



The Not-Whole Feminine Sexuality, the Big Other, and the Other Jouissance— Rereading Seminar XX Encore

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Abstract:

Through a close reading of Lacan's Encore seminar, this article locates the reasons and consequences of not-whole femininity. The lack of the big Other and the unnameability of the Other Jouissance can be consequences—and reasons, retroactively posited—of the female not-wholeness. Thus, the not-wholeness of female sexuality breaks down the boundary between cause and effect, form and content, and even knowledge and jouissance.

Through analyzing the causes and effects of the not-wholeness, the big Other and the Other jouissance, the article argues that these three constitute Lacanian logic of impossibility, contingency, and necessity.

Keywords:

The not-whole femininity, the big Other,
the Other jouissance

When talking about sexual jouissance, Jacques Lacan (1999: 8–9) uses the analogy of the number and the intersection. Like the finite number enclosing the infinite tendencies or numbers toward itself, the intersection has the same relational structure. The intersection is also a place of convergence and separation, with the convergence meaning that underneath a limited and closed space of meeting is covered an infinite number of attempts to meet, and the separation implying the impossibility of this covering. Lacan then proposes that the said intersection is a “being that... covers or poses an obstacle to the supposed sexual relationship” (ibid.: 9). This number and intersection analogy retroactively presents a sexual relationship that moves from the impossible, through the contingent convergence’s covering, to the final, surplus, and disperse state of jouissance. What covers the impossibility of a sexual relationship is the big Other, a closed and limited space. The Other jouissance is fantasized jouissance enjoyed by the Other and what the Other lacks.

Sexualization in Lacanian psychoanalysis describes the passage of libidinal energy through the Oedipal triangle, which results in sexed beings taking up different structural locations. Thus, sexualization has no direct relationship to physical features but relies on structural difference. Lacan talks about this process in terms of “the displacement of the negation” (ibid.: 144), which has three formulations: that which “stops not being written” (ibid.: 94) is the phallic function; that which “doesn’t stop being written” (ibid.: 108) is the necessity, that is, what is led to through analyzing the phallic reference; and that which “doesn’t stop not being written (ibid.: 94),” defined by Lacan as the impossible sexual relationship (ibid.: 94). These three logic formulations will be interpreted in detail in a later section, but here we cannot ignore the structural correspondence of these three logic modes with the analogy of the intersection. Before the intersection, it is that infinite impossibility, those which wander outside the scope of being written, which approaches the interception of the intersection, embodied by the castration rule in the Oedipus Complex. In the intersection space, the big Other poses as a semblance that covers

the abyss of what is fluctuating underneath, and, paradoxically, as an obstacle to the impossible jouissance. This is the place dominated by the contingent phallic function. What escapes the big Other's inscription is that necessary, surplus jouissance that acts as the hole in the big Other and exposes the big Other's pretended posture.

This article will illustrate the consequences of Lacan's proposition of the capitalized Women's non-existence for both the big Other and the jouissance of the big Other in Lacanian psychoanalysis. In presenting the consequences, rather than the reasons, of the not-whole feminine sexuality, the article presents a temporal loop causality, from which one supposes the causes or sources, rather than a lineal evolution of a sexual relationship. In this way, it exposes the displacement in this retroactive effect. The article will use Seminar XX's primary text, *Encore*, proclaimed as one of the hardest seminars to untangle, to expound the relationship between female sexuality's not-wholeness, the big Other, and the Other jouissance. The official translation of Lacan's seminars was only published at the turn of the twenty-first century, which renders it necessary to refer to Lacan's text more closely. Based on a close reading of this seminar, this article will argue the relationship among these three, that is, the not-whole of female sexuality, the big Other, and the Other jouissance, constitute the Lacanian logic model of impossibility, contingency, and necessity respectively.

Lacan's three-logic model describes the deadlock of sexual relationships, implanted in the sexualization process. That which "doesn't stop not being written" is this original impossibility of inscription in the Symbolic, the impossibility to express jouissance in language, which is retroactively traced, stains our attempts to express this impossibility, and becomes the unavoidable eternal pathological element in our activities. It is the inherent gap between our natural, multiplied perceptive facilities and the programmed, regulated understanding abilities (Žižek 1993: 58). This gap transfers itself again and becomes displaced through language acquisition; it is the inarticulability of the not-whole of the female sexuality. That which "stops not being written" is the subjectification element that contingently occupies the place of the empty seat of sexual relationship and thus stops the signifier chain from flowing. These contingent elements thus cover the gap or impossibility of jouissance and offer temporary replacements, like phallic jouissance, for the subject. That which "doesn't stop being written" is retroactively posited by the subject as escaping the big Other's inscription, which will act as the final referential point of the subject and the big Other.

Lacan's three-phase logic of female sexuality regains new ground after its initial dismissal by feminist thought. Drawing on the inscription of women into language, Hélène Cixous advocates a feminine writing that will expose the ineffable female experience "from an inconceivable region, deep down inside me but unknown, as if there might exist somewhere in my body... another space, limitless" (1991: 10). What differentiates Lacan from Cixous' advocacy of feminine writing is a denial of essential femininity prior to castration. Instead, Lacan stipulates that both man and woman are the result of a failed attempt to inscribe the lost object of desire into language, and an inequation of desire and *jouissance*. As with Cixous, Judith Butler (1993: 2–3) locates a material effect in cultural and political discourses on sexuality and considers female sexuality to be the result of discourses' performative iteration. Different from the returning to the essential femininity through writing advocated by Cixous, Butler locates a disruptive power in the reiterative performance of the symbolic Other, since this Other is never complete and there is always a failure or variation in its repetitive iteration. Still, there are some key differences between Butler and Lacan. While Butler denies sexuality's essentialism and instead considers it a linguistic construction, Lacan thinks of male and female sexualization as two different reactions to an inherent impasse of sexual relationship, which in turn results in the not-all female sexuality.

