

God and the Jouissance of The Woman

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“God and the Jouissance of The Woman”, which is Chapter 6 of Encore has been partly translated in the book on feminine sexuality by Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose. Encore itself is the text of a seminar that was given monthly during the same period as L'Étourdit and Télévision, during the early 1970s. This chapter gives us Lacan's second theory of sexualisation. The first of his theories, which emerged in the 1950s and early 1960s, corresponds to The Meaning of the Phallus, the text on feminine sexuality in Guiding Remarks for a Congress, and a few others. Ten years later, he produced this second one, which was perhaps the first to be truly post-Freudian in the sense of being beyond Freud.

The first theory is basically Freudian, in that it is centered on the phallus and on the idea that there is only one sex for speaking beings. The problem is, how to make two distinctive positions with one sex; which leads Lacan to construct a small combinatory with which he produces two different sexual positions from one phallic function. We can say that this combinatory is composed of four elements: the phallus as signifier; negation; to have; and to be. With those four elements you can construct two types of sexual position, and think the relation between the sexes. Lacan's position at this stage is broadly Freudian; the only element he adds to the Freudian position, certainly an important addition, is that he makes an interpretation of the phallus as signifier.

But the second theory of sexualisation introduces something new. It introduces a beyond of the phallus, which implies that we no longer think of feminine and masculine sexuality in terms of parallelism or symmetry; for the first theory maintains a kind of symmetry between the masculine position and the feminine one. Let us say that the axis of symmetry is a phallus and its two sides the two sexes. What is destroyed in the period of Encore is precisely the phallus as axis of symmetry, so that the sexual positions, sexual difference, can no longer be organised in a symmetrical way. That is the real moment when Lacan goes beyond Freud.

Turning to the text itself, we find an introduction, which has not yet been translated into English; we will return to this shortly. The first paragraph of the text has not been translated, because it concerns a certain critical reading of Lacan's The Agency of the Letter by French scholars. The second paragraph deals with the formula “Y a d' l'Un”, which is translated as “there is something of One”. In fact it is virtually impossible to translate, because even in French it is an invention; it is a very colloquial way of speaking.

If we are to try to explain this formula, we can first relate it to “there is no sexual rapport”, and secondly, to the attempt to make up for, to compensate for the absence of sexual rapport. Thirdly, I shall try to elucidate the relation between the *jouissance* of the body and love as related to feminine sexuality.

First, let us return to the introduction. We can summarise it by relating two terms: the satisfaction of speaking, and phallic *jouissance*. What does this mean? Lacan refers to the satisfaction of speaking as “another satisfaction”. How can we think this link

between this other satisfaction - the satisfaction of speaking - and phallic *jouissance*? In my view, we have to rely on something which is formulated in The Meaning of the Phallus, in which Lacan introduces a thesis which is absolutely fundamental: that sexuality for human beings is nothing but *semblant*, nothing but make-believe. After emphasising that the phallus is a signifier and not an organ or an image, he says: "Let us say that these relations will revolve around a being and a having, which, because they refer to a signifier, the phallus, have the contradictory effect of on the one hand lending reality to the subject in that signifier, and on the other, making unreal the relations to be signified."¹

What I wanted to emphasise is the sentence that comes next: "This follows from the intervention of an appearing, which gets substituted for the having, so as to protect it on the one side, and to mask its lack in the other ...". Thus we have these two positions: the masculine as protecting and the feminine as masking. But the term which is important, which is translated here as "appearing", is *paraître*, which is a way of saying that all sexuality in the human being is make-believe, semblance. Defining human sexuality according to the function of the phallus implies as a consequence that all human sexuality locates itself in the field of *paraître*. That concerns only the subject of the unconscious; it does not concern man as a biological or a social being. It deals with the Freudian field, the field of the unconscious - in a way, the field of language. In that field sexuality is a matter of *paraître*. And this is the truth of it: there is no further truth behind the mask of femininity or the protection of masculinity.

