

ON THE COLLAPSE OF OBJECTALITY IN CAPITALIST DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT: The article retraces Freud's path from the exclusion of *das Ding* to the emergence of the dimension of objectality through the constitution of reality structured as fantasy. In Lacan's *Seminary of Anguish*, it is highlighted the concept of object taken as cause of desire, resulting from his discussion of the downfall of the objects that establish the borders through which the libido will move in search of the lost object. At the end, the collapse of objectality caused by the capitalist discourse is examined. In particular, the deception of this discourse is underlined, as it makes it seem as if the lost object is accessible in the form of gadgets that each time renew the promise of more enjoyment.

Keywords: *das Ding*; objectality; discourse of the capitalist; surplus enjoyment.

Resumo: Sobre o colapso da objetividade no discurso do capitalista.

O artigo refaz o percurso de Freud desde a exclusão de *das Ding* até o surgimento da dimensão da objetividade por meio da constituição da realidade estruturada como fantasia. Com Lacan, coloca-se em evidência o objeto *a* como causa do desejo no *Seminário da Angústia*, no qual se discute a caducidade dos objetos que estabelecem bordas pelas quais a libido irá se deslocar em busca do objeto perdido. Enfim, aborda-se o colapso da objetividade na vigência do discurso do capitalista. Em particular, é sublinhado o engodo desse discurso que faz supor acessível o objeto perdido na forma dos *gadgets* que a cada vez renovam a promessa de mais gozar.

Palavras-chave: *das Ding*; objetividade; discurso do capitalista; mais-gozar.

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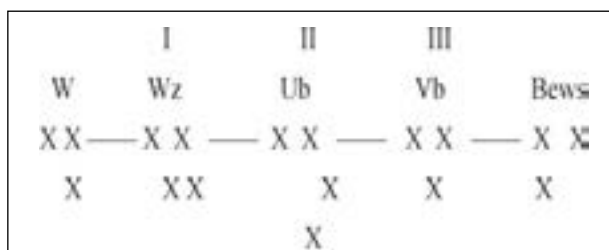
FROM THING TO OBJECT

The discussion about the origins of the subject/object antithesis is actually a discussion about the advent of subjects, i.e., the humanization of the man's cub. Subjects aren't a given. They appear as the effect of a double operation simultaneously establishing inside and outside, *Ich* and non-*Ich*, symbolic and real. The 1925 essay *Negation* offers grounds to consider this origin myth.

After some technical considerations, in this essay Freud advances towards the investigation of the intellectual function of judgement through a distinction between its two modalities: the judgement of attribution and the judgement of existence. The former consists of affirming or denying that something has a certain attribute, while the latter consists of affirming or denying that a certain representation exists in reality. What's new is that Freud proposes that the judgement of attribution predates the judgement of existence. He conceives that, initially, the judgement of attribution focused on discerning, in things (in what's perceived), what carries the "good" attribute and must be internalized, and what carries the "bad" attribute and must be expelled from *Ich*. In terms of the cannibalistic impulses of the primitive oral stage, this original judgement of attribution is translated in a double operation of incorporation and expulsion, founding the distinction between internal and external. What's internalized is identical to *Ich*, and what's expelled is foreign to it.

Expressed in the language of the oldest instinctual impulses — oral —, judgement is: "I'd like to eat this" or "I'd like to spit it out", or, more generally, "I'd like to put this inside me and keep that out". This is like saying: "It will be inside me" or "It will be outside me". (FREUD, 2006/1925, p. 266-267).¹

Integrating something in the *Ich* means making an inscription [*Niederschrift*] based on a perception. The perceptive apparatus can't create a memory trace by itself, because the perception and memory functions are incompatible. While the perceptive function is completely permeable, allowing an influx of perceptions to pass without suffering permanent alteration, and returning to the original state of availability to receive new impressions, the memory function is permanently altered, what's perceived leaves a mark in it. This implies that perception and memory can't live in the same psychism layer. In Freud's *Letter 52*, he presents to Fliess a stratified psychic apparatus model, where memory traces would be successively transcribed in the path from perception to consciousness. His scheme is reproduced below (FREUD, 2006/1896, p. 282):



