



Anxiety in sexed arithmetic

As Patrick Barillot highlighted in his argument on the theme of this International Meeting : anxiety is an indicator of the enigmatic real of desire, through the object a , which is, in turn, its only subjective translation concerning love and desire.

The phallic valence, in logical terms, $f(x)$, exerts its strength in current debates on sexuation and the various semblants that articulate the knot between desire, jouissance and love.

A fragment of feminine anxiety stands out in the final chapters of Seminar 10 *Anxiety* [1], particularly with regard to desire and jouissance. After situating The Other real as that which specifies jouissance and adding that the law, which constitutes desire, does not concern this Other - unless it is eccentrically on the side of the object a , Lacan asserts: women are superior in the field of jouissance because their connection with desire is weaker.

But it is at the end of this Seminar that Lacan, aligning himself with Kierkegaard, asserts that women are more anguished than men, more anguished in the dialectic of desire and love. This is a clinical fact in psychoanalysis. Women often consult for problems of love. The different circumstances and stages of life do not hide this fact: the relationship between love, desire and jouissance brings anxiety into play.

Colette Soler has addressed this subject at various points. Referring to anxiety, I'd like to emphasise what she calls the differential clinic: a kind of sexed arithmetic [2]. I'll just take one of her segments, when she asserts that anxiety in women may be due to the fact that they are not lizards, which means that they are more anguished in the face of the enigma of the Other's desire because, not having an object to give up, it is themselves that are at stake. This assertion is based on what Lacan articulated at the end of the said seminar, on the surrendering of the object.

From 1972 onwards, Lacan took this theme of sexed arithmetic further by proposing the formulas of sexuation; the end of Seminar 10 *Anxiety* being one of their origins. Nearly 10 years later, in *L'étourdit*, referring to Frege, he would argue that it is through this function $f(x)$ that speaking beings will respond according to the way in which they have constructed their argument [3].

This certainly includes the phallic valence mentioned earlier, which is at the heart of the discord... of sexuation, whether for the Universal "For all x , $f(x)$ " or for the "not-

all" (*pas-tout phallique*). This phallic valence is valid for all speaking beings (*parlêtres*), even if some may "not-all" respond to the referential of this function.

The tensions in the current debate on sexed identities can hardly overlook the value of the sign of anxiety - the real in question - with regard to this arithmetic, which indicates that there is no way of making it speak without going through a logical listening that integrates the f(x) function into the discourse on desire, jouissance and love.

One observation: those who order themselves solely in the phallic valence are at the mercy of anxiety, whenever the habits of power and impotence are not enough to respond to the impossible of the enigma of the desire of the Other. Those who are "not-all" are governed by the phallic valence may be at the mercy of anxiety because of the strangeness of the enigmatic jouissance but, despite this, they can respond with the power of speech.

It seems to me that in both situations, making anxiety speak precisely enables the development of the drive versions in which symptom and fantasy are articulated. It's a step beyond strangeness, knowing about it and relying on it.

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[1] J. Lacan, (by A. Price), *Anxiety :The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book 10*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

[2] C. Soler, *Les affects lacaniens*, Paris, PUF, 2011, p. 42. *Lacanian Affects*, Translated by Bruce Fink, Routledge.

[3] J. Lacan, *Autres écrits*, Paris, Le Seuil, 2001, p. 458.

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