but does not present it, which would break down the very notion of set (Rona, 2010). This significant contour is not, however, mere labeling: "[...] it is non-existence itself counted as One", it is a "[...] 'positive inertia' within the symbolic" (Cardoso, 2010, p. 136, 140, authors emphasis), just like the real engenders significance. In this sense, the One essentially designates the limit of the symbolic itself, where the assumption of One more signifier circumscribes a place of lack. Rona (2010, p. 107) observes that $\emptyset$ is "Other in relation to any other signifier [...]", which clearly denotes the impossibility of symbolizing the otherness that would be proportionate to the subject.

This real of which I speak and of which the analytic discourse is made to remind us that its access is symbolic. The so-called real, to which we accede in and through this impossible that only the symbolic defines (Lacan, 2003a, p. 92).

The One speaks and supports existence, the only thing on which the speaking being can support, says Lacan (1971-1972/1997) on March 3, 1972, because we can only be through the symbol, “[...] this being without being [...]”, which unsettles and situates existence in “[...] the most fleeting of the enunciable” (Lacan, 2003a, p. 95). The One is lost and takes “[...] to the summit what concerns existence until it confines existence as such insofar as it arises from the most difficult thing to reach” (p. 95). Just as in Frege, the 1 is forged when the demarcated lack (set) appears concomitantly with its count as an element, we could also say that lack and fleetingness also set the tone of the Moebian structure of the sexual, the ontological and the subject: “[...] this bipartition, always elusive, [...] of man and woman” (Lacan, 2003a, p. 121); “[...] what I oppose as being [...] is the being of significance” (Lacan, 2010, p. 148); “[...] the subject is never anything but punctual and evanescent, he is only subject by a signifier and for another signifier” (Lacan, 2010, p. 272).

The monad taken into account here is the very nullity that is equivalent to any suturing effort of the lack-to-be; it is not the indivisibility of the natural unity of the thing, it is this nucleus of the ‘real’ that underlies any ‘reality’: “[...] the monad [*monade*], therefore, is the One that knows itself alone, point-of-real of the empty relation” (Lacan, 2003b, p. 547); but “[...] let us no longer call it a monad, but a One-saying, since it is from it that those who insist on repetition come to ex-sist” (p. 548).

Lacan (1997) emphasizes that the One as a reiteration of the lack is correlated to the principle of repetition. The “[...] bricolage” (Lacan, 1997, p. 46, our translation) that never ceases to be written is guided by the “[...] One’s jouissance [...]” that “[...] exercises the function of the subject” (Lacan, 2003b, p. 548): the same element that represents the absence of an element is repeated in each associative tail, in each swarm of thoughts, in each speech effect that constitutes the place of the Other. Which implies that the potentiality of value for the signifier, Saussurian speaking, is infinite and leads to the sameness of the One; that is, the sameness of the lack is the sameness of the signifying relativity; any symbolic arrangement where relative differences are extracted and the consequent signification is dependent on the absolute difference that presides over the differentiation itself.

The definition of ‘man’, ‘woman’ or ‘Auvergnese’ starts, therefore, from the same centripetal inertia that organizes the possibility of symbolic relativity; identity is forged in the case by case of local meanings that try to complete the truth: “distinct means nothing but ‘radical difference’, since nothing can be similar. There are no species. Everything that is distinguished in the same way is the same element. And what does it mean” (Lacan, 1997, p. 107-108, authors emphasis).

Psychoanalytic theory sees the One at two of its levels. The One is the One that repeats itself; it is at the foundation of this greater incidence in the speech of the analysand that it denounces with a certain repetition, in relation to what? To a signifying structure.

What, on the other hand, is produced by establishing the subject at the level of the jouissance of speaking, considering the scheme I gave of the analytic discourse? What is produced is what I designate on the so-called plus-de-jouir level, it is S_1 , that is, a significant production [...] What is the sameness of difference? What does it mean that things we designate in the signifier with different letters are the same? What can they mean ‘the same’, if not precisely that it is unique, starting even from the hypothesis from which, in set theory, the function of the element starts? (Lacan, 1997, p. 110, authors emphasis).