W is short for *Wahrnehmungen* [perceptions]. This level corresponds to what is captured by sense organs. It's not a psychic layer yet, because in *W* no traces of what is perceived is retain; there is only a succession of raw perceptions that, at first, leave no trace. The first inscription [*Niederschrift*] appears in *Wz*, *Wahrnehmungszeichen* [perception signs]. From this point on, the psychic apparatus can represent what has been perceived, but these representations aren't yet organized in a chain, but as simultaneous associations. A transcription into the second layer, *Unbewusstsein* [unconsciousness] would be necessary for us to speak — with Lacan — in an unconscious structured as language. Consciousness itself [*Bewusstsein*], corresponding to the *I* recognizing itself as such, would only be produced secondarily, insofar as, after transcribing memory traces into the third psychic layer (*Vorbewusstsein* [pre-consciousness]), thought is articulated through verbal representations.

What is at play in the incorporation conducted by the original judgement of attribution is this insertion in perception signs, *Wz*. From this first psychic layer, the distinction between subjective and objective appears, since the organism acquires the extraordinary capacity to represent objects, no longer submitted to the mere flux of current perception. In *Negation*, we read: "The antithesis between subjective and objective doesn't exist since the beginning. It only appears from the fact that thinking has the capacity to bring forth in the mind, once again, something previously perceived, reproducing it as representation without the need of external object's presence" (FREUD, 2006/1925, p. 267). What is inscribed, this signifier mark incorporated by *Ich*, in Freudian terms, is the memory trace of the satisfaction object. We must then reclaim the narrative of the mythical satisfaction experience to understand the other side of the double inclusion-and-exclusion operation allowing

¹ Unless otherwise specified, all quotes were translated into English from the Portuguese translation for this paper.

the advent of subjects, because, if the initial pleasure-self is established by assimilating object representation, its contours can only be established through what's ejected from it.

Two principles guide Freud's elaborations about the mental apparatus: 1) in everything concerning psychic processes, activity is distinguished from rest by the presence of an amount of excitement that, although it isn't measurable, has quantitative aspects, with the capacity for increase, decrease, displacement and discharge; 2) the primary function of the psychic apparatus is getting read of excitement, considering that the general increase in amounts provokes displeasure experiences, while its decrease coincides with feelings of pleasure. The concept of drive, both obscure and indispensable, was the theoretical construct formulated by Freud to account for the nature of these excitements.

The drive is situated in "the boundary between mental and somatic, as the psychic representation of stimuli originating from within the organism that reach the mind, as a measure of the demands made on the mind towards working in consequence of its relationship to the body" (FREUD, 2006/1915, p. 127). Drive vouches for the life's great urgencies [*Not des Lebens*], prototyped by hunger. It exerts constant pressure on the psychic apparatus, a demand for work forcing it to conduct specific actions in the world in order to provide an adequate object for the drive to achieve its goal, satisfaction, i.e., the discharge of excitement in its bodily source.

What happens is that human babies, premature and helpless, aren't in a position to conduct any specific actions. At first, they're solely invaded by excitement, and its related feelings of displeasure, and tries to get rid of it through random motion actions, among them screaming. Thus, Freud shows that a baby's crying is, at first, a mere discharge, ineffectual before drive demands. But crying ends up taking on a secondary communication function, as there's someone close by [*Nebenmensch*] that accepts it and interprets it. A human-beside-them that feels implicated in the *infans'* scream and conducts in their name the specific necessary action to appease the state of urgency produced by the drive. By interpreting the baby's cry as a plea, the *Nebenmensch* gives the first step towards including the human cub in the symbolic order, and, in this encounter with the primordial Other, the mythical experience of satisfaction occurs.

Nebenmensch is, for the baby, a *helping person*, but also, simultaneously, the first object of satisfaction and the first hostile object. As an effect of the mythical experience of satisfaction, part of this perceptive complex will be internalized and something will be expelled from the *Ich* through the judgement of attribution. In his *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, Freud evidences the division of the *Nebenmensch* complex in an understandable part, which he calls the attributes of things, and an unassimilable part, corresponding to the Thing itself [*das Ding*]. Freud states: "Thus the complex of a fellow-creature falls into two portions. One of these gives the impression of being a constant structure and remains as a coherent 'thing'; while the other can be understood by the activity of memory [...]" (FREUD, 2006/1895, p. 384). And further in the same manuscript: "[the perception complexes] are dismembered in an unassimilable component (the thing) and a known ego component through its own experience (attributes, activity), which we call understanding [...]" (FREUD, 2006/18, p. 421). The Thing [*das Ding*] is what remains on the outside, irremediably lost through the inscription of the satisfaction object's memory trace. It corresponds to what is strange and hostile, to what is expelled from the *Ich* through a judgement of attribution.

