

THE PRESENCE OF CAPITALISM IN LACAN'S THEORY OF DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT: Examination of the reference to capitalism in the theory of discourses is preceded by demarcation, from the field of linguistics, from the difference between the notion of discourse and the more abstract notion of language. It is clear that, by resorting to the discourses, Lacan avoids objectifying the linguistic drift, implicating the ethical and political dimensions. With regard to the establishment of such theoretical devices by Lacan, we focus on the reference to capitalism there included. We try to situate such reference in forwarding the theory of discourse, as well as questioning the meaning of the formulation arising therefrom, albeit occasionally, of a discourse of the capitalist.

Keywords: Lacan; four discourses; capitalist discourse; jouissance.

RESUMO: A presença do capitalismo na teoria dos discursos de Lacan. O exame da referência ao capitalismo na teoria dos discursos é antecedido pela demarcação, a partir do domínio da linguística, da diferença entre a noção de discurso e aquela mais abstrata de linguagem. Esclarece-se assim que, ao recorrer aos discursos, Lacan evita derivas objetivantes da ordem linguística, implicando as dimensões ética e política. Com relação ao estabelecimento por Lacan de tais aparelhos teóricos, centramo-nos na referência ao capitalismo aí incluída. Busca-se situar tal referência no encaminhamento da teoria dos discursos, bem como interrogar o sentido da formulação daí advinda, ainda que pontualmente, de um discurso do capitalista.

Palavras-chave: Lacan; quatro discursos; discurso capitalista; gozo.

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LANGUAGE, LINGUISTICS AND DISCOURSE

The proposal to address the issue of capitalism according to how it is articulated to the Lacanian theory of discourse implies that, preliminarily, we briefly understand the notion of discourse both in its linguistic background as in the rigor of its formulation by Lacan.

We start recalling, as Ducrot reminds us, as it is only from the middle of the 19th century, with the rise of comparative grammar that something like a proper science of language begins to be designed in a systematic way (DUCROT, s/d, p. 23-4). We should remember, still following Ducrot, that Saussure placed the emergence of the modern science of language in F. Bopp, who would have been the first one to understand that “relations between related languages could become the subject of a standalone science. Making one language clear through another, explaining the form of one of them through another, that’s what had not been done yet” (SAUSSURE, 2005, p. 14).

If, as Ducrot reminds us, the study of language begins as discourse analysis rather than language linguistics (DUCROT, s/d, p. 92), the initial *episteme* of language is effectively the rhetoric, making the concrete phrase in an inter-subjective context to be the first object of a systematic study in this field. In this way, we can resume a specific classic definition of rhetoric from Aristotle, according to which it would be the art of persuading and rebutting a discourse through another (REBOUL, 2004, p. 18), or still, a more modern one that characterizes it as “any linguistic production, oral or written, that talks about a certain subject and presents sense and unity” (REBOUL, 2004, p. 246). Such definition, though too generic, already indicated, however, its concrete character, contextually localizable, reasonable in its coherence, finite, directed to others and thematically distinct in a more or less continuous act of enunciation. Thus, it is important to us to point out how much such a characterization is opposed to the unification of the empirical diverse of discourse under the abstraction of the notion of Language.

Traditionally, language is claimed to be the determinant of a prominently anthropological mark, as we see in it one of the distinctive traits of man with respect to other animals. In this sense, as Saussure was aware, despite its lack of uniformity, postulating its existence implies beforehand the assumption of some kind of essence, at least in the form of a particular *language ability* in his humanity. By doing this, the search for a structural property that allowed us to regroup this set in its entirety, some linguistic universal — in the height of abstraction — is in line with the reduction of the multiple to the single, of the particular to the universal, of the contingency to the need and of the other to the same. Each of the forms of language expression would always indicate the

same universal language ability, synonym to the anthropological difference, naturalized and timeless.