Specifically, Lacan's three-phase logic of sexualization as the transition from impossibility to contingency and to necessity offers a process of sexualization that is not a lineal causality but is the overlapping of cause and effect: the reasons retroactively presupposed and the consequences subsequently brought about. The not-whole female sexuality is both the original cause retroactively posited from the phallic whole logic and the consequences of the phallic castration. Besides the three modes of negation mentioned above as the contingent, the necessary, and the impossible, Ellie Ragland adds another logic of the possible in which some symptom ceases writing itself, and further divides these four logics: "two of the modes – the necessary and the possible – describe a masculine way of being in language, while the other two – the contingent and the impossible – take up a feminine epistemology" (2004: 180). Ragland's main difference from the logic argued in this article is in the division of the contingent: here, the contingent is associated with the big Other, while Ragland attributes it to female sexuality. The reason for the division in this article is that the phallic signification is not universally but contingently falling on some phallic signification. The contingency that "stops not being written" implies

the phallic function's instability and temporary nature. Ragland pairs the contingent with the female because, in contrast to the male logic's possible and necessary, "the impossible and contingent logics know that not all meaning can be enclosed within a space" (2004: 181). The contingent's ambiguous status is consistent with this article's argument: not-whole female sexuality is simultaneously the phallic inscription's cause retroactively posited and its consequence. Therefore, the logic of contingency is associated with female sexuality by Ragland but paired in this article with the not universal big Other.

This ambiguous status of the female not-wholeness as both cause and consequence is also exposed by other scholars in different ways. Lorenzo Chiesa associates Lacan's sexualization with Lacan's contemporary, Gottlob Frege's account of the logic of numbers. He thinks the blurring of origin and product, or cause and consequence, is due to Lacan's logic of numbers: "It is also this very [woman's] in-existence's concomitant ex-sistence toward what lies in between the zero and the one" (Chiesa 2016: 169). Women, or more exactly women's jouissance, are both in-existent and ex-sistent. This is what causes women's logical out-of-placeness between the zero and one as both the contingent and the necessary. On the relationship between thought and being, Joan Copjec expresses a similar structure to the ambiguous status of the not-all female sexuality: "it is thought that makes an all of being impossible. It is thought that makes this impossibility of constituting an all a property (not of thought, but) of being" (2002: 3). There is an unidentifiable status of the being in relation to thought here: whether the being should be cause or consequence. In terms of the relationship between the One of masculinity and the zero of the not-all femininity, it is the fantasized One of male sexuality that treats the in-existence of femininity as the zero, as the unattainable object *a*. In turn, it is this ex-istance of female sexuality's zero, an inherent paradox, that ensures the phantasmatic completeness and inherent disintegration of the male phallic world.

The Not-whole Feminine Sexuality

As Lacan formulates sexualization, the formula on the upper part of the female side says: there is not a woman who is not under the influence of the phallic function; not all of a woman is under the influence of the phallic function. These two statements constitute an inherent deadlock in the female subject: For one, the female subject as a speaking being is affected by the rules stipulated around

the phallic signifier; for another, not all women's jouissance comes from the phallic function. It, therefore, means that the not-whole of women's jouissance is situated in the phallic function, with some in and some out. Lacan describes this negation as a "never-before-seen function in which the negation is placed on the quantifier, which should be read 'not-whole'" (1999: 72). This negation is not on the woman as a whole, but an indeterminate one, which results in the not-whole.

Rather than the Freudian double deprivation, there is another way to interpret the logic of the not-whole.¹ Lacan moves from the Freudian position that differentiates men from women between having and being phallus to the non-relationship of sexual difference where the phallic signifier serves as the operator of the impossible relationship between the symbolic and the jouissance (Luepnitz 2003: 226). Lacan considers that he puts forward the woman as not whole because "the question of a jouissance that, with respect to everything that can be used in the function of the phallic jouissance, is in the realm of the infinite" (1999: 103). Through identifying with the phallic signifier, the subject enjoys phallic jouissance. Jouissance, as the unfathomable depth of the subject's psychic and physical experience, never completely overlaps with the symbolic. Woman, thus, also enjoys other jouissance, the Other's jouissance that is left out by the Symbolic's phallic function and that resists the phallic function.

The not-whole negation is not a total negation, but an indeterminate negation. It is not simple negation, as the idealist does to materialism: all the material exists not because of its pre-discursive existence, but due to the representation of mind work. Instead, as Lacan himself clarifies, his formulation of sexualization wants to get hold of "the idealism related to the impossibility of inscribing the sexual relationship between two bodies of different sexes" (ibid.: 120). It seems there is an interior antagonism in the sexual relationship that stops a symmetrical relationship between two sexes from developing. The not-whole logic is the female way to deal with this antagonism. It represents the transition of negation from Lacan's logic of contingency that "stops not being written" to his logic of

¹ What differentiates the woman's sexualization from the man's, according to Freud, is that the woman achieves her symbolic identification based on an imaginary process because the girl depends on the gestalt image of father as the phallus. Besides castration, the girl suffers another deprivation because her child, whom she envisages as his phallus, is separated from her. Therefore, what the woman gains from symbolic identification is an empty place, a lack, and an absence. Only through being the phallus can the woman become the signifier of the man's desire and obtain her sexual position.

necessity that “does not stop being written.” If the phallic function’s logic is the logic of men that obeys the rule of half-saying, that is, it only says enough to carry on, then the not-whole or the non-all logic is the logic of women that “doesn’t stop not being written,” and that will never stop.