From *Negation*, Lacan will extract the terms *Bejahung* and *Austossung*, elevating them to the condition of concepts. *Bejahung* corresponds to the *primordial statement* through which the Other's place is inaugurated through the incorporation of the first signifier battery, which Freud, lacking the resources of linguistics, conceived as representations [*Vorstellungen*]. *Austossung*, meanwhile, is the *Bejahung's* counterpart, the *expulsion* establishing what's real as impossible. In *La forclusion* [*The foreclosure*], Solal Rabinovitch demonstrates that the *Bejahung/Austossung* double operation isn't yet referring to the establishment of clinical structures, but to the separation between the Other – signifier treasure – and the Thing – forever lost *jouissance*. This original split, which Freud ascribed to the judgement of attribution, establishes the signifier for all subjects, turning the Other into a clean *jouissance* terrain.

The Freudian line dividing outside and inside, defining the judgement of attribution, becomes with Lacan, an intersection between real and symbolic. Since the *Project*, Freud installed a division of reality between first outside (*das Ding*) and inside, where the "qualities" (*Qualitätszeichen*) of the lost object could be found or reproduced; then, he opposed and associated *Bejahung* (in Lacanian terms: incorporating the first body of significants, installing the place of the Other) and *Austossung*, its negative face (constituting the outside as a real exterior, impossible, since it is lost forever, never to be found) [...]. (RABINOVITCH, 2001, p. 25).

Desire appears as a residue of the mythical experience of satisfaction insofar as *das Ding* remains undeniably lost. The experience of satisfaction leaves behind a tracking [*Bahnung*] which articulates the object's memory

trace and the moving image of the reflexive movement creating the discharge. In clearer terms, a link is created between the representation of the mother's breast and the suction movement, a privileged path of discharge, activated whenever excitement increases. When the baby sees himself again in a state of urgency, they invest all their energy in the representation of the object, and, since they have no resources to discern between memory and perception, this investment originates a hallucination, leading to the reflexive suction movement and disappointment. That's the primary process, ineffective concerning self-preservation.

In the primary process, the object of desire presents itself in a hallucination because the investment in its memory trace isn't inhibited. In an author's note to the *Formulations on the two principles of mental functioning*, Freud demonstrates that the pleasure principle in the baby's psychic apparatus is only possible due to the mother's care. The child hallucinates the breast, activates their suction reflexes and faces frustration. But the increase in excitement creates a discharge – the scream – and, if this reaction is promptly interpreted by the mother, offering the baby her breast, they can obtain the satisfaction that had been hallucinated. From this we conclude that, while there is no temporal scansion between hallucination and satisfaction, i.e., while there is no occasion to experience displeasure, there will be no reason for the *infans* to devote themselves to the laborious procedure of reality testing. It's worth noting, however, that the impossibility of full satisfaction is a structural fact: "It's as if our children had remained forever unfulfilled, as if they had never sucked their mother's breast for enough time" (FREUD, 2006/1931, p. 242). The child progressively realizes a discrepancy between their driving demands, causing constant pressure, and the mother's breast, which appears and disappears, forcing them, finally, to distinguish between the breast and their own body, that until then formed a whole unit.

Although drive is characterized as an unconnected energy that pressures towards discharge, it can only achieve its end through specific actions. Due to these demands, the apparatus is then forced to give in to their primary tendency, tolerating the accumulation of excitements in order to enable itself to realize complex actions intending to intervene in the world. Freud will attribute the development of all superior psychic functions to the energy reserve from delayed *jouissance*. Refraining from investing great driving energy charges in the desire object's memory trace, the subject inhibits the primary process. What was a disconnected energy flux in search of the shortest path to discharge through motion, due to accumulation, becomes connected energy, combining high investment with low dislocation through the chain of representation. Subjects then stay in a position to conduct reality testing to verify if all that is represented can be recovered in perception. This secondary, inhibited, process, configuring all thought activity, corresponds to the second judgement modality described by Freud in *Negation*: the judgement of existence.