It is precisely this trend, which is up-to-date now more than ever, — present nowadays in different cognitive sciences, in many contemporary designs of the naturalization of intentionality, and which expresses a possibility opened by the objectification of a linguistic order in each of its numerous records — that Lacan tries to avoid through his reference to the discourse. In other words, the implicit promise of structural objectification, inherent to the very notion of language, ends up by suggesting the deletion of the ethical dimension and the policy originally present in that of the discourse. It is in this sense, a political sense, that Lacan will then seek in his own teaching a new form of language theory. For him, the notion of discourse, insofar as this necessarily implies a multiplicity of specific structures irreducible to each other and, above all, identifiable to the living forms of existence, moves in the opposite direction to the study of Language.

It's in this direction that the notion of discourse will allow Lacan to deepen his detachment from an idealistic and objectable reading of the unconscious — a threat that unceasingly hovered over the structuralist perspective — without losing its doctrinal requirement of formalization. Through its adoption, Lacan performs a *tournant* in his, let's put it this way, materialistic orientation, inasmuch as the discourse points to a much more pragmatic record of subjectivity than that of a prior structure regarding the whole enunciation. Such notion means, for him, the possibility of seizing different modes of subjective organization, each of them referred to a concrete activity historically traceable, to a living expression connotation and, soon, referred to something necessarily embodied. In closer terms to structural anthropology, which strongly marked the beginning of Lacan's teaching, when we moved from language to discourse, we moved from structural ideality to the reality of the communication processes and to the local systems of exchange, or, in more Wittgensteinian terms, we moved to the inconsistent field of language games and its refusal of an ideal language.

THE NOTION OF DISCOURSE IN LACAN

From what we have read above, we can say that while the generic and abstract notion of language refers to something logical and, let's say, formal, the notion of discourse refers in turn to the effective, to the political and to the economic, and, consequently, to the living. So, if the term language connotes the symbolic ordering understood as a set of signifiers, if the term was defined in structural terms by Lacan, especially with respect to the notion of the Great Other as the desert of jouissance and emptied of substance, the notion of discourse indicates

precisely its concrete reverse: a linguistic form already saturated with *jouissance* and marked by the historical predicaments of a concrete living. In other words, the notion of language takes us to that notion of language in Saussure, as its component formally isolable from all concrete practice and to which there are only differences arranged in an empty way. The notion of discourse, in turn, reintroduces the problem of substance in its interior, as well as positivity within the difference.

The discourse then emphasizes the importance of the historical context of its manifestation and its anchoring and, soon, of the irreducible contingency and particularity of all discursive formation. It is this concrete singularity, a statute characteristic of real historical phenomena, that the notion of discourse enables working out first. It is this *no-need* that the speech offers valuing, and that's what exactly allows Lacan to introduce ahead the issue of the absence of sexual intercourse. The formulas of sexuation, following the theory of discourse, would report, in this sense, more than to the forms of language, to the manners of discourse. If *self-sexing* is *self-discoursing* as subjective embodiment, so it is only in the field of discourse, in the language in *act*, that the emergence of the subject is possible as a sexed body. For Lacan, the discourse will always appoint a form of social bond.

If, from this perspective, we focus on the *Seminar The Reverse of Psychoanalysis*, we find a crucial discussion as to the way in which Lacan understood the discourses and his determination for psychoanalysis. Concerning his support in the analytic discourse, Lacan's *matheme* is defined as a "four-legged apparatus, with four positions" which is able to help "define four radical discourses" (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 18), among which his own analytic discourse which supports the *matheme*. The use of the verb *define* is not without consequence, because it implies that certain forms of subjective agency, that the Lacanian formulas of discourses stenograph, were already there before being tackled by Lacan — in the same way that the transfer and hysteria, in the case of Freud, or the commodities and surplus value, concerning Marx's theory —, that is, in the form of realities that awaited the proper apprehension by the concept in order to become possible that we operated on them.

