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SEX AND DEATH

–you have to make an effort not to believe that one is immortal
J. Lacan, Opening of the clinical section
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Epochal themes and those related to the structure of the *parlettre* summon us from the real of our clinical practice. The exchange between psychoanalysts and with the community in general on these questions requires a delicate approach.

The subjectivity of the time, in its algorithmic and virtual dimension, a technoscience that has crossed the threshold with the incipient capacity of artificial intelligence, tends to create communities of equals as the other side of an egoic individualism, announcing the problem on the horizon of segregation. What do analysts say about it?

Today an idea of eternity seems to be fostered in which the condition of finitude is particularly prohibited and death reduced from necessary to contingent. We have just emerged from a Pandemic that confronted us with the insistent presence of the ominous and death in an awareness of daily and unbearable finiteness. What are the subjective effects on each person of having dealt in one way or another with the narcissistic loss of the illusion of immortality?

Freud in "*Of war and death*" (1915) says that "*no one believes in his own death*" and that there is an "*unmistakable tendency to put it aside, to eliminate it from life.*"

In "*The Interpretation of Dreams*", he speaks of the **navel of dreams**, "a journey that ends in darkness", in the enigmatic, tangled web, thick fabric from where "desire like the fungus of its mycelium" then rises.

And precisely in said navel of the dream, and at the impassable point where the patient's associations stop, *sex and death* inhabit.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* sexual union indicates the immortality of the germinal plasm and the mortality of the soma. *Sex and death* then alludes to death in reproduction.

In this sense, talking about sex is not the same as referring to gender. A living being is born, reproduces and dies. For both Freud and Lacan, the presence of sex in the living being, the biological dimension of the sexual union, signals the necessary death of the species, the real of the biological nature of sex informs the living being of its finitude.

How does the current development of reproduction techniques affect this equation? A difficult question given the radical novelty of science that via cloning can reproduce the species without going through sexual intercourse.

There are issues and questions as difficult to sift as they are necessary. The problem is when the reflections become political and ideological and there are terms that are trivialized in their use and in their approval.

What do you do with a child who says he prefers another sex? What is the fate of such Freudian infantile sexual fantasies in our current universe of urgency and action? Sexual orientation, individualism, rights of the subject? Does the free determination of sex tap into the individualism of our days? Is it sexual differences or different positions regarding the phallic function? Will the name of the father and the phallic function continue to be valid? How do analysts think about the issue of abuse as a signifier that inhabits daily consultation? Is there a certain hegemonic discourse that favors the victim position? What would be the incidences for the *parlêtre* of a compulsive deconstruction? Do identity movements harbor the seeds of segregation? I would add a question regarding the idea that I proposed at the beginning: not talking about sex, is it inscribed in a subjectivity that eludes the knowledge of death?

For any possible dialogue regarding these issues, beyond an algorithmic echolalia in which we repeat ourselves and prefer to speak with equals and read to those who think the same as us, it would be convenient to adjust certain concepts.

With a deconstructivist, linguistic, and cultural approach, Judith Butler seeks to detach gender from the physical and biological. With the signifier gender and the so-called gender identities, he questions the notion of sex as a pre-discursive existence - taking J. Austin's notion of

performativity - he argues that gender is performative, that is, that it does not depend on the biological, registering in the tradition Nietzschean according to which there is no *being* behind *doing*. He proposes to disarm the binary stability of sex that would establish a forced heterosexuality.

Resituating some concepts in psychoanalysis would not be without consequences in the direction of the cure nor the extended analysis.

SEX, SEXUALITY, AND SEXUATION

Sex refers to the biological and anatomical body, to the secondary sexual characteristics, to the genotype and phenotype, and to the sexual division, which ensures the maintenance of the species.

Sexuality moves away from the biological. It does not coincide with sex or genitality. It indicates knotting of that real with the imaginary and the symbolic. Perverse and polymorphous sexuality of the partial drives, variants of the object and each person's modes of jouissance.

Sexuation, in Lacan, we know that the bipartition between who is said to be a man or who is said to be a woman is not anatomical, nor natural, nor divine, but an effect of discourse that articulates the *parlêtre's* sexual position with jouissance and with a subjective assumption of sex, and depends on the phallic signifier and the relationship with that signifier.

Beyond anatomy, anyone can be on one side or the other. Saying one is a man or a woman does not refer to a genome or an identity, but to the relationship with the Other. Beyond the biological and any commitment to perception. The famous formulas of sexuation indicate which side each person stands on in relation to the phallus, how they enjoy and not who they are.

IDENTITY

Valuing the dignity of the fight for women's rights and the rights obtained thanks to their political battle for trans, transvestites, and homosexuals, in which the *gender perspective* makes it possible to denature different forms of violence against women, it is important to remember that it entails the question of identity.

Identity refers to a supposed unity of the self. In L'Insu we read that identity is the *crystallization* of identifications.

The principle of identity alludes to the formula $a=a$, a problematic issue since the subject, in his neurotic disagreement, is never equal to himself, and identity can try to veil this mismatch behind a strong self.

On certain occasions, surgical interventions to change sex or hormonal treatments could be the prolegomenon of a crisis that, in the solitude of a break, destabilizes the patient precisely in the rips of identity.

THE PALLUS IS NOT AN ORGAN

In a psychoanalysis that draws on Lacan's teachings, the phallus is not an organ, nor is the name of the father a patriarchal masculine who necessarily abuses his power, but instead is about conceptual formalizations; a signifier articulated to the phallic function. The phallus is not the masculine organ, but the signifier of a lack. In mathematics, we have learned that every set includes the empty set, which means that there is no universal set.

Very early on, Lacan rescued the notion of the phallus from post-Freudian use, in its purely imaginary aspect, and elevated it to the category of signifier, articulating it to the phallic function. It is around the phallic function that the fields of jouissance and sexuality will be ordered.

But although the statute of the subject lies in the division and opacity that identity seeks to veil, in times like the present, with so much impetus for deconstruction, working with serious or difficult patients - possibly psychotic - requires being warned that anyone needs that imaginary and unifying dimension: an identity. And that its absence, hand in hand with an unraveling of the imaginary, can leave the patient immersed in a psychotic outbreak hell. The real of the clinic requires from us, the analysts, a delicate reading that does not get caught up in ideological or epochal bastions. For example, what effects can a surgical intervention or a hormonal treatment produce in each structure, as long as they affect this identity dimension?

Keeping the subjectivity of the time on the horizon and interrogating it to know the spiral into which this time drags us is also an ethical dimension in our practice.