In his *Project*, Freud demonstrates with great detail that the only goal of every thought is reestablishing the experience of satisfaction. Insofar as there's no identity between the object of desire's memory trace and perception, judgmental activity engages in the search for a link between both representations, conducting a kind of experimental groping through the chain. Judgement suspends motor action until the subject can "be convinced", Freud states (2006/1925, p. 267), that the object is actually present. Faced with the indication of reality, judgement chooses the motor action that will interrupt thought activity to give way to discharge.

Thus, the end and goal of all thought processes is establishing a state of identity, transmitting a cathexis, emanating from the outside, to a cathected neuron through the ego. [...] When, once the thought action is concluded, the indignation of reality arrives to perception, we obtain a *judgment of reality*, a *belief*, achieving thusly the goal of this entire activity. (FREUD, 2006/1895, p. 385).

That the *judgement of reality* is equivalent to a *belief*, and that the goal of the *judgement of existence* is to *convince* the subject of an object's presence are good indications around the constitution of the reality principle. After all, if the judgement of existence is secondary to the judgement of attribution, this means subjects can only find in reality what was previously incorporated by the *Ich*. Freud is quite clear on this point: reality testing must find in perception a trace of the object carried by the *Ich* as representation. Reality is constituted, therefore, through signifier markings leading to the advent of subjects. What was expelled in the double *Bejahung/Ausstossung* operation – *das Ding* for Freud or the real for Lacan – can't in any way be part of reality, insofar as it remains unrepresentable. Rabinovitch recognizes there the *loss of reality*, which Freud shows also occurs in neurosis, not just psychosis. Subjects have no commitment to the outside world:

Thus, the judgment of existence constitutes the reality situated outside – only what's found there will be reality for the subject –, but in so far as it's already represented inside, due to the first judgement, that of attribution. This definition of reality clarifies the issue, approached in "The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis", of the *Ich's* detachment to the outside world. If reality is made of what the *Ich* can find in it identical to what's already represented inside of themselves, i.e., if reality is an imaginary world ordered by

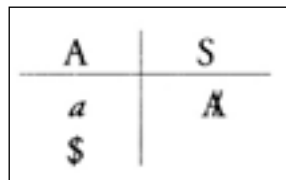
a subject's signifier splits, [...] reality, purely represented, imaginary-symbolic connection, differs entirely from the real, that's essentially unrepresentable. (RABINOVITCH, 2001, p. 25).

In neurosis, the relationship between subject and object happens in this *world ordered by signifier splits* to which Freud refers in the aforementioned essay as the *fantasy world*. Libido moves through the representation chain attempting to establish identity with the object of the mythical satisfaction experience, that, meanwhile, continues to be irremediably lost, causing desire to only find partial satisfaction. “[...] it's evident that a precondition for reality testing consists in objects, which have previously brought real satisfaction, having been lost” (FREUD, 2006/1925, p. 268). The partiality of satisfaction works as an engine for desire, urging the subject to continue its infinite hunt for a pleasure that's only announced as asymptote. In the first contribution to the psychology of love, Freud attributes an endless series of unsatisfactory objects to the unconscious presence of an irreplaceable, but forbidden, object: “[...] the notion of something irreplaceable, when activated unconsciously, often appears as divided in an endless series: endless because every substitute, notwithstanding, can't fulfill the desired satisfaction” (FREUD, 2006/1910, p. 175). In this essay he proposes that the object of drive is always a mere surrogate of the original object, but the experience of the original object dates back to a mythical time and its existence can only be discerned by the faulty encounter with each substitute. That's exactly why the object of drive is presented in the metapsychological article as being what it carries of most variable. Drive and object aren't originally attached, between them there's just a weld.

Both the scheme of psychical apparatus in *Letter 52* and the discussion about the two modalities of judgement in *Negation* put into evidence that the constitution of objectality occurs in two logical times: in a first moment, the inscription of perception signs isolates the Thing as unrepresentable, but this split isn't enough to constitute the fantasy where the subject will develop their relationship to the object, because the representation of the object of satisfaction keeps libido captured in the hallucinatory *jouissance* of the primary process. After *Austossung*, the primordial expulsion, castration will be necessary so that signs of perception are transcribed into the second layer of psychism, *Unbewusstsein*, allowing the judgement of existence which constitutes reality.