It is not, however, from a given reality (social and historic, for example) already in action — despite the obviousness that we are born in a society that necessarily pre-exists to each one of us — that something would be abstracted as theoretical. On the contrary, Lacan aims to point out that his formulas are not abstractions of a previous reality, but theoretical apparatus fabrications that, by being introduced in the real, make possible a hitherto impossible operation. This is what Lacan suggests at the end of the *Seminar*, when he calls the attention that his "little quadrupedal schemas" are not the "turntable of history"

(LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 179), because it is not, in his formulation of the discourses, a neutral instrument with respect to a reality located in exteriority to the instrument, a design with a strong theological character in its union of realism and finalism. On the contrary, according to him, the formulas of the four discourses should be understood as “radical functions, in the mathematical sense”, that is, as examples of “something that enters into the real, which had never entered there before and which corresponds, not to discovering, experimenting, circumscribing, detaching, extracting, but rather to writing — writing two orders of relations” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 179). Similar to a scientific instrument, which is not exactly discovered by abstraction from reality and by reducing its empiric wealth, but built through the mathematics literality as an operation mode on this wealth (at the same time that it makes it intelligible), the discourse places us, then, within the strict framework of handling the literal terms, in this case, S_1 , S_2 , a and $S/$.

THE PRESENCE OF CAPITALISM IN THE SUBMISSION OF THE THEORY OF DISCOURSE

The drafting of the discourses, in accordance with the given terms, enables Lacan to reflect about certain features of modernity, in the context in which the reference to capitalism will be included. In this way, we've found that one of its main discursive settings resides in what he calls *University discourse*, where a certain way to install knowledge (S_2) in the dominant place, at the top left of the formula can be distinguished. Such eminent location of knowledge would belong to modernity itself, in that “what happens between the discourse of the antique master and the modern master, who is described as capitalist is some modification in the place of knowledge” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 29). In this regard, Lacan points out that — as he previously stated concerning the discourse designated as that of the master — “the fact that in the initial status of the Master's discourse, the slave's share is knowledge” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 29). In our modernity, at the same time epistemically scientific and politically liberal, it is precisely the slave, with his technical know-how, who takes the dominant position, addressing to what then becomes *nature* in a properly modern sense; something, for him, inert in its mechanical positivity (object a in the position of the other, at the top right of the discourse) and that is then reduced to the only possible way of existence. It is interesting to realize, such as P. Macherey makes us notice, that the *University discourse*, as the name indicates, is not the discourse of the University, but simply the *University discourse*, i.e., entirely impersonal (MACHEREY, 2009), aiming at safeguarding an alleged neutrality, without the manifestation of ethical or political components. The *University dis-*

course intends to be, in this way, an objective and objecting discourse, therefore with no subjective and reducing traits of all reality to the mechanics of natural necessity. It is in this sense that the University discourse is built in a regressive way from the discourse of the master, through the repression of its enunciative arbitrariness and through the authority of an eminently political character.

In the management of the terms by Lacan, the shift that converts the writing of a discourse regarding the issue of an antique master into the writing of a discourse that supports the emergence of the capitalist as a modern master is then highlighted. The knowledge (S2), which was at the top right in the discourse of the master, shifts to the left in the University discourse. It is for this reason that Lacan is concerned in highlighting that, in this passage of the knowledge (S2) from the original place it occupied in the discourse of the master to that of the University discourse, “is no [more] the same knowledge” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 33) that is all about. As to the truth, Lacan adds: “The fact that the all knowledge has shifted into the place of the master, is something that, far from clarifying, makes a little bit more opaque what is in question” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 30). This all-knowledge is not to be understood in the simple sense of *knowing all*, but as the reduction of all to the way of knowledge, such as the reduction of all possibility of existence to those solely determined by science. It follows, then, what is called the “new tyranny of knowledge”, because S2, in this form of the modern master, “this is what makes it impossible in the course of historical movement for truth to appear, as we might perhaps have hoped” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 30).