As to the question of what is covered by the transition of negation from impossibility to contingency, Lacan explains that the temporary contingency that “stops not being written” is

an illusion that something is not only articulated but inscribed, inscribed in each of our destinies, by which, for a while—a time during which things are suspended—what would constitute the sexual relationship finds its trace and its mirage-like path in the being who speaks. (ibid.: 145)

That “stops not being written,” or the contingent, just replaces the gap in the transition of negation. It is an illusion that covers the unstoppable movement of things or sexual relationship, and that appears occasionally in the traces and mirages of our destinies. Our destinies are but this repetitive articulation of something that is doomed at its origin. It is an illusionary belief that something completely enjoyable might be waiting at the end of the tunnel or that someone else, like the big Other, is enjoying this unattainable *jouissance*. This illusion either gives us temporary peace of mind or the driving force to attain this full enjoyment. The illusion covers the suspension of things—the suspension of the Freudian Thing or the object in the subject-object relationship. In this case, the Thing is replaced and left undealt with in the transition of negation.

This Lacanian not-whole of feminine sexuality is a double negation in dialectical logic. The double negation is not a return to the original affirmative status with a positive existence. It resembles the Kantian indeterminate judgment, where it is neither the impossibility that “doesn’t stop not being written,” nor the state of phallic function that is fallible and never fulfills, but the intermediary state that is simultaneously indeterminate and subversive. What is indeterminate is that this not-whole sexuality is not articulable in symbolic language; what is subversive is that the feminine sexuality possesses a hysteric quality that forever questions what she really wants. Colette Soler clarifies the woman’s hysteric quality in relation to the Other: “she makes herself a cause thereof, but a cause of. . . knowledge, not because she is motivated by a desire to know, but because she would like to inspire a desire to know in the Other” (2002: 52). Thus, the woman’s hysterical quality supports the knowl-

edge, which points to the lack of the Other. First, female sexuality negates the big Other, like a symbolic castration. Then, there is a self-negation in the Other that exposes what the hysteric woman is seeking in the Other: the lack of the Other that could inversely find support from the hysterical questioning of women.

This not-whole logic involves a distinctive approach to some philosophical aporias. The first of these is between form and content. In the relationship between form and content, different priorities will produce different standings. If you think the form is an enlivening framework that gives meaning to the neutral content, which will otherwise remain chaotic and undifferentiated, you belong to that group of idealistic thinkers. If, on the other hand, you hold that the particular content decides the universal form and acts as the principle of the form's individualization, you stand on the side of those materialistic thinkers. On this controversy between form and content, Lacan seems to fall in the former categories: "Form is the knowledge of being. The discourse of being presumes that being is, and that is what holds it" (1999: 119). Here, Lacan is following the Platonic tradition that places more weight on the form, which stipulates and supports a range of being. Lacanian psychoanalysis, however, aims to probe that part of being that is outside the frame of the Symbolic but that leaves its imprint in the Symbolic. As Lacan himself clarifies, psychoanalysis underpins "not the idealism that holds that everything we know is representation, but rather that idealism related to the impossibility of inscribing the sexual relationship between two bodies of different sexes" (ibid.: 120). So, Lacan here is burying an explosive in the Platonic tradition that will bankrupt the all-inclusive image of the form.

The explosive that psychoanalysis is seeking is that little piece of the Real that will undermine both idealistic and materialist thinking. The Lacanian imposition of sexual difference not only admits the impossibility of inscribing sexual difference but also breaks down the complementary relationship between the two sexes. Paul Verhaeghe explains the impossible relationship between sexes, as well as between form and content, and between mind and body: "Each time we meet with an impossible relationship between two terms, in which one tries to regain the other but never succeeds, because this other is already included in the one, albeit by ex-sistence" (2002: 130). Lacanian psychoanalysis places some surplus enjoyment outside the phallic function and refuses the dichotomic thinking. Within the range of the sexual relationship, that little piece of the Real might correspond to the big Other's jouissance that a woman has but is unable to name. It forever puts the woman in a position

to pursue what is in this place of the big Other's *jouissance*, and thus associates woman with the hysteric.

Another aporia the not-whole logic answers is about Oneness: the One's nature and its origin. On the former, Lacan says that "there's such thing as One," which implies that that the One is made up, and that "desire merely leads us to aim at the gap (*faille*) where it can be demonstrated that the One is based only on the essence of the signifier" (1999: 5), which means there is always a gap between desire and satisfaction. What caused the gap is the essence of the signifier. Like the intersection analogized with the *jouissance* by Lacan, the signifier stands and covers the gap between the desire and satisfaction. The signifier is like the extension of the Real psychic effect, which covers the experience's impossibility and leads the subject to other signifiers. The signifier is the result of the double negation that first negates the impossibility of the representation and then exposes the underlying object *a* within the logic of the signifiers that drives the signifier's movement.