If the sameness of the significant variation is equivalent to the radicality of the difference, it can therefore be said that the master signifier is, strictly speaking, that sameness of the One that commands speech and its attempts to create the Two, as Lacan (1997, p. 96): “It is always, surely, of the signifier that I speak when I speak of There is One [*Yad’l’un*]. In order to extend this *d’l’un* to the extent of its empire, since it is surely the master signifier, it is necessary to bring it closer, where it was left to its talents, to place it at the foot of the wall”.

Any significant or set composition is reduced, therefore, to what this sameness can write of contrasts. There is One declares the very absolute difference of sex, its fundamental avoidance that paradoxically supports the saying of difference, translating it into the impasses of jouissance, surrogates of the relationship. The only assured unity is that of the subject with the knowledge that produces truth and jouissance as a double response to the problem of ex-sistence (Lacan, 2003a). The One aspires to be true and establish a relationship with the Other by inscribing itself in that place, but “[...] the true only exists lacking its partner” (Lacan, 2003a, p. 118). The Other lacks, but this failure does not prevent attempts at bonding and substitutes in love, a requirement of a structure called sexuation (Danziato, 2016).

The One and the (sexual) difference

While expressible if not through difference, in its functionality of strangeness to any imaginary conformation that is sought, sexuality cannot be defined by identities. The One makes the Being and guides the circulation of the subject with knowledge; “[...] the strangest of decoys [...]” occurs when, in the cultural imaginary, we interpret the phallic meaning as a binary of the biological metaphor (Lacan, 2010, p. 109).

From the One, the abyss that separates it from the Two is founded: the ‘small difference’ is perceived very early on, dispensing with the phallic phase to become visible, and the error of this dialectization is constituted by the possible criteria, according to the current symbolic order. That is, we reject sexual bipolarity, structurally speaking, through identifications (Lacan, 2003a). Because the being is speaking, there is a castration complex (Lacan, 2003a). The imaginary Two thus ignores the unarity that constitutes it, a primordial failure of the symbolic that nevertheless sustains it; which makes the unconscious succeed only by failing (Lacan, 2003a). Thus, logic and sexuality become entangled because of the auspicious ambiguity of the word *rapport* in the French language (Le Gaufey, 2014): each one on its side, the partners oppose each other, they do not unite; they are not *related* because there is no ‘proportion’. There is no sexual relationship because language works at the level of jouissance promoted by the semblance, explains Lacan (1997, p. 35) on December 2, 1971:

We don’t know anything real about these men and women as such, because that’s what it’s all about; it’s not about dogs and bitches. It is really about those who belong to each of the sexes from the speaking being. There is not even a shred of psychology there. Men and women—this is real.

Unarity is eclipsed by the specular reference to the animal model that specifies male and female, giving the naturalness that only errors have (Lacan, 2003a). Unlike the Freudian Eros, the partners cannot add up: “Their [*D’eux*] is not merged into *One*, nor *One* founded by two [*deux*]” (p. 124). The unconscious knowledge at work, in homology to the theory of sets, is rooted in the One that founds the mistake, both that of the signifier in its constitutive nullity and that of the interpretation of the ‘all’ that establishes the *sex ratio* attributively: “[...] the only interesting thing from the signifier are the mistakes that can come out of it, that is,

something of the order of 'merging them into a One', and other idiocies of this type [...] the 'all' is necessarily semantic" (p. 130, authors emphasis).