This is a very important passage, because it implies that sexual satisfaction is phallic, and, as such, offers another satisfaction, a satisfaction of speaking, dealing with speech and language. In a way it is Freudian because what Lacan emphasises, when he is reading Freud historically, is the opposition between, - as one of the basic points in psychoanalysis -, indeed, the impossibility of articulating the formations of the unconscious with the order of sexuality. It is the difference between the books by Freud dealing with the formations of the unconscious: dreams, jokes, etc., and the Three Essays on Sexuality. Those two distinct orders imply that the main point of difficulty in psychoanalysis is the articulation of sexuality, as dealing with the body, and the order of speech, which is the main, the fundamental point of the unconscious.

So the consequence of this contradiction – between being submitted to sexual reproduction because, on the one hand, of the difference between the sexes, and on the other, being a speaking being -, is the definition of sexuality as *paraître*, as *semblant*, which implies the necessity of thinking which type of *jouissance* we are dealing with in psychoanalysis.

If we move on to chapter 2, in the second paragraph², we find this phrase "Y'a d' l'Un", there is something of One. How can we explain this formula? Lacan is right, "there is something of One" is not in the least simple to say. In psychoanalysis, or more precisely in the discourse of Freud, it is set forth in the concept of Eros defined as a fusion, making one out of two, that is, of Eros seen as a gradual tendency to

¹ An approximation of this translation can be found in the English version of the Écrits, page 289.

² Feminine Sexuality, edited by Juliet Mitchell and Jaqueline Rose; translated by Jacqueline Rose. Macmillan, 1982.

make one out of a vast multitude. This is the first definition of the formula: “there is something of One”. The Freudian definition, Eros, the fusion, making one out of two, which is in a way precisely what I said before, how to make one out of two. One signifier, two positions, two sexes. First, Eros, love, is one instance that allows one to make two, or two to make one, that is, it permits the passage from two to one, one to two.

The second way of explaining it is this: that after making this affirmation that Eros is one, what enters into Freud’s work is Thanatos, that which re-introduces two. Later we should perhaps make an interpretation of that; but we do not know precisely what Thanatos is; it has been rejected by all or most of the post-Freudians. Melanie Klein reduced Thanatos to aggressivity, but in Freudian terms it is not the same thing. So we can say that Freud presents Eros as a principle of unity, but at the same time re-introduces something of a duality, on the dark side. The second possible interpretation of “there is something of One”, this time a Lacanian interpretation, is: “there is no Other of the Other”, “*il n’y a pas d’Autre de l’Autre*”. This is the consequence of “there is something of One”; there is only one Other, there is no Other different from that Other. When Lacan says, “there is something of One”, you can think precisely of that Other as the place of the signifiers. “There is something of One” means here there is nothing but the symbolic. There is no other way to locate oneself as subject of the unconscious, there is no way other than to locate oneself in the Other. There is only one Other, which is the Other of language, and from that “there is One”, you are a subject; you are its consequence.

Another way to think this affirmation “there is something of One” is, there is only one unconscious: for if there is only one Other, then there is only one unconscious. There is, for example, no feminine unconscious or masculine unconscious; there is no singular unconscious nor a collective unconscious. There is only One and it is strictly the consequence of the structure of language in a living being. So there is no possibility to differentiate between a feminine unconscious and a masculine one. And thus there is only one sexuality and only one discourse, as sexuality is located in the field of discourse.

As a theory, this is rather radical. I hope you follow the subversiveness of these propositions. Because when you say there is sexuality, you imply that there is no way of biologising psychoanalysis; and it is true to say that Lacan is an absolutely un-biologising psychoanalyst. Furthermore, this explains why Lacan says, for example in Seminar XI, that there is nothing that has been done in psychoanalysis regarding the sexual functions, or the sexual way of functioning. He says that psychoanalysis has produced no benefit, no discovery, regarding the sexual lives of human beings. It is not sexology. It does not repair human sexuality, it deals with the subject’s relation to it. And the third, very important, consequence is that if there is only One, something of One, then there is no sexual rapport. “There is no sexual rapport”; we are familiar with the formula, it is a very strong one. It was a scandal in its time. What does it mean?