The object causing desire

In the context of his *Seminar* Book X, Lacan presents the Other as a treasure of significant, prior to the advent of subjects, such as Saussure defines language. From the start, the subject doesn't exist, can't be isolated, and, although Lacan refers to it as a subject of *jouissance*, this name can only be conferred in a mythical level: “The treasure of significant where they must situate themselves already expects subjects, that, in this mythical level, don't exist. They will only exist through the signifier that's previous to them and constitutive of them” (LACAN, 2004/1962-1963, p. 179). The operation of subjectivation occurs insofar as this still inexistent subject directs themselves to the field of the Other, where all significant belong. It's from the Other that the subject receives their first message: to the question “Who am I?”, unformulated by the subject, the Other replies “You are”, inverting the question without adding any content to it. The subject will come then, determined by the signifier, herein defined as what represents the subject for another signifier.



The division scheme represents the operation through which the subject constitutes themselves when they enter the Other's field. In the first line we see A, the great original Other, and S, the hypothetical, not yet constituted, subject. The quotient of A / S division is \$, barred subject, who comes instead of the Other as a signifier marking, the only thing we have access to in analytical experiences. However, this division leaves a remainder, an indivisible, irreducible residue, represented in the scheme by the letter *a*. Lacan highlights, in this moment, that the remainder is the only proof of the Other's alterity. Both the subject marked by the signifier bar and the object *a* situate themselves left of the chart – the objective side –, while the subject side features the /A, the great barred Other, the unconscious.

The division scheme evidences the statute of the object *a*. It's what the subject carries that's real and irreducible, i.e., what, in the subject, resists signifier assimilation. In this sense, the object *a* names a loss, something the subject must give up to appear in the Other's field. Lacan states: “Well, he's precisely what resists to any other assimilation to the function of signifier, and that's why it symbolizes what, in the signifier sphere, is always presented as lost, as what's lost to signification” (LACAN, 2004/1962-1963, p. 193). The signifier's

introduction in the real causes a loss. Nothing lacks in the real, which doesn't absolutely mean it's whole. But it's only through the mediation of the symbolic that lack becomes apprehensible, and the object *a* was the concept forged by Lacan to represent what is left out.

The issue then is knowing how the signifier enters the real, leading to the emergence of the subject. What allows the signifier's embodiment is the body, and, from the moment the subject speaks, he is, through the world, implied in his body. But this body isn't matter extended, as conceived by Descartes. In the field of analytical discussion, the concept of the body is directly articulated to a split operation, through which the object *a* is extracted: "the safest way to approach this something lost is to conceive it as a body part" (LACAN, 2004/1962-1963, p. 149). To illustrate this idea, Lacan resorts to Shakespeare's comedy *The merchant of Venice*, where Christian merchant Antonio accepts to vouch for a loan taken by a friend from Shylock, a Jewish moneylender. The contract signed by the characters determines that, if the loan wasn't paid in full, Shylock would be authorized to take a pound of flesh from Antonio to settle the debt. Thus, Shakespeare shows that our debt must be paid with our body. In other words, a man's engagement in signifier dialectics sacrifices a body part, separated from him, and this pound of flesh is object *a*.

Object *a* is what we no longer have, *on n'a plus*. It's presented in five different ways, corresponding to the five bodily experiences of loss, listed by Lacan in his *Anxiety* seminar: oral, anal and phallic objects, as well as the eyes and voice. All of them are characterized as objects given by the subject, constituting, in the body, the irreducible libido reserve. The split on objects *a* institutes the erogenous zones, areas where libido will roam. It's interesting to note that the concept of object *a* as a pound of flesh shifts the identification, exposed by Freud, between the lost object and the other: "The characteristic initial separation, which allows us to approach and conceive the relationships, isn't a separation from the mother" (LACAN, 2004/1962-1963, p.135). The split, according to Lacan, separates the child from the breast, that can't be confused for the mother, since the breast, during breastfeeding, is part of the child's body. The decisive issue, then, wouldn't be the frustration due to the mother's absence, but the giving of the breast, to which the baby is attached as a part of themselves, and that, ultimately, is up to them to hold on or let go.