The 'all' that culture manufactures to make a relationship gives the illusion that there are two sexes, two essences, according to the genitalist model of science and theological morality. The assumption of harmony in animal life forgets that a biology will never approach what would be untouched animality. Even the imaginary of nature can be provoked, and Lacan (1997) does not shy away from this either. At the level of zygote, how can we think of a relationship in the mathematical sense if a third cannot be formed from Two by complete fusion? There remain the genetic halves that do not enter into the meiosis account: "[...] what is one, new, is done with what [...] each one of them that dropped a certain number of pieces" (p. 101). Lacan (2003a) also recalls that reproduction through sex is one modality among others; in the most primitive species there is no coitus. That is, we always imagine sexual binarity at the animal level, "[...] as if every illustration of what, in each species, constitutes the tropism of one sex for the other were not as variable for each species as its bodily constitution" (p. 38).

The attribute masks the groundlessness of the language. Lacan (2003a) points out that, until the theory of sets, from the idea of class, individuals were biunivocally distributed, according to the common attribute of each universal of the *sex ratio*; each with its own, effect of the countenance precisely because it makes itself visible.

[...] the following must also be settled first, that not even the idea of the individual in any case constitutes the *One*. Because, it is visible at least, this could be within reach, for what concerns the sexual relationship on which, in short, not a few people imagine that it is founded, and there are as many individuals on one side as on the other, in principle, at least, in the speaking being, the number of men and women with exception, isn't it? (Lacan, 2003a, p. 132).

Not even the classic active/passive dichotomy, with its attributive statement, can serve to think the Two: "[...] the man, he is active, the darling! In sexual intercourse, then, it seems to me that it is more the woman who plays hard!" (Lacan, 2003a, p. 179). Thus, on May 17, 1972, Lacan (2003a) distinguishes the One of difference from the One of attribute. The latter makes use of qualification to found the universal, the former is different from the class, as it leads to the empty set in its material neutrality, which is counted in the parts of the set as an element: "The *One*, as pure difference, is what distinguishes the notion of the element. The *One*, therefore, as an attribute, is distinct" (p. 134).

The class is attributively defined and ceases to exist when is emptied, unlike the set, which works even while empty. Lacan relies on set theory to subvert the metaphysical status of the universal and existence, based on identity, indivisibility and the validity of the principle of contradiction. In that same lesson, he interrogates these pillars of Aristotelianism at the level of the formulas on man's side. The One of difference, articulated to the formula of exception, sustains the fantasy of a saying that Φx is not true; it is "[...] the only characteristic element [...]" that founds man (Lacan, 2003a, p. 135). The universal is opposed to existence insofar as "[...] it is no less true that the relationship with $\Phi of x$ is what defines man, there, attributively, as 'all man'" (p. 135, authors emphasis). As clarified by Lacan (2019) in the previous seminar, 'every man' does not guarantee any existence, he is "[...] a signifier, nothing more" (p. 178), which implies that the question of the universal must be "entirely replaced from the function that *Yad'lun* articulates" (Lacan, 2003a, p. 135).

If "[...] man is a phallic function insofar as he is 'all man'" (Lacan, 2019, p. 178), it is about the fact that the proposition does not acquire meaning unless the existence of the referent, by occupying the empty place of the argument, gives the said proposition its truth value. The ex-sistence here objects to the universal, unlike the logical square of the minimal

particular according to Aristotle, in which the particular propositions concretely posit the concept of the universal. The logical square by the maximal particular as Lacan constructs it implies that existence is distinguished from universality, just as the One is not confused with the Being, according to the Lacanian reading of *Parmenides*. It is not about “[...] *the One is* [...]”, but about “[...] *is One*” (Lacan, 2003a, p. 85), that is, the being is emptied, the exception must be taken qualitatively, as a plastic existence that embodies the traits (Le Gaufey, 2015). Thus, “[...] the man of ‘every man’, when he is the subject, imposes a function of a universal that does not support him [...] but his symbolic status” (Lacan, 2019, p. 171, authors emphasis).

Thus, a sex is articulated to the phallic unit that encloses jouissance in signification; to the other, unity does not necessarily determine sexual experience. To the extent that the signifier can only work under the regime of lack and hinders other symbolic possibilities, A jouissance is touched by language, which implies that heterity — and not *deuteros*, that is, secondarity — ex-sists at its pace. The existence and the universal on the masculine side are opposed by the non-existence of another existence and the absence of a universal Other on the feminine side:

Thus, the writings on the left/right, man/woman, aim to express the fact of non-relationship by placing side by side an x whose functioning allows one to think of an essence ($\square x$) and an existence ($\square x$), and an x whose functioning does not authorize any essence, but rests entirely on an existence that remains intractable by whatever unity it may be.