We believe that the above quote refers to Marx. Returning to what was said in his previous seminar, titled *From one Other to the Other*, Lacan points out that the analytic discourse would end up in, between knowledge and truth, what Marx puts into evidence concerning the issue of *jouissance*. It is what is synthesized, for example, in the categorical statement that: “The intrusion into politics can only be accomplished by recognizing that there is no discourse, and not just analytic, except about enjoyment, at least when one expects from it the work of the truth” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 74). In this sense, despite its apparent objective neutrality, also the University discourse would be marked by him. This is one of the reasons why Lacan finds an ally in Marx, because both psychoanalysis and the Marxian political economy would seize a face often forgotten of the secret of capitalist productivity: “what is called, in other records, means of production — what? Satisfaction” (LACAN, 1968-1969/2008, p. 201).

Our scientific and capitalist modernity inaugurates not only a new political economy, but also a new libidinal economy, to the extent that satisfaction becomes captured by the technical know-how. Lacan notices in Marx, however, that his denunciation of the spoliation process still deserves some adjustments

because «only he does so without noticing that its secret is in knowledge itself — just like the reduction of the worker to being nothing more than value» (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 76). Transposing the added value for its libidinal size, as surplus jouissance, Lacan insists that the spoliation process concerns, above all, the jouissance, emphasizing the importance for such articulation of what's going on with the place of knowledge, to the extent that this is here taken as a means of jouissance in a modernity marked essentially by the union of university science with the capital.

From the University discourse to capitalism there is only one step, in that it is a change in the status and function of what is necessary for the establishment of the capitalist as a modern master. The University discourse “is the one that shows what guarantees the discourse of science” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 97). From here we can see an association, throughout the seminar, of the cut of capitalism where the absolutizing of the market, inseparable from the absolutizing of modern science itself, reshapes the issue of a prior logic between the discourses. That's what we can see, for example, in the passage below:

“[...] the putting at the horizon of the new world of these pure numerical truths, of what is countable, not signify, just by itself, something quite different than the coming into play of an Absolute Knowledge? Is it not the very ideal of a formalization where nothing is considered except as the count (...) — is this not the sliding, the quarter turn — which means that at the place of the Master there is established a completely new articulation of knowledge, one that can be completely reduced formally, and that in place of the slave, there comes not something that could be inserted in any way into the order of this knowledge, but which is much more rather the product” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p.76).

This *all countable*, inseparable from the establishment of a new place of knowledge, is also what was at stake in the establishment of a capitalist logic:

“Something changed in the Master's discourse at a certain moment in history. We are not going to bore ourselves finding out if it was because of Luther, or Calvin, or some traffic or other of ships around Genoa, or in the Mediterranean Sea, or somewhere else, because the important point is that from a particular day on, surplus pleasure can be calculated, can be counted, totalized. Here, what is called ‘the accumulation of capita’ begins” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 169).

In the Seminar *From one Other to the Other*, although prior to the formalization of the University discourse, this association was already established: “Let's start from the fact that the capitalist reality doesn't have very bad relations with science. They do get along. And everything indicates that it can go on like this; at least for a little while” (LACAN, 1968-1969/2008, p. 38). Lacan examines such

association even more closely when he mentions a market of Science: “The very process by which science is unified, in which it draws its node from a consequent discourse, reduces all kinds of knowledge to a single market” (LACAN, 1968-1969/2008, p. 40).

It is because of this “homogenization of the knowledge on the market”, he will say, that it happened to be revealed what of *jouissance* is ordered from knowledge: “In this situation, therefore, what represents the discontent of civilization, as they use to say? It is a surplus *jouissance* obtained by waiving the *jouissance*, having the principle of the value of knowledge respected” (LACAN, 1968-1969/2008, p. 40). It is no coincidence that Lacan quotes *Civilization and its Discontents* because we must remember, *en passant*, that, in this text, Freud (1930 [1929]/1974) had already pointed out how much the secret of political economy lies in its capacity of managing the libidinal economy. It is in this sense that Lacan points out: “Even if it’s possible, for now, there’s no way to stop the market of knowledge. You yourselves are the ones to act and make it even more established. The unit of value, this little piece of paper which they intend to grant to you, that’s it. It is the sign of what knowledge will turn into, more and more, in this market called University” (LACAN, 1968-1969/2008, p. 42).