It does not mean that there is no sexual act; nor does it mean that there are no sexual relationships. Of course there are. Then what does it mean, ‘no sexual rapport’? There is no rapport between the sexes because there is only one. That is the consequence of the first theory of sexualisation which I mentioned at the beginning. And why is there only one sex? Because of the phallus. And why is the phallus the only signifier we have got? Because we are dealing with sexuality within the field of language, that is to say, of *paraître*, of *semblant*. There is no other sexuality in the

human speaking being than that of speech. Then the formula “there is no sexual rapport” implies that there is no relation between one sex and the other because it is only the same relation between the two phallic positions: the feminine and the masculine.

Maybe we can develop this idea, although it was not developed in Lacan’s text at that time. But it was to appear later in his formulae of sexualization. There is still the two - we cannot escape the two, even though we are in “there is something of One”. There are always two parts. The problem is how to follow the principle that there is something of One, and describe two positions. It is still the same very simple problem. In the formulae of sexualization, we can say that the left side is the phallic side, that is to say, what previously had been the whole side of sexuality in Lacan. Before the 1970s, there was only one way to think sexuality in psychoanalysis, and this was it. The right side is an innovation, a discovery of those years. This is what is new, what is not in Freud; but we can still say we are on Freud’s side.

What is Freud’s side? Freud’s is the phallic side, Freud’s is the father’s side, the father’s name, if you translate *le Nom du Père*. And they are related. In Lacan, they have been related since the two little schemas in the text on psychosis (schema R). In the bottom right corner you have the father, and in the top left, Φ ; if you fold the schema right up the middle, Φ and the father come to overlap one another. So the subject is included totally in the field of the father, and consequently under the domination of the phallus. This is what is now called masculine sexuality, the masculine side of sexuality. But that implies that all human speaking beings are located there - without any relation to, or implication of, their biological sex. There is a difference to be made in psychoanalysis between male and female. I know that ‘male’ and ‘female’ are used in English, instead of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, as is the case in Spanish, but not in French. In French, ‘female’ always implies a biological side, but not sociological sex or psychological identity. So you have the subject being located sexually, having a sexual identity, from this phallic function. It is the sex of making babies. Whatever you are, male or female, organically, or biologically defined, you encounter yourself here. Because “there is something of One”, one sex for all of us.

As long as we are located in speech and language, this position implies, as a clinical consequence, that you cannot say, when a patient enters your consulting room, that it is a woman; you are always absolutely sure it is a man, whatever female it looks like. That is very important. You are always dealing with men, even if you have got feminine or female patients. So what is the definition of sexuality on this left side? If rapport implies that there is no sexual rapport, if we are all in the same boat, how can we relate to one another? We can relate by this very precious means. We are in the field of the subject of the unconscious, that is, the subject is divided between conscious and unconscious. So we can write it this way: $\$ \leftrightarrow a$.

The first making-up for or compensation for the missing sexual rapport is this: what allows us to think we have sexual relations is fantasy. But we have to explain why fantasy is not a sexual rapport, but only a making-up for a sexual rapport, because it is not a relation between a subject and the Other sex. It is a relation between a subject and an object. So here, (a), the object, which is causing, determining desire, comes in place of the Other sex, of the Other. That is what Lacan developed, referring himself to the object as partial in psychoanalysis. It is always a part, but a very particular part, because it is a part without a whole. So this is the first solution. Of course, it is a solution which implies two interpretations: a masculine and a