[...] Without diving into an overly substantialist conception, which would make this x something pre-sexual, one is thus led to conceive that sexual bipartition results from enunciative dispositions: the x that is excepted from the whole that it posits as the place of their belonging will be said man; the x that exists without belonging to any all will be said to be a woman (Le Gaufey, 2015, p. 197-198).

In this sense, the inaccessibility of the symbolic Two does not imply that Zero denies One; the principle of contradiction does not apply here because it is not a matter of deciding about what is true and what is false (Lacan, 2003a). As we have seen, it is in what between symbolic and real can be articulated from the One that the “[...] founding failure of sexual jouissance” (p. 115) is based, with its incommensurable modalities of failure. The fantasy of the relationship is based on the supposed consistency of entities; the reflexivity of the symbolic, in turn, makes the true its own signifying equilibrium in the equivocation of its nullity: “0 is not the negation of truth 1, but the truth of the lack that consists of 2 lacking 1 [...] 0 is not the negation of anything [...] It plays its part in building the number” (Lacan, 2003a, p. 118). Thus, the Lacanian logical square rests on this “[...] bifid tip” (Le Gaufey, 2015, p. 127) in which the impossible guides significance and generates effects of truth.

Final considerations

Based on Lacan’s sayings regarding sexual difference, we can formulate that the phallic function denotes a ‘*There is One* function’. The “[...] isolation in the proposition, or more exactly of the lack, of the void, of the hole, of the hollow” (Lacan, 2003a, p. 40) implies that the very division of the subject, this gaping presence that turns the symbolic, defines the duality of the real of sex, between an existence that precariously conforms to the trait governing difference and an existential dispersion typical of a “[...] radically Other [...]” jouissance (Lacan, 2010, p. 173). Two sides of the same coin, homologous to the sides of the sexualization formulas; “[...] a double way of not-being: not-being-one (at least-one) and not-being Other (not-one-that-not)” (Dunker, 2017).

The other sex is thus articulated to the fact that the One is not inscribed in the Other: “[...] it is only from ‘being a woman’ that she can establish herself in what is inscribable by

not being so, that is, remaining gaping with regard to sexual intercourse” (Lacan, 2019, p. 179, authors emphasis). Lacan (2019) says that it is like every woman that the hysteric can decide herself as a subject, participating in the phallic unitarization of the representation of a signifier to another signifier. But the very meaning of the phallus, founded on the demarcation of One lack, is contradicted by the non-advent of that unity which, like Frege’s zero, is the very enveloping of the impossibility of identity. The hysterical decision for the One coexists with the fantasy of Otherness that would satisfy their desire for “[...] more-being” (Soler, 2005, p. 52). If the Lacanian man insists on his ‘idiot’s jouissance’, believing that he creates the woman, the latter opposes him as the ‘moment of truth’, disjoining jouissance and semblance (Lacan, 2010, 2019). Structurally, it is the sameness of the One revealed in its lack of content, in its attempt to be a unity despite its difference within itself. The deformity of female jouissance, “[...] between the center symbolized by the phallus and the most radical absence [...]”, is the indetermination that each significant march prolongs as the mythicity of fullness, a unique fact of the One formally unable to conclude the phantasmatic All (Bassols, 2017, p. 8).

‘Inscribable precisely because it is not inscribable’ is therefore the unarity of the body’s refusal of what can be written as sexual. Forclusively or discordantly, sexual positionings expose modes of discursive constraint from the fact that there is One: “[...] language traces in its own grammar the so-called effects of subject” (Lacan, 1997, p. 100).

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Received: Nov. 5, 2020
Approved: Feb. 20, 2021