On this unreal of the One's reality or faked presence, Lacan seems again to have something in common with the idealistic thinkers. For the idealists, the reality is there for our gaze; for Lacan, the subjective stance is also constitutive of reality. However, there is a fundamental difference between Lacan and the idealists. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the subject's sense of reality depends on the big Other's gaze and its guarantee. The subject needs to repress something substantive about the object to emerge as a legitimate subject, but the repressed will return and disrupt the subject's acquired peace. What's more, this repressed will accompany the subject and act as the final reference for the subject's thinking and behavior. This is a blind spot that is inscribed in the subject's activity of seeing, which guarantees the consistency of the subject's perceptive world. Slavoj Žižek interprets this repressed but effective presence of the past in the present as "the paradox of a kind of 'pathological a priori': a pathological element that sustains the consistency of the formal frame within which it occurs" (1999: 277). The pathological element that disrupts the Symbolic operation turns into a supporting force that guarantees the consistent operation of the Symbolic. It is a paradoxical existence that is both inherent and pre-excluded by the Symbolic. It is a blind spot that lies outside the subject's perception but ensures the subjective world's legitimacy and Oneness. For the idealist, the One, like the Platonic Ideal, is always exterior to the subjective world, whose movement changes the material world's configuration, while Lacanian psychoanalysis accepts both this

not-whole of the material presence and the inflexed interiority of this observant subjective gaze.

The One's construction is, therefore, based on the signifier's essence, which makes "at-least-one" or "One-missing." In other words, the language creates the meaning that ties the subject to the network of signifiers. Through speaking language, the subject includes part of himself or his being in his statement, which Lacan names as the subject of statement. And this subject of statement is the price of excluding the act of saying itself, which is named by Lacan as the subject of enunciation. Within the subject's sexualization framework, the female subject is entitled to two kinds of *jouissance*, as we have talked about. The female subject's *jouissance*, like the subject of enunciation, is excluded from language, but she is participating or enjoying female *jouissance*. This is the paradox of female *jouissance*, which gives the female more sources of pleasure but excludes it from the consciousness or knowledge of the female.

This is the central theme that Lacan covers in this seminar about female sexuality, where he states, "the crux of or key to what I put forward this year concerns the status of knowledge, and I stressed that the use of knowledge could but imply a *jouissance*" (ibid.: 125). Bruce Fink thinks that in the seminar, Lacan still centers on the basic Freudian question between representation and affect, changing the question into the impossibility of knowledge and *jouissance* (2002: 21–22). Lacan's formulae of sexualization reveals an inherent deadlock in the two sides of the formulae that prevents full access to the *jouissance*. Alenka Zupančič succinctly summarizes the relationship between knowledge and *jouissance* in Lacanian psychoanalysis: "The unconscious is the very form of existence of an ontological negativity pertaining to sexuality ('there is no sexual relation'). Because of its link to a singular mode/split of knowledge (I don't know that I know), this form is actually epistemic" (2017: 16). The same negativity pertaining to the conscious is here inflicted onto the relationship between knowledge and sexuality. The unconscious that plagues the conscious has the mode of "I don't know that I know." It also applies to woman's sexuality: the woman enjoys access to the mythic *jouissance* of the big Other, about which she knows nothing. Knowledge, woman, and subject all fall under this category of a split mode, in which an ontological negativity prohibits its identification with itself. The negativity, along with its accommodation with the cultural matrix, produces different modes of sexualization for man and woman and still maintains its effect within each mode, thus resulting in the asymmetrical relationship between two sexes (there is no sexual relationship).

Knowledge, woman, and subject thus all occupy a place in which they are not fully in control, a half-being that is plagued in the center of their beings. As Lacan interprets the subject, the place, and semblance: “We are not even semblance. We are, on occasion, that which can occupy that place, and allow what to reign there? Object *a*” (1999: 95). These three conceptual items (the semblance, the subject, and object *a*) operate around a place in the subject’s perceptive and psychical structure, upon which they are producing some effect. The subject is the place’s sovereign, acting as the intermediary bridge that connects the semblance and object *a*. It is like a formal framework that contains some semblance in the place under which lies the real manipulator, object *a*. The function of object *a* is paradoxical, both as excluded content and as a form with included effect.

The other question about the One, the origin of the One, is closely related to the question we have analyzed of the One’s nature. The question of the One’s origin may be transformed into the question of what constitutes the One and what is in the place of the One prior to its coming. We have investigated the nature of the occupants (knowledge, woman, and subject) and their relationship to place. What is there prior to its occupants’ coming? What results the awkward relationship between the occupants and their places? Lacan himself denies any ontological positivity in his teaching: “it [the book that discredited Lacan] assumes — and with that one can do anything — that I have an ontology, or, what amounts to the same thing, a system” (ibid.: 70). Thus, here Lacan uses an empty seat of ontology to return the attack because it targets an empty seat that is not the real focus of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Quoting Francois Balmes, Žižek (2012: 779) raises the question whether language is a protective screen against sexuality’s impossibility or that sexuality is repressed with our entry into the language. He then proposes that “the symbolic order is an effect which rebels against its own cause, and, vice versa, language itself retroactively generates the heterogeneous Otherness which it represses or excludes” (ibid.). In other words, the big Other is a contingent construct, one which hides the Real’s impossibility and regulates its pathological side. Language creates meaning and orders intersubjective communication, from which it retroactively envisages the pre-representational world as an otherness, which it excludes.