feminine one. Does this mean that we have a feminine and a masculine fantasy? No. There are only masculine fantasies, because they are on the phallic side; we would say that there are only phallic fantasies.³ This has many consequences. First, what Lacan says in his text, which is the fact that masculine sexuality, as phallic, is always perverse. That is very Freudian; in the Three Essays on Sexuality, Freud says that the child is a polymorphous pervert. There is no sexuality other than perverse as long as you are dealing with fantasy; Lacan says that again in Télévision. Masculine sexuality as such is perverse because it is organised by fantasy. “Can one say that if man with a capital M wants woman, capital W, he cannot reach her without finding himself run aground on the rock of perversion? That is what is precipitated as a formula through the experiment instituted by psychoanalytical discourse. If it is verified, it can be taught to everyone, that is to say it is scientific, since it is on the basis of this postulate that science developed.” Well, that is another thing, but there is no other masculine sexuality than this one.

First consequence: masculine sexuality is perverse, because it deals, through fantasy, with an object, replacing the Other sex, covering it up, covering up the absence of the Other. The second consequence, which is more difficult to demonstrate, is that there is no difference between masculine and feminine fantasies. One way to explain it could be that, as we are in the field of the phallic signifier, the fantasy is always making a relation between Φ and (a), always dealing with this value of the object; it covers (a) by Φ ; in a way the fantasy is efficient, as long as the object is covered by Φ . Since this (a) is always covered by libidinal value, it always shelters behind the phallic signifier.

If there is only the phallic signifier which can be used, then the fantasies that women (as the term is used in everyday speech) have are masculine ones. We can say this is one compensation for the formula “there is no sexual rapport”, as a consequence of “there is something of One”.

Before moving on to love, let us ask what are the particularities of the feminine use of fantasy, or rather, what are the particularities of feminine positions in this field of castration and phallic function? They are organised by one point, which is to mask the lack; so we can say that the use of fantasy is organised in a woman by this orientation towards masquerade. So we can think of what Lacan wrote about masquerade and of what Joan Riviere wrote about it, as she invented the term. Maybe we can think of maternity as a solution, a feminine solution to the use of fantasy, yet maternity is a masculine position. That might be a little provocative; but maternity is on the masculine side of the formulae of sexuation, so maternity as such is a feminine use of fantasy in a masculine position. In other words, being located in the field of the phallic signifier and of the father, maternity is a feminine way to use fantasy as a relation with an object. Maybe this explains why perversion is so rare in women’s sexuality, because it is not necessary. Maternity gives an ideal interpretation of it.

The second compensation is love. Lacan in this text presents this second compensation, referring to courtly love, as a way of creating sexual relations: “For

³ $\$ \leftrightarrow a$

.....
- ϕ

the man, whose lady was entirely, in the most servile sense of the term, his female subject, courtly love is the only way of coming off elegantly from the absence of sexual rapport" [page 141]. Before that, he had said, "It is an altogether refined way of making up for sexual rapport by pretending that it is we who put an obstacle to it. It is truly the most strategic thing that has ever been tried, but how can we expose this fraud?" [ibid.] First, then, love is a making-up for sexual relations; secondly, as a making-up for, it is a fraud, a deception, in the sense, not of putting an object in place of the Other, but in the sense of putting oneself as the agent of the absence, the absence of sexual rapport. If the subject says that he is the one who produces it, then this absence appears as a strategy, as a constriction of his own devising. So it is a way of escaping what is in fact not a choice, the absence of sexual rapport. If you say that you are responsible for it, first you imply that if you wanted, it could take place, and secondly, that your desire is precisely what is the cause of the lack of sexual rapport. One can see the fraud. The fraud is crediting the absence to one's own account, implying that it is not in the real. So we can see that the field of the making-up for is not only fantasy, on the side of desire, but on the other side, there is another type of making-up for. One is by desire, and that implies the use of an object and fantasy, the other is by love, which implies the use of the Other, God, of course, but also in courtly love, the knight. The knight and the lady.