The relationship between the baby and the breast is established from the suction movement, and Lacan calls attention to the fact that the lip is a border, a product of splitting. Indeed, the giving of object *a* leaves behind a hole in the body, and the hole's border as a structuring function in constituting the erogenous zone, the bodily source of drive. Since it's the first, chronologically, the oral drive ends up serving as a model to understand all other partial drives, and also for the castration complex, although we must recall that Freud doesn't recognize the efficacy of castration until the loss can be associated to the phallus. In the function of object *a*, the phallus is represented by Lacan as $(-\phi)$, notation indicating its dimension as a lapsed object. Early on in his elaboration, Freud associated anxiety to coitus interrupted, and Lacan starts at this indication to assert that anxiety is provoked by the disjunction between orgasmic jouissance and the organ's use, that doesn't occur only when coitus is interrupted, but in any sexual act, since copulation costs detumescence. "The fact that the phallus is more significant in human experience due to its possibility as a fallen object than to its presence, is what points towards the possibility of the place of castration in the history of desire" (LACAN, 2004/1962-1963, p. 187). Deprivation is real, but, in order for it to have consequences in the subject's experience, it must be symbolized, and that's the function of object *a*.

Object *a* distinguishes itself from all objects in the symbolic world that are exchange objects, considering it's what institutes the general field of objectivity. In a previous moment, Lacan had attributed to the mirror stage the origins of both subject and object. This stage corresponds to the imaginary operation through which subjects identify themselves with the unified image of their own body, structured through the image of their peer, so that their identity is always alienated in the image of a small other. Individuation would only be possible, then, through the appearance of a dispute object, that might introduce the idea of ownership: I distinguish myself from the other insofar as any given object is mine or theirs. In the *Anxiety* seminar, however, Lacan rectifies his position, stating the existence of two types of objects. On one hand, there are shared objects, exchangeable objects performing the function of mediation in the relationship between subjects and their peers. On the other, are objects *a*, extracted at the time of the subject's entrance in the Other's field, logically prior to the mirror stage: "Indeed, they're previous objects to the constitution of the common, communicable, socialized object status. That's what *a* is about *a*" (LACAN, 2004/1962-1963, p. 103).

The exteriority where object *a* is situated is a radical exteriority, prior even to the constitution of a boundary between inside and outside, which happens at the mirror stage. Thus, Lacan recognizes the Other's anteriority regarding the imaginary operation, and the causality dimension engineered by the object's extraction. Physics and philosophy tried in vain to eliminate from their discourses the notion of causality, that remained irreducible and irrefutable. It's impossible to eliminate it, because the cause is founded on the loss of the object due to

subjectivization. The remains, having been elided, originates the desiring subject, who will be thrown in an unending search for their separated part, and the fantasy builds the scene where such a search occurs. The fantasy matheme proposed by Lacan, $\$a$ (barred subject a punction), articulates the possible relationship between subject and object. Both terms belong to the field of the Other – as we’ve seen in the division scheme – and the logic operator designates a relationship that is both conjunction (\wedge)– subject and object –and disjunction (\vee)– subject or object.

We have here, in ($\$a$), the desire’s correspondent and foundation, the point where it fixes itself on the object, which, far from natural, is always constituted by a certain position of the subject in relation to the Other. It’s with the help of this fantastic relationship that man finds and locates his desire. Hence the importance of fantasies. (LACAN, 1999/1957-1958, p. 445).

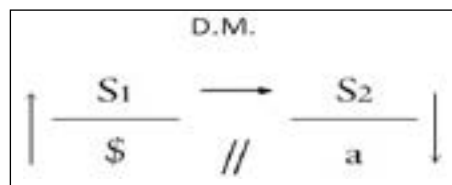
The notion of causality indicates that the object is behind and not in front of the desire, but it wears imaginary envelopes to which the subject directs himself in an attempt to recover lost *jouissance*. It’s in this sense that the small a , beyond a lost object correlated with mortification through the signifier, also reveals itself as a *jouissance* condenser, in the form of the more-than-*jouissance*. The fantasy matheme represents the point when meaning articulates with *jouissance*, when the subject barred by the signifier connects with the object, which is reintroduced into the circuit, providing the retrieval of *jouissance* through repetition. Fantasy structures the reality where desire moves. In the sexualization table, the arrow from $\$$ crossing a vertical line towards the small a indicates that the subject’s partner, to whom they’re directed, is the object causing desire. The subject only accesses the Other through the object a : “between two, there’s always One and a ” (LACAN, 1985 [1972-1973], p. 67). *Jouissance* conditioned by fantasy and submitted to the principle of reality is what, in the *XX seminar*, Lacan will call phallic *jouissance*.