In this seminar, the notion of discourse was introduced in order to formalize the relationship between knowledge and *jouissance*. What would be there as structural is something that Lacan identifies in the added value such as formulated by Marx. Then, on the one hand, Lacan’s surplus *jouissance* was introduced in homology with Marx’s added value. On the other hand, if Marx’s object of research was capitalism, the latter should have some of the support that Lacan found in the relationship between knowledge and *jouissance* which resulted in the surplus *jouissance* and the very notion of discourse. Such as the last ones appear as effects of an analytical discourse, Lacan locates, in the case of Marx and the surplus value, the correlation with what he coins as a “capitalist discourse” (LACAN, 1968-1969/2008, p. 37). This is to designate the absolutizing of the market, of its equivalent regime, of the exchange, which, to encompass the work itself, established the conditions for the formalization of the added value by Marx.

To resume the *Seminar The Reverse of Psychoanalysis*, it is possible to define how Lacan locates the displacement of knowledge associated with the capitalist as the modern master, there articulated according to the terms of the University discourse. From the beginning of the seminar, he already affirmed “that the philosophical tradition had a certain responsibility for this transmutation” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 30). He is more incisive forward, when he points out, admitting to fall back into the Hegelian term, that “what philosophy designates throughout its whole evolution is the following: the theft, the abduction, the removal from the slave of his knowledge, through the operations of the Master”

and that “science as it has currently come to the light of day, properly consists in this transmutation of the function (...)” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 140). About the philosopher, Lacan will say:

“It is not for nothing that he called on the slave to answer and that he demonstrates that he knows, that he knows what he does not know. You can only show he knows when the right questions are put to him. It is along this path that the displacement came, which means that today our scientific discourse is on the side of the master, that it represents him as such. It is precisely this that cannot be ignored” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 30).

When the scientific discourse takes the place of the master, this doesn't become an instrument of that, on the contrary, the centralization of power assumed by the traditional figure of the master is deposed and the scientific knowledge emancipates from all external control. Capitalism and scientism become inseparable in their joint movement of self-reproduction, similar and indistinguishable from the very autonomy of capital.

Lacan then situates what emerges in the world: “because how, in a world in which there has emerged, in a way that indeed exists and is a presence in the world, not the thinking of science, but science in some way objectified, I mean these things entirely forged by science, simply these little things, gadgets and things, which for the moment occupy the same space as us, in a world in which this emergence has taken place” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 140). If the discourse of science in order to be stable, needed the epistemic will characteristic to the scope of philosophy, it is, however, with the advent of a science objectified in its union with the capital that formulates a broader issue for Lacan, including what regards the possibilities of shifting this discourse. In the context of what objectified science is, Lacan locates such fabrications of science as “operation of a true formalized truth” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 152). The consolidation, in capitalism, of the logical form of object *a* under the rubric of the surplus *jouissance*, made possible the expansion of its field, by removing the objects manufactured by the science in the field of university research and applying them to the genesis of mass consumption. That's what Lacan indicates when he coins *lathouses* “the tiny little *a*-objects that you are going to encounter when you leave, on the pavement at every street corner, behind every shop window, in the superabundance of these objects designed to cause your desire in so far as it is now science that governs it” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 153). Here we can see that the knowledge of the capitalist as the modern master, contrary to ancient wisdom, lies in the exploration of desire, making itself industrialized

and thus allowing, as stated in *Radiophony*, “the rise to the social zenith of the object described by me as *a*” (LACAN, 1970/2003, p. 411).