As far as the feminine position is concerned, then, the making-up for includes maternity, and probably also the hysterical discourse. On the side of love, we have courtly love; and I should also add: feminine homosexuality and mysticism. Indeed, in Encore, in this chapter, Lacan starts from courtly love to come to mysticism. He does not speak of feminine homosexuality in this chapter, but in another chapter of Encore, he relates it to a solution by love. So on the one hand it is a solution by means of the object as cause, and on the other a solution which emphasises the fraud, the deception of love. It is a solution which implies the importance of being, rather than having. The *ménage à trois* is another idea from this chapter that I wanted to emphasise. There are some parts of the chapter that are not translated on the *ménage à trois*: it implies that love is in the end always related to being, to that Being who has most Being, that is to say, to God. In any love there is a part of God's love, in a way.

Let us turn to the third part. I have already spoken about the formulae of sexuation. Maybe we need something in order to be precise about what 'he' or 'she' means and the difference between Φ and $-\phi$. There is a reference to this in the Écrits, in Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire [English translation page 318 ff.] First, capital Φ , defined as a principle of sacrifice. "We must distinguish, therefore, between the principle of sacrifice, which is symbolic, and the imaginary function that is devoted to that principle of sacrifice, but which, at the same time, masks the fact that it gives it its instrument." [page 319] So this capital Φ is the principle of sacrifice, and is symbolic. What is sacrifice? It is a *jouissance* implied by the sole fact that we are living in speech and language, that our environment is language. And this is what Lacan develops with the dialectic between demand and need. Nothing of need can be satisfied if it does not pass through demand. What is sacrificed is *jouissance*, that is to say, a part of the real.

Then there is the imaginary function, which is what Freud formulated to govern the investment of the object as a narcissistic object. It was to this point that I returned when I showed that the specular image is the channel taken by the transfusion of the body's libido towards the object. So we can say that $-\phi$ is the negativisation implied

by human narcissism, not primary narcissism which is common to both speaking beings and non-speaking animals, but secondary narcissism, that is to say, the relation between us and our image as regulated by this principle. So this image gives reality to this principle of sacrifice; and ϕ , which is more rarely used as such, as non-negativised, could be the organ itself. This connects with the text on psychosis, in the commentary on the Schreber case.

In the schema we find in the Écrits on psychosis, Lacan implies something like a raw existence of flesh, without any phallicisation, the phallicisation which is included in $-\phi$, in order to write the effect of the lack of the Name of the Father in the human being. If you take out the $-\phi$, then you encounter something which is, in a way, pure real, which is not imaginised, and does not refer to symbolic sacrifice. It is a proposition, but it is a way of thinking the relation that some psychotics have with their own body, with their own flesh and bones, in the case of self-mutilation, for example; we could say it is raw meat.

What Lacan uses in paragraph three is precisely that: the principle of the sacrifice of *jouissance*, and its symbolic function, related to a mythical exception, which is the father. Now we have the two formulae. First the set of speaking beings as submitted to the principle of sacrifice, which is a consequence of language, together with the exception to it, which is the father as not submitted to the principle of sacrifice: the Oedipal father, we can say. This is the father of Totem and Taboo, which, being outside the set, implies the possibility of the set itself. As Lacan says again in this part of Encore, the father is only there in order to produce the set as a whole.

$$\exists x \bar{\phi} x$$

$$\forall x \phi x$$

Secondly, the problem is how to produce another mode of functioning, of sexualisation, which would be exactly the same as far as the phallic function is concerned. This implies that the feminine side of sexuality is defined with respect to the phallic function as well, although, as we shall see, it does not function in the same way as the phallic side. To define it, Lacan uses a way of negating quantifiers which, as he says in L'Étourdit is never used in logic or mathematics.

The feminine side is not to be opposed to the masculine side, neither in itself nor as complementary to this side. The proper term used by Lacan is 'supplementary' - as a plus, you could say. And that is something completely new in the field of psychoanalysis. It allows Lacan to lift the problem of femininity above all those debates about the place of the vagina, of the clitoris, the question of the penis and the phallus, and so on. Φ as a principle of sacrifice of *jouissance*, and the making of the phallus into a signifier, and not an organ nor a bodily image, created the first possibility of taking sexuality beyond biology in a clear way, which is not the case in Freud. It is present there, but it is not demonstrated.