Thus, the One’s origin is a retroactive effect, which is different from the pure origin but is an effect envisaged from the current symbolic order. Religious tradition seeks to return to the prelapsarian world, and metaphysics maintains there is a stabilized and automatic

center, both of which lose or deviate their directions on the way.¹ The situation is like the relationship between the love and death drives in Lacanian psychoanalysis. Love is a drive toward the One, which covers the sexual relationship's displacement. However, there is another more fundamental drive that negates the drive for the One, which ends up always *Encore*, as the seminar title shows. In talking about the article, "Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty," Lacan says that the intersubjective relationship between three prisoners can be reduced to two plus *a*, since each subject intervenes as a small *a* in the gaze of the others (1999: 49). Furthermore, he carries on the reduction: "This two plus *a*, from the standpoint of *a*, can be reduced, not to the two others, but to a One plus *a*" (ibid.: 49). It cannot be reduced to two complementary ones because of this irreducible small *a*, which cannot be fitted into either one. This One plus *a* is the origin of One, where One is to fill up the empty seat caused by the small invisible *a*. The small *a* is the reason behind the One, which is to cover the emptiness left by the small *a*; the small *a*, however, relies on the retroactive trace in the big Other, which otherwise remains out of track. What remains unfulfilled is the not-whole of the One's combination with the small *a*, which does not make a whole.

The Big Other

What differentiates the Lacanian big Other and the unchangeable structure of structuralism is that the big Other lacks. This lack may be represented by the fact that the master signifier is the signifier without its signified; it can also be illustrated by the Freudian myth of patricide that is the necessary condition for the establishment of the law and the master signifier. Lacan points this out — that the big Other also lacks by comparing scientific and psychoanalytic discourse. Scientific discourse supposes that there is a strict and mechanic causality, resulting in the conclusion that the world is a strict structure. This conclusion will stop us from enquiring about knowledge because everything is in a fixed place of some structure. Psychoanalytic discourse brings in confusion through the fact that man "knows a lot more about things than he thinks when he acts" (Lacan 1999: 88). This ambiguity of the unconscious thus produces a reality that is phantasmatic, which in turn produces the possibility

¹ Religious traditions like Christianity tell a story of fall and salvation. It is a nostalgic return to the original One. Metaphysics put an automatic being at the center as the One, who is in full control of his behavior. For the narration of metaphysical centering of the subject, see Butler (1993: 6–9).

of knowledge. This is the cycle that is presumed by psychoanalysis about being, knowledge, and the world, different from scientific discourse.

Lacan uses the relationship between the big Other (the big A) and object *a* (the small *a*) to clarify this fundamental difference between two discourses. He says that psychoanalytic teaching is “to dissociate *a* and A by reducing the first to what is related to the imaginary and the other to what is related to the symbolic” (ibid.: 83). From the scientific perspective, the world is associated in a certain way that can be quantified, thus causing the coalescence of the barred big Other and object *a*. Through free association, psychoanalysis locates the obstacle that causes the short circuit of *a* and A, which leads to the subject’s stagnancy or its stubborn attachment to some traumatic element. This is where the subject’s *jouissance* lies and where the subject simultaneously longs and fears to return, which is why Lacan says that free association is “what leads to the *Lustprinzip*, what leads to it most directly, without requiring the accession to the higher spheres that constitutes the foundation of Aristotelian ethics” (ibid.: 84). The *Lustprinzip* (the pleasure principle) is human beings’ survival instinct that preserves the race, but there is another more insistent and more fundamental drive that resists beyond the pleasure principle, the death drive, causing the subject to strive again after each failure. The death drive beyond the pleasure principle is also what causes the little *a* to slip from the dominance of the big Other.

There is an asymmetrical nature to the dual relationship between male and female, knowledge and *jouissance*, and the subject and object, within which there is something extra escaping the capture of their relationship. In talking about the evolution of the relationship between form and content, a passage in the seminar mentions this complex but fundamental relationship between those opposing terms:

The strange thing is that in this crude polarity that makes matter passive and form the agent that animates it, something, albeit something ambiguous, nevertheless got through, namely, that this animation is nothing other than the *a* with which the agent animates what? He animates nothing — he takes the other as his soul. (ibid.: 82)

Thus, there is nothing that is animated between these two polarities, form and matter, which can be extended to the relationship between male and female, knowledge and *jouissance*, and the subject and object. That is to say, there is nothing substantial between

these two as the bridge that forms a complementary relationship except the inarticulable object *a*. Form is something stained in the content that blocks the full representation of object; man chases woman as object *a* that is in the woman but more than woman; jouissance escapes the understanding of the knowledge and drives the endless pursuit of the knowledge; and the subject itself is that blind spot in the object that makes the representation of the object simultaneously possible and impossible.

Thus, there is always already an uncomplimentary relationship between these two opposed items, within which there is something decisive but indeterminate, both interior and exterior. About non-corresponding male and female relationships, Lacan comments that “a woman can, as I said, love in a man only the way in which he faces the knowledge thanks to which he soulloves” (ibid.: 88). *Soulove* is a combination of soul and love, which means either man loves the soul of woman or man love woman with a soul, which is also the precondition of traditional ethics. Lacan refutes the hypocritical claim of both these situations. Like speaking, which Lacan considers a stupidity, soul is also positioned in an empty place that is filled with some sublime content. There is not simply so-called soul in every being, and soul is not the headquarter of the bodily element. Soulove is the blind spot that escapes scrutiny and that, therefore, sustains the consistency of love. It is the product of all-powerful knowledge, the authoritative and patriarchal figure of the father, and all-inclusive framework of the form. This is the trap that attracts the female’s gaze and becomes the way that directs the love of man and woman.