Let us remember that Lacan had already stated that “the discourse of science is only sustained, in logic, by making of truth an operation of values, by radically eluding all its dynamic power” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 84) and making these values the place of truth, that is, establishing a social system immune to every complaint. If the capitalist is the modern master, then the merchandise is the master-signifier and, as such, delimits the very possibility of meaning in the capitalist-technical modern world. Lacan was fairly warned of this feature, because, as he reiterates in *Television*, “in denouncing it I reinforce it —by normalizing it, that is, improving it” (LACAN, 1974/2003, p. 517). Instead, it is the association of the added value to the function of the surplus *jouissance*, in this case a surplus *jouissance* that happened to be accounted for, and that would participate, according to Lacan, in the elucidation of what characterizes the social bond in our time. In this sense, beyond the complaint, it is necessary to “begin by seeing why the Master’s discourse is so solidly established, to the extent that few of you, it seems, can measure the extent to which it is stable” (LACAN, 1969-1970, p. 169). Such an idea of stability of the master’s discourse invokes, in this seminar, the designation of a capitalist’s discourse, an outcome of the association between the capital and the university science: “we did not have to wait for the discourse of the Master to fully develop and show its last word in the discourse of the capitalist, with its curious copulation with science” (LACAN, 1969-1970, p. 103).

We can ask ourselves why Lacan employs, in the context of the formulation of a unique *matheme* of the four discourses, the notion of discourse to describe a capitalist discourse, being less controversial the adoption of other designations, as when he speaks of the “capitalist-style” (LACAN, 1969-1970, p. 160) of the discourse of the master. What can be already verified, however, is that the issue of capitalism clearly exceeds the scope of the delimitation of the university discourse, what Lacan explicitly says “Let us now ask ourselves the question of how this society described as capitalist, can afford the luxury of allowing a relaxation of the University discourse” (LACAN, 1969-1970, p. 160). The copulation of capitalism with science refers to the unfolding of the discourse of the master, not exclusively in association with what is formulated in the university discourse, as this is undermined in an unexpected way when conducting the subjects to an insatiable desire for satisfaction, incompatible with the asceticism of the university discourse. It is in this way that the question perseveres in following the teaching of Lacan.

THE WRITING OF A DISCOURSE THAT BELONGED TO THE CAPITALIST

As we have seen, it is not just a matter of situating the capitalist logic as a condition for the detection of the added value and, consequently, of the surplus jouissance. Lacan takes it as a reference to be essentially prioritized:

“It is, in short, to get something to the test: if the key of the various problems which will be proposed to us is not to put ourselves at the effect level of the capitalist articulation that I left in the shadows last year, when I provided you with only its root in the discourse of the master. Maybe I can give you a little more this year” (LACAN, 1971/2009, p. 36).

If, in the *Seminar The reverse of Psychoanalysis*, something derived from the discourse of the master was delimited, the formal grasping of this change is already being sought now:

“You’re not very curious and also, above all, are little interventionist, so that, when I told you about the master’s discourse last year, no one came to me to ask me how the capitalist discourse was situated there. I expected that, I’m just asking to explain it to you, especially because it’s too simple. One little thing that rotates and the discourse of the master of yours shows up everything that’s more transformable in the capitalist discourse” (LACAN, 1971/2009, p. 47).

In that same year, in a lecture delivered in the context of another seminar, Lacan reiterates that he could show, in relation to the master’s discourse, “a little twist, somewhere, that makes it the capitalist discourse” (LACAN, 1971-1972/2011, p. 61). There is also here an addition that will be crucial in the continuation of his teaching: “It is exactly the same thing, only that it’s simply better done, it works better, you are being even more deceived” (LACAN, 1971-1972/2011, p. 61). In the conference following this one, the same idea is taken up, but added to the observation, similar to what we’ve seen before, that the origin of the formalization of such a discourse in Marx did not prevent that, from then on, he reinforced himself:

“But history shows that he lived for centuries, that discourse [the master’s], profitably for everyone, even a certain deviation which, due to a small slip, which went unnoticed to those who were really interested, became the discourse of capitalism, which we wouldn’t have the slightest idea if Marx was not committed to complete it, to give it its subject, the proletariat, thanks to what the discourse of capitalism spread through all regions in which the form of the Marxist State prevails” (LACAN, 1971-1972/2011, p. 88).