From the moment that you demonstrate that the unconscious has the structure of language, or view the unconscious as structure of language, you can forget questions about the vagina and clitoris; but you can also do something more. You can locate something feminine outside the field of the masculine but within the field of the unconscious, which is the difficulty. One solution could have been to stick to the Freudian position, saying that there is no difference between masculine and

feminine sexuality as such, i.e. any little girl is a little boy and this is only a question of position. What is revolutionary is to look for a way to write down feminine sexuality as such: not only as defined by the use of fantasy, or the use of phallic signification, but as such, as related to the Φ of castration, by means of a different logical operator.

$$\bar{\exists}x\bar{\Phi}x$$

$$\bar{\forall}x\Phi x$$

The aim of this logical operator is to produce a position which is not organised as a set. It is to propose the possibility of femininity, of a woman, as not organised by a universal function. It is the negation of the universal: there is no means to build a set of feminine beings according to a universal principle. And secondly, there is no exception which would enable us to build this set; which does not imply, however, that the set does not exist. It implies that it does not exist as a defined set in terms of universals and exceptions. But, of course, this implies that something of the feminine exists. Or something of femininity exists; and why do I write 'exists'? Because it can be written. But the fact that something of femininity exists, can be written, does not imply, by any means, that sexual rapport exists.

That is the trick, in a way. You can write something about femininity, about the feminine position, but once you have got the feminine and the masculine, you still cannot write sexual rapport because their ways of functioning are absolutely not opposed. Yet this might re-introduce the possibility of a relation. They are not opposed, they are not antagonistic, they are just different, incommensurate. What, then, is the *jouissance* implied by this mode of functioning? It is not the way of fantasy: *jouissance* as related to the object with phallic value. It is another mode of *jouissance* related to love, and not to desire. There are two points: $S(A)$ and Φ , principle of sacrifice.

The feminine position is not separated from castration. On the contrary, feminine sexuality is related to castration in itself, as principle of sacrifice, but not to castration as embodied, veiled by the object with phallic signification. Thus, the relation with the Other, as barred, is to be linked with sacrifice.

To conclude, it is impossible, firstly, to distinguish between what Lacan designated in relation to theology as ecstatic love, and physical love. The problem is that it is love without desire, oriented by sacrifice; that is a reference to Kierkegaard, which you can find at the end of the text. It is love without reference to the objects of fantasy, in other words, without reference to the object that takes the place of the drive. We can say that it is a love beyond the father, but not beyond castration, in a way, where the name of the lack is never phallicised. Generally, all you lack, all that you lose, can be, or can take on, a phallic value. And as we have been speaking about maternity as a solution within fantasy, we could mention Medea here. She is a 'real woman' – but 'real woman' is a very deceptive expression.

You might think, then, that in using this term, which is Lacan's term, we are re-introducing 'The woman'. But that is not the case. By 'real woman', I believe that he means precisely this way of thinking the feminine position. If you read Euripides' tragedy of Medea carefully, you can see the place she gives to her children. First, she locates them within filiation; they are part of Jason's filiation, as Jason's

descendants; which, of course, means dealing with the father. For Jason has been taking away from her something she appreciated very much - the *jouissance* of the bed; and in Greek, the terms for 'bed' and 'wife' are the same - so he has at one and the same time moved her from the place of the wife, and taken away from her the pleasure she was addicted to, the pleasure of Jason's organ. But how does she go about destroying this order? Jason himself is not destroyed, he is the only person she does not kill: she kills the new wife, her own father, her own brother, and a few others along the way, but not him. Although he is afraid of being killed, he is not killed by her; but she destroys in Jason the Name of the Father, that is, she relates herself to the principle of the sacrifice of *jouissance*; and in another way she relates herself to the lack of this order of the Other S(A). In any case, she presents one very permanent solution to the question.