In the case of perversions, what they seek is the precisely the blind spot that the soullovers want to cover. Put more simply, the sadistic want to destroy the elements that resist in their objects, which revive their victims and their own desire; the masochistic sacrifice themselves as the object of suffering to expose the big Other’s pretenses and incite its anxiety; and the fetishists are still stuck in their fixation of others’ unarticulated sexual jouissance.¹ These unchanneled sexual desires in their different ways target the very gap that separates male and female desire. Comparatively, neurosis represses this illicit desire toward jouissance’s full consummation and accepts the compromise of phallic jouissance. The neurosis’s negation is, therefore, an indirect and indeterminate negation that admits the void of this jouissance itself. There is a small but fundamental difference between the neurotic and the soullovers, though

¹ For the relationship between object *a* and the couple of the sadists and masochists, see Lacan (2014: 163–65).

both repress the illicit desire toward an unattainable *jouissance*. The neurotic always doubt whether the *jouissance* they obtained is the one that they want. That is equivalent to what Lacan calls the deviation between language and *jouissance*: “I ask you to refuse what I offer you because that’s not it” (ibid.: 111). This is also the displacement of negation that is always already in place.

What and how does this big Other, the big Other that is barred, have to do with sexed beings, and with the mismatch between the two sexes? On the big Other and sexual relationship, Lacan states,

In reality, he puts her to work – to the work of the One. And it is in that respect that the Other – the Other insofar as the articulation of language, that is, the truth, is inscribed therein – the Other must be barred, barred on the basis of (de) what I earlier qualified as the One-missing. (ibid.: 131)

Freudian differentiation of men and women as having the phallus and being the phallus, though controversial, is consistent with what Lacan designates here. Men desire in a phallic way, that is, attract women through obtaining the status of phallus. The phallic signifier, however, has no signified, and can only dominate in the locus of the big Other. Man’s desire is doubled, in that man does not rely on their actual partners but pursues the object *a* that is inscribed in his partner (Salecl 2000: 301–02).¹ Man’s desire is directed to the object *a* posited through the fantasy. Thus, what man wants in woman is the object *a* that is missing in the phallic function and will supplement it, in the hope of making the One. The big Other, on the one hand, is the locus that sexed beings speak, and provides support for the enjoyment of the subject. If the big Other must be barred and One-missing, as Lacan designated, the big Other just provides enough enjoyment for the subject to carry on, so that the subject will survive without a full presence of being. On the other hand, the big Other stipulates the reality principle that governs the pleasure principle to regulate and channel the subject’s pathological energy. Therefore, the relationship between the big Other and sexed beings is paradoxical in that the big

¹ Salecl clarifies the relationship in the Oedipus complex triangle and transforms the triangular relationship into four angles. She associates this transformation with the doubled partner and considers what is double is death itself: “In the final analysis, the fourth figure in the quartet is none other than death itself. This death necessarily remains only an imagined death” (2000: 302). In the man’s situation, the woman lover is double into the lover herself and the unattainable lover, the object *a* that supplements the lack in the male subject.

Other supports as well as regulates the subject's enjoyment.

Furthermore, what plays an inherent role in the lack of the big Other is a self-referential negation implanted in both the pleasure and reality principle. In rereading Freud's *Entwurf*, Lacan posits that the control of the pleasure principle is theoretically exercised on the perception, while the reality principle tends toward the identity of thought (Lacan 1997: 31). In a word, both principles affect not external, but psychic reality. Therefore, the reality principle might seem to prolong or apply the pleasure principle despite their conflictual relationship. Psychic reality produces conscious reality as well as represses unconscious reality. This relationship of the two principles, which governs the jouissance of the subject and the reality, thus introduces a fissure in the subject's relationship with external reality. Since the unconscious reality is released in the structure of language, the big Other, as the locus where the truth is articulated, must be consistent with the subject and be barred if it can articulate the truth of the subject.

Man's desire is to desire for One. Man, thus, tends to be obsessive neurotic: although he understands that the phallic function does not necessarily bring about meaning and Oneness, he reserves a sacred place for the phallic function and repetitively pursues the full function of phallus. As regards women, the situation is more uncertain and indeterminate.

As Lacan's formulation of sexualization shows, woman has access to both phallic jouissance and the jouissance of the big Other: woman desires man as he is the symbol of having the phallus, and woman also has access to the jouissance that is supposed to have by the big Other. Through being the phallus, woman maintains the position of object *a*. In this way, woman maintains the desire of man as the unfathomable depth without being fixed in the phallic function or the function of the big Other. As for the big Other's function, Lacan specifies that "[w]oman has a relation with S(\$), and it is already in that respect that she is doubled" (ibid.: 81). That fact that woman is doubled means that woman is also stuck in a deadlock. The reason Lacan gave here is that woman has a relation with the barred big Other. The big Other is an open set that is established by excluding the Father in the Freudian myth, which then opens space for the meaning and phallic jouissance. What is more, the pretended authority is guaranteed by the phallic signifier which itself lacks a signified. The exclusion and the lack thus renders woman's relationship with the big Other unmeaningful and lacking. Women's relationship with the big Other thus puts woman in a double deadlock, which she cannot fit in completely or cannot withdraw from.