We can see that the focus of the Lacanian analysis has a high degree of criticism. To Lacan, it's not about only finding historically what allowed the emergence of the union of the capital with science in the form of capitalism. His interest is, above all, in trying to isolate how such production system, precisely because it must be essentially defined with a self-reproduction system, not only is resistant to criticism, but feeds itself on precisely what he opposes. As he specifies in the *Seminar On a discourse that might not be a semblance*, it is not a matter of locating its beginning, but its absence of the end: "That is not what is important, the reference to Marx was enough to show you that it had the closest relationship with the discourse of the master. What I am trying to get to is the following, it is to catch hold of something as essential as what is here, let us say the support of surplus jouissance" (LACAN, 1971/2009, p. 36).

In this regard, on the one hand, Lacan grasps effectively the formalization of the capitalist discourse from the discourse of the master, finding such passage through *one little thing that rotates, a little twist of nothing, a tiny sliding*. But, on the other hand, he indicates that, more than showing the relationship between both, which would allow the delimitation of its historical sense, we must advance in the apprehension of what accounts for its durability. And, in this case, we must understand the expression used by Lacan — "the support of surplus jouissance" — in the subjective and objective genitives at the same time, as in the case of other Lacanian propositions.

When the figure of the master is repressed and determined regressively in the academic form, slavery is universalized and, in place of the simple direct expropriation of a production, a contradictory surplus is generated that serves as the anchoring to a subjective suffering and a form of defense against its own dilemmas in the field of sexuality. At this point, the slave is no longer the one submitted by the authority of a master, but an individual who explores himself and that manifests in consumption the same form of reproduction of expropriation.

Lacan had already spoken before about the point of impossibility or the hiatus which is characteristic to the articulation of each one of the discourses, which, holding its rotations, also allows that each of them can be overcome in the direction of another discursive mode, the famous *one quarter backwards* which allows us to move from the master to the hysterical, and so on. Now he points to the fact, indeed disturbing, that with one of the sides of the tetrahedron necessarily breaking down, we could get in a discursive manner that, producing a circular motion, would tend not to be overcome anymore:

"Here is the discourse of the Master, as you perhaps remember, characterized by the fact that of the six lines of the tetrahedron, one is broken. It is in the measure that one makes these structures turn on the four lines of the circuit that follow one

another in the tetrahedron — this is a condition — are fitted in the same direction, it is in this measure that the variation is established about what is involved in the structure of discourse, very precisely in so far as it remains at a certain level of construction which is the tetrahedric one, this tetrahedric one that we cannot be satisfied with once the agency of the letter is brought out. It is even because one cannot be satisfied with it, that to remain at its level, there is always one of the sides of what makes the circle which is broken” (LACAN, 1971/2009, p. 95).

The inclusion by Lacan, in the framework of his theory of discourse, of a heteroclitite such as the capitalist discourse makes thoughtful the very movement of self-reproduction of the capital, to be understood as self-circularity of the surplus jouissance: “a little inversion simply between the S1 and S/... which is the subject... it suffices so that that goes on casters! Indeed that cannot go better, but that goes too fast, that consumes itself, that consumes itself so that is consumed” (LACAN, 5/12/1972). In this famous Conference in Milan, in which he finally presents the complete formula of the capitalist discourse, reversing S1 and S/, Lacan indicates this is something witty — as he had spoken before of something that works better, is more well done, that deceives us even more, in a functioning that short-circuits its terms in a dangerous way.

He consumes himself and this is consummated, on a possible way of his own destruction, but in a circular motion, with no way out ... maybe. The formalization of the capitalist's discourse points to its impasse, which could justify the writing by Lacan of a discourse that incurs a logical impossibility under the notion of discourse where it starts. This idea of the absence of an interruption in the capitalist's discourse was already present in *Radiophony*, referring to the added value as

“the cause of the desire that an economy makes its principle: that of the extensive production, therefore insatiable, of that lack-in-jouissance. It is accumulated on the one hand to increase the means of this production on the side of capital. It extends consumption, on the other hand, without which this production would be vain, precisely from its ineptitude in procuring a jouissance that would allow it to slow down” (LACAN, 1970/2003, p. 434).