[...] this $\$$ is only related, as a partner, with the object a inscribed on the other side of the bar. They can only access their sexual partner, the Other, through this, they being the cause for their desire. Thus, as pointed out elsewhere in my charts the conjunction from this $\$$ and this a , it’s nothing other than fantasy. This fantasy, where the subject is captured, is, thus, the basis for what is expressively called, in Freudian theory, the reality principle. (LACAN, 1985 [1972-1973], p. 108).

The Capitalist discourse

The seminar *The other side of Psychoanalysis* is a great effort undertaken by Lacan to circumscribe the configurations of the social connection through discourse theory. Discourse is a wordless structure regulating all that can appear, contingently, as enunciation. It protects speaking from the signifier metonymic manic slip, allowing stable relationship modalities to be established between the subject and the Other. The discourse articulates language and *jouissance*, is a *jouissance* apparatus since it responds to the impossibility of the sexual relationship, engineering *jouissance* retrieval practices, feeding into the social bond.

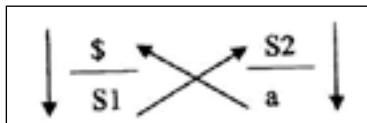
The four radical speech mathemes represent four possible configurations of the social bond. They’re written based on four fixed positions, where the four elements composing discourse circulate. The first position is the agent function, controlling the discourse, and the second position belongs to the Other, whom the agent is addressing, and where work is conducted. Between the agent and the Other there’s the impossibility barrier, so that each discourse consists of a specific modality of relationship failure. In the third position is inscribed what is created or lost in a discourse, and in the fourth position, the element corresponding to the truth of the discursive structure at hand. Between the third and fourth positions is the impotence barrier, preventing what was lost to be re-assimilated into discourse. The elements coruscating in these four positions are S1, master-signifier, S2, chain-organized knowledge, the little a object, cause of desire and more-than-*jouissance*, and the subject divided by the signifier.



The Master Discourse is the unconscious discourse. In this matheme, we observe a similar writing to what Lacan created in the division scheme, describing the operation through which the barred subject comes in the Other’s place as a signifier mark. Here, the master-signifier occupies the space of the agent, addressing the

Other structured as language, as knowledge chain. The mark left by S1 in S2 engineers the fall of the object, represented by the small a in the loss position, and from this extraction the subject appears in the space of truth. The impossibility barrier separating S1 from S2 promotes a scansion whose consequence is that the signifier can never fully represent the subject to another signifier. And the impossibility barrier, by establishing a disjunction between object a and the barred subject, allows the constitution of fantasy, which, as we've seen, corresponds to reality itself. It is, therefore, the driving renouncement, dropping the lapsed object, that conducts to the arrival of the unconscious subject, desire subject, that might then search for some kind of *jouissance* retrieval, engaging in experimental groping through the symbolic chain created by fantasy.

It's in the 1972 Milan Conference that Lacan will introduce not exactly a fifth discourse, but a variation on the Master Discourse, conceived as a modern master discourse and named Capitalist Discourse. To obtain it, we must invert, from the master discourse, the master-signifier and barred subject positions. In addition to that, Lacan changes the disposition of arrows indicating discursive flux, to show that the Capitalist Discourse is a circular discourse, where there's no loss, nor entropy. The following figure allows us to visualize it:



The first aspect that draws our attention is the fact that, in the Capitalist Discourse, there's no relationship between the agent and the Other, which puts in check the discursive status itself. The relationship here is between S1 and S2, whose scansion, present in all four radical discourses, is suspended. Hence the hypothesis of incompatibility between the Capitalist Discourse and the unconscious discourse. Besides, it's worth noting the arrow conducting the small object a to the barred subject, suggesting a conjunction between both terms. If the fantasy is precisely characterized by the dual conjunction and disjunction relationship between subject and object, as we've seen previously, then there's the issue of discussing the constitution of fantasy and reality in the scope of Capitalist Discourse.