The Other Jouissance

Lacan starts this seminar on female sexuality with jouissance. Jouissance, being, and subject are all related to impossibility: the impossibility to realize the sexual relationship, the impossibility to exert full being, and the impossibility to formulate the subject-object relationship in the One. These impossibilities in turn cause the gap or fissure, the gap between knowledge and jouissance, meaning and being, and subject and object. The subject appears exactly in these gaps to cover them and impossibility. Within Lacan's three-logic models, the subject is that which "doesn't stop being written," the logic of necessity, because there is always something missing in the subject's expression, and there is always a gap in the subject's satisfaction, which, however, cannot stop the subject from expressing himself.

While the impossible libidinal energy filters through the Oedipus phase, some becoming enjoyable and legitimate, others are repressed but will return. This is the process of castration and identification. Castration is the necessary negation that forms the subject, without which there is no jouissance. Jouissance, therefore, is closely related to rule and law. As Lacan says, "that is clearly the essence of law — to divide up, distribute, or reattribute everything that counts as jouissance" (*ibid.*: 3). The law is thus to ensure the even distribution and enjoyment of jouissance so that it will last. Sexual jouissance is the result of the incest taboo, which prohibits marriage within the close clan. Genevieve Morel associates the figure of incubus in the woman's sexual nightmare with the dead primordial father: "And should we not seek the secret of this incubus in the dead father, who is both the guardian of jouissance and the principle of castration?" (2002: 81) The dead father is the paradoxical combination of law and jouissance. Thus, woman's jouissance is associated with the primordial father's jouissance, the Other jouissance excluded and castrated to ensure the symbolic law's consistency. The figure of incubus is the return of the primordial father.

Lacan uses the transition from infinity to finiteness to illustrate the non-satisfaction of sexual jouissance. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, castration is "the sign with which an avowal dresses itself up, the avowal that jouissance of the Other, of the body of the Other, is promoted only on the basis of infinity" (Lacan 1999: 7–8). Through symbolic castration, natural libidinal energy is channeled into a symbolic construct, which constitutes finite and limited space. This finite and limited space is exactly the locus of the big Other. It is this symbolic castration that maintains the difference between

the natural libidinal flow and sexed beings and forms the tension between infinity and finiteness. This is also what the analogy of the intersection used by Lacan is about: a finite and limited space extending to infinity. Lacan summarizes these two resulted finite jouissance from the infinity:

Here then is the statement of the status of jouissance insofar as it is sexual. For one pole, jouissance is marked by the hole that leaves it no other path than that of phallic jouissance. For the other pole, can something be attained that would tell us how that which up until now has only been a fault or gap in jouissance could be realized? (Lacan 1999: 8)

Phallic jouissance is a product that is supposed to fill the hole caused by the castration. Phallic jouissance is a gap or a fault in and of itself and is, therefore, finite. As for the other pole, which is obviously female jouissance, it is ambiguous whether the female jouissance is in the pre-phallic space or is a reactionary measure to make up the fault in the phallic jouissance. Nevertheless, Lacan specifies that this female jouissance, the open sets that covers limited space, constitutes a multitude that “can be taken one by one” (ibid.: 10).

These rules or limits regarding the castration, through repetitive articulation, is incorporated as agency of regulation into the subject’s behavior. This is why Lacan says that the superego, as the agency of morality which judges the ego, is “a correlate of castration” (ibid.: 7). How do we interpret the contradiction between the function of superego (as the correlate of castration, the superego is supposed to guard against the dark and pathological energy in the subject) and the imperative of the superego, “Enjoy!”?

This contradiction is due to the double figure of the superego: the superego is both “consonant with the [symbolic] register and the idea of the law” and obscene for “its senseless, blind character, of pure imperativeness and simple tyranny” (Lacan 1991: 102). Lacan, therefore, not only associates the superego with morality and the symbolic, but to the devouring and possessive image of the mother. There is also a self-negating reflection in the superego’s function, which establishes its paradoxical presentation. The superego arises from a misunderstanding of the law, from gaps in the symbolic chain, and it fills out those gaps with an imaginary substitute that distorts the law (Lacan 2006: 142). To trace the reason further, the paradoxical superego is also because of the ambiguous relationship between law and jouissance. The law of castration, while prohibiting desire for the mother, also produces new forms of jouissance.

Phallic jouissance can be associated with the phallic signifier, the master signifier without the signified, which results in the phallic jouissance's gap or fault. Where, on the other pole, does this jouissance of the Other come from? Lacan connects the jouissance of the Other with the gap in desire: "the gap there is between this One and something that is related to being and, behind being, to jouissance" (1999: 6). *Encore* (once more), the title of this seminar about female sexuality, is also the name for endless desire, because there is always a gap between the big Other and the being, between language and jouissance. This is also the reason for the non-satisfaction of the Other jouissance. Lacan emphasizes difference between the phallic jouissance and the Other jouissance: "to enjoy a body when there are no more clothes leaves intact the question of what makes the One, that is, the question of identification" (ibid.: 6). The One is a symbolic construct based on an exclusion, as symbolic law is based on eliminating the primordial father in the Freudian myth. Through identification with the symbolic law, the subject gains a legitimate identity. However, to enjoy a body, the body of the Other that symbolizes the Other is different from the construction of phallic jouissance. Renata Salecl thinks that this Other jouissance, different from the phallic jouissance, "does not pass through the unconscious, it passes beyond the woman" (2002: 95). This location of the Other jouissance outside of the unconscious is consistent with Lacan's stipulation. The place where this jouissance of the Other comes, according to Lacan, is named *l'amour*:

L'amour is what appears in the form of bizarre signs on the body. They are the sexual characteristics that come from beyond...regarding which I would point out that we can't say that it's life since it also bears death, the death of the body, by repeating it. (Lacan 1999: 5)

Here, there are several levels that are in different order. First there is being, the jouissance of body as such, which is unsexual and represents the original libidinal flow. Through sexualization, some parts of the body are sexualized and becomes erotic zones around which develops the erotic drive, the eros. The distinction of *l'amour* is that it carries with it not only the life drive, the eros, but also the death drive. This death drive is toward "the death of the body," which can also be extended to the non-satisfaction of the jouissance, the jouissance of the Other.

This Other jouissance also has a paradoxical relationship with language. Language has an indeterminate relationship with the unconscious desire. The word "indeterminate" means that language

represses the unconscious but is retroactively supposed. What again negates the language and gives an indeterminate meaning is that language expresses the unconscious desire without the subject's awareness. This is the mode of "I do not know that I know." This double negation and the mode of "unknown known" also apply to the relationship between language and the Other jouissance. As to the relationship between language and woman's jouissance, Lacan clarifies:

The sexed being of these not-whole women does not involve the body but what results from a logical exigency in speech. Indeed, logic, the coherence inscribed in the fact that language exists and that it is outside the bodies that are moved by it—in short, the Other who is incarnated, so to speak, as sexed being—requires this one by one. (ibid.: 10)

The Other jouissance of female sexuality does not involve the body, because the body is not what it used to be after the castration of language, and the body becomes the imaginary Gestalt that the subject identifies or the symbolic body that obtains its meaning at the price of the displacement of jouissance. This jouissance of the big Other, however, does not stop. It depends rather on the logical necessity of language. The relationship between language and jouissance is the relationship between language and body. Language inscribes the meaning into the body and moves the body on a displaced route, the displaced part of which will interrupt the normal operation of language. And paradoxically, the interruption is required by language.

This double negation of the Other jouissance by language results in what Lacan calls something positive expressed with a negation (ibid.: 59). Because of this castration rule, people repress this Other jouissance. It is right because of this repression and because of the Other's inappropriateness that people speak about it. This is the Other jouissance's double negation, which results in "the jouissance that shouldn't be / could never fails" (ibid.: 59). This is the logic modal of the Other jouissance: "Were there another one [besides the phallic jouissance], it shouldn't be / could never fail to be that one" (ibid.: 60). In language, there is no other jouissance except the phallic jouissance. The Other jouissance should not be that one it is supposed to be, that is, it should be expressed through other forms than it is. However, because of its necessity that "does not stop being written" in language, the Other jouissance never fails. Combined in these two modes of "shouldn't be" and "could never fail to be," the

Other jouissance is a paradoxical existence that “I don’t know that I know.” As Lacan summarizes this Other jouissance, “you don’t know how to enjoy otherwise than to be enjoyed or duped, because it is precisely the jouissance that shouldn’t be / could never fail” (ibid.: 62). There is no other way to access this Other jouissance than through the deception of language, through inscription into the big Other. This Other jouissance is a jouissance that should not be or is not supposed to be expressed directly within the range of the big Other, which, however, exerts its effect because it “could never fail to be.”

Phallic jouissance, the jouissance that constitutes man, is an obstacle to sexual relationships and is the consequence of the Otherness of woman’s jouissance. Lacan defines phallic jouissance as “the obstacle owing to which man does not come, I would say, to enjoy woman’s body, precisely because what he enjoys is the jouissance of the organ” (Lacan 1999: 7). Phallic jouissance is the obstacle itself that prevents man from enjoying woman’s body since the phallic signifier is an empty signifier, representing the excluded primordial father which is an absent presence. Thus, we can say the obstacle is posed by the absent presence of meaning, associated with the Otherness of women’s jouissance. About the Other jouissance, Lacan explains: “Being the Other, in the most radical sense, in the sexual relationship, in relation to what can be said of the unconscious, woman is that which has a relationship to that Other” (ibid.: 81). Lacan’s explanation contains three levels of implication: First, woman is always the Other and can never be fully articulated. This is the Other in the most radical sense. Second, woman is the Other in the sexual relationship and provides the coordinate for man’s desire, that is, acting as man’s object *a*. Third, the mode of unconscious, that is, unknown to the conscious, is also the governing principle of woman’s Other jouissance. Woman is unaware of her access to this Other jouissance. All these implications point to a forever lost Otherness of woman’s jouissance.

Phallic jouissance is like desire, which puts the subject on the metonymic chain to chase one symbolic meaning after another; the Other jouissance resembles the drive, the unavoidable stain that escapes the subjective gaze but accompanies every subjective behavior. Žižek thinks that one of the fundamental differences between Lacan and Deleuze is that “for Deleuze, desire at its purest stands for the free flow of libido, while the Lacanian drive is constitutively marked by a basic unresolvable deadlock” (Žižek 2004: xii). In other words, Deleuze is after the ultimate ground before language becomes contaminated, the pure desire which desires for desire’s own sake,

while in Lacanian psychoanalysis this free flow of libido, that is, Deleuzian desire, is the death drive, which repeats itself in