There's what imposes the questioning of a discourse that belonged to the capitalist, because this would exclude the point of impossibility that is inherent to the definition of Lacan's discourse, undoing the binding of the discourse with the social bond. One could still add that, if such impossibility point inscribed in the discourses reports to the fact that castration is found at the heart of what psychoanalysis pioneers in the field of truth, what distinguishes the capitalist discourse

is precisely “the *Verwerfung*, the rejection out of all fields of the symbolic, with the consequences I have already mentioned — rejection of what? Of castration” (LACAN, 2011, p. 88). If the impossible at the heart of the discourse articulation refers to the place of castration in the core opened by the investigation of the truth in psychoanalysis, such opened core causes, in turn, the impossibility of a discourse that was not semblance.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we do not want, obviously, to exhaust the issue of capitalism in the teaching of Lacan. The issue is, on the one hand, too long — actually, it gets mixed up with all the references to the political economy that start around his fifth seminar — and, on the other hand, extremely complex, to the extent that it participates in an unceasing dialogue not only with the work of Marx, but also when it mingles with other fields, such as those of the metaphysics of subjectivity, of the mathematics and of course that of linguistics.

However, we would like to point out that Lacan distinguishes in psychoanalysis and, in this sense, in the psychoanalytic discourse, one of the only subjects, along with those from the Marxian thinking, capable in our days to support an effective critique of the circularity of capital and of this one with science. According to Lacan, “the analytic discourse is specified, is distinguished, by raising the question of what use is this form of knowledge that rejects and excludes the dynamic of the truth”, while to the science “it is forbidden, just because it is the science of the master, to deal with the question of the craftsman” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 85). To deal with the truth, unlike the forms of knowledge that reject it, Lacan believes that psychoanalysis is located “in the path that Marxism opens up, namely, that discourse is linked to the interests of the subject” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 86), interests that Marx showed in the capitalist society, being liable to a profound commercial alienation. In this sense, Lacan argues here that, “since commodities are linked to the master-signifier, exposing it in this way solves nothing” arguing that “commodities are no less linked to this signifier after the socialist revolution” (LACAN, 1969-1970/1992, p. 86).

As to us psychoanalysts, following the terms he relates to distinguish, in his discourses, the one we would be the effect of, Lacan adds the symptom to the semblance and to the truth. This is the symptom as worked by Freud, although Marx is still identified as the one who introduced the idea. Freud was then the one who, upon realizing that the symptom was there,

“was disturbed by something which obviously became the only element of interest that still had some relationship with this thing that people had previously dreamt about and which was called knowledge. At an epoch when there was no longer

the slightest trace of something which had a meaning of this kind” (LACAN, 1971/2009, p. 49).

The function of the truth on neurosis, highlighted by him in relation to the symptom, is consistent, according to Lacan, “with this subversive operation of what up to then had been sustained throughout a whole tradition under the title of knowledge” (LACAN, 1971/2009, p. 153). He still adds that “The fundamental dupery that is contained in the theory of knowledge, this dimension of semblance that introduces the dupery exposed as such by Marxist subversion” (LACAN, 1971/2009, p. 153), which clarifies that the symptom, in the sense identified here, has its origin attributed to Marx.

The symptom is, therefore, what is left of a theory of the subverted knowledge. The truth, in turn, reported to the symptom, is linked to the semblance; the idea of knowledge is not placeable here. In the *Seminar From One Other to the other*, the truth had already been located, due to the inconsistency of the Other, as only being able to match the function of an object which is not connected to knowledge, object *a*, with which the surplus *jouissance* is introduced. If the origin of subversion at stake here is found in Marx, the step that he was not able to give, as Lacan had already said, is what I would go from added value to surplus *jouissance*. It was only with Freud that the discourse that happened to elucidate the symptom was introduced and that: “The way each one suffers in his/her relationship with *jouissance*, is only inserted in it by the function of surplus *jouissance*, here’s the symptom — to the extent that it appears coming from this: that there isn’t but one average social truth, abstract” (LACAN, 1968-1969/2008, p. 40). If this psychoanalytic discourse is consequent to the path opened by Marx, this has to be checked, through the debate where this article is inserted, how much it can, in turn, place the discourse in which the formalization made by Marx is supported.

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