

SEX ALL OVER THE PLACE: “FUCK!”

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The title for this issue came up in conversation at the Miami Symposium of the World Association of Psychoanalysis on “What Lacan Knew About Women”. As we were discussing our next journal issue on sexuality, Professor Joan Copjec exclaimed: “Sex! It’s all over the place”. Given that, in spoken English, the word “fuck” recurs as an all-purpose punctuation mark, we could only agree with her: sex *is* all over the place, at the very least in language. And psychoanalysis favours *evidence-based-on-language* over evidence-based medicine!

The substitution of the multiple of sexual practices for the binary of sexual difference has profoundly affected the social bond. So is it all over, now that it is all over the place? Are we going to be happy? Some in the field of gender studies and queer theory claim that the future of psychoanalysis is tied to the repressive hypothesis, to the persistence of heteronormativity – and that it is, therefore, fated to fade away, a relic of an oppressive past. So, is there no future for psychoanalysis? Fuck!

It is true that reality can now be rectified in unprecedented ways. This can be done either by modifying discourse to accommodate new forms of subjectivity, granting new rights securing a place for singular modes of enjoyment, or transforming the body through sophisticated, and sometimes intrusive, medical procedures. As a result, the limits that “nature”

seemingly imposed upon the imaginary of sexuality keep being pushed back, and ever more numerous configurations take shape.

So, have the fluidity of gender norms, the new modalities of accessing sexual satisfaction, and the advances of science rendered psychoanalysis obsolete? Now that there's no one to blame for one's failure in achieving sexual satisfaction – finding the perfect match, living the dream, pursuing happiness to the full – it seems, on the contrary, that psychoanalysis is more pertinent than ever. As Jacques-Alain Miller demonstrates in the two pieces we have chosen to open and close our thematic section, it is structurally impossible to say the truth about *jouissance*, to negate *jouissance* by means of the symbolic. *Jouissance*, therefore, unfailingly returns on the subject in a ferocious fashion, causing all manner of suffering in the process. It is the effect of the return of the drive onto the subject that Freud christened “superego”, and it is now amply averred that the weakening of social prohibitions has, if anything, increased the superego's might. On what conditions, then, might a new alliance with *jouissance* be formed? This is the research programme of the Lacanian Orientation.

We can follow its contours in the polyphony of the other texts in our thematic section. Without a doubt, the centrepiece is a dialogue between Professor Jack Halberstam, an American queer theorist and trans*, and psychoanalyst Marie-Hélène Brousse. It seemed to us that the encounter between gender studies/queer theory and psychoanalysis needn't remain a missed one, that it has been more of a misunderstanding. Indeed, the dialogue between eminent representatives of two enlightened opinions clarifies the nature of the misunderstanding. As Marie-Hélène Brousse points out, psychoanalysis takes its bearings only from the speech of analysands, whichever signifiers they may choose to represent themselves or order their *jouissance* with. As to the binary of sexual difference, it is an avatar of the binary structure of the signifier, and thus of language. It is language, then, which is heteronormative.

The piece by Jorge Assef further demonstrates, in a careful counterpoising of the work of Jacques Lacan with that of gender theorists, that Lacanian psychoanalysis neither cares for the repressive hypothesis nor strives to shore up traditional family structures. All that matters is to take account of the real in speech addressed to another, and to recognise that “the unconscious is politics”, as Lacan once put it, and so also recognise that it is an effect of discourse.

In this vein, Pierre-Gilles Guéguen explores the singular couple that Francis Bacon formed with his partner and model George Dyer. Paul Verhaeghe shows the limits of the repressive hypothesis in Freud's own work: it is the discovery of the a-natural circuit of the human drive which constitutes the scandal of sex in the Freudian discovery. So there is nothing

all that new about the impasses of human sexuality, although the omnipresence of porn and its insistence on leaving nothing – or *hardly anything*, as Laurent Goumarre and Gustavo Freda argue – out of the visual field is demystifying the sexual act in ways that entail unprecedented consequences for the sexual life of today's speaking beings.

Every paper addresses a distinct facet of the theme. Bruno de Halleux explores the evolution of the psychoanalytical theory of sexuality. François Ansermet delineates the impact of science on gender norms now that anatomy definitely does not have to be destiny. Pamela King traces the logic of the well-known case of Norrie mAy-Welby. Christiane Alberti's contribution is specifically addressed to the analytic experience: what remains, she asks, of our fantasies in the course of an analysis? And if the phallus is always involved in the fantasy, what is the effect of the decline of the virile on our fantasies?

The second issue of *TLR* has the same structure as the first. Thus, it continues with a section on the formation of the analyst and concludes with an echo of our congresses. The first of these two sections opens with the question of supervision. Éric Laurent exposes the logic of Jacques Lacan's reflection on the formation of analysts, the institutional structures that he invented to preserve the singularity of the emergence of *non-conforming analysts*, the logic of the Pass, and the importance of supervision at the time of the speaking being. Patrick Monribot provides a lively illustration of the continued pertinence of supervision, even after the Pass, as the possibility of an act, an analytic act, is never guaranteed. You will then discover several texts by Analysts of the School relating to the Pass, which we collected at the WAP Congress in Rio in April 2016. They illustrate the relevance of this procedure invented by Lacan for the transmission of psychoanalysis, itself central to the formation of non-conforming analysts – whether from the perspective of a reflection on the Pass or through personal testimonies.

To conclude, in our section on clinical orientation, you will find the text of Miquel Bassols' intervention in Dublin in July 2016 at the NLS Congress, followed by three cases presented in various settings for clinical discussion in the Freudian Field. Miquel Bassols, current President of the WAP, delineates key coordinates for the psychoanalytical treatment of the psychoses – a theme which will form the focus of the next Congress of the WAP, to be held in Barcelona in April 2018 – and so provides an orientation for our practice not to be ... all over the place!

When the binary of sexual difference no longer orders the social bond, *everything* is all over the place, and so our clinical practice needs to become non-standard – a necessity reflected in the theme of the PIPOL encounter in Brussels in July 2017. Non-standard, yes, *but not without a compass!*