The capitalist is represented in the matheme by the master-signified, hiding in the place of truth. It raises the barred subject, representing the consumer, to the position of discourse agent, giving him the illusion of being in charge of the consumption operation. There's the capitalist's guile: by offering to the worker the product of their work in the form of merchandise, he makes the worker implicate themselves in the discourse with their own *jouissance*, making them stop resisting capitalism, and turning them the engine of the circular discourse. The capitalism acts in communion with the scientific discourse, transformed into techno-science and inscribed as S2 in the place of work, and the fruit of this union are gadgets, the small objects produced by science and offered in the market for consumption. The object loses its dimension of lost object, cause for desire, and offers itself up on shelves as pleasure promises, announcing the possibility of castration foreclosure.

Obviously, it's a ruse. A relationship between subject and object that isn't blocked by the impotence barrier nor by the impossibility barrier, the finally accessible object which would provide full satisfaction not the subject, only exists in capitalist propaganda. In actuality, gadgets are ephemeral and captures consumers in compulsive relationships. Since no merchandise has the expected effect of suspending its bar, the subject ends up throwing themselves voraciously in a manic metonymic displacement, where it's always the next release that will finally be able to suture their lack. The more we drink, the more we thirst, an exhaustive misunderstanding finding its basis in the statute of the more-than-*jouissance* object itself. In French, the expression *plus-de-jouir* plays with the ambiguity of *plus*, that can be simultaneously read as "more" or "no more". In this sense, the object a , when it stops performing the function of desire-causing object to present itself as a *jouissance* condenser in the form of more-than-*jouissance*, engineers, at the same time, an excessive pleasure and a lack of pleasure. Actually, what Lacan demonstrates writing the Capitalist Discourse is that consumer objects promise enjoyment and deliver lack. And the worker, distracted from their exploitation by the merchandise's *jouissance* possibility, puts on themselves the demand to work more to have more pleasure, while all they get from their trouble is their quota in the no-more-pleasure distribution.

The castration foreclosure is not, therefore, attainable through the Capitalist Discourse. The modern master discourse has no effect as a psychotic disarticulation from reality structured through fantasy. However, when displacing the relationship between the subject and the Other to engage it in a compulsive relationship with gadgets produced by techno-science, this non-discourse compromises the possibility for a social bond and the objectality dimension, whose erasure prevents the emergence of desired subjects. Desire, much like the bond, presupposes a lack, a driving renouncement. An object that is offered as merchandise, supposedly available, lowers desire to the dimension of need, insofar as there's always a corresponding object. That's why we talk about an objectality collapse where the Capitalist Discourse is in vigor. In *Lacan, passeur de Marx*, Pierre Bruno

reminds us that love substitutes the inexistent sexual intercourse. When capitalism promises to foreclose castration, when it announces the possibility of existent sexual intercourse, love lapses as a result.

Final thoughts

Based on *Project for a Scientific Psychology, Letter 52* and *Negation*, we tried to retrace the Freudian path from the exclusion of *das Ding*, the primordial *Austossung*, to the appearance of the objectivity dimension through the constitution of reality structured as fantasy. With Lacan, we saw the formulation of the object *a* concept as causing desire in the *Anxiety* seminar, where there's a discussion of the lapse in objects establishing erogenous zones as borders around a hole, through which libido will move in search of a lost object. Finally, we discussed the collapse of objectivity incurring from the current Capitalist Discourse.

This collapse isn't free of consequence. In contemporary times, we're faced, in clinic, with bodily events that, differently from Freudian symptoms, don't seem to reveal a phallic meaning. They're symptoms making no demands, where the drive satisfaction dimension overlaps with the encrypted message dimension, making it harder to enter into analysis and establish transference through knowledge supposition. It's an effect of the Capitalist Discourse, which, allied to techno-science, led the object to the zenith of culture. Let's end with the demand of returning to this discussion in further work, where we might discuss these clinical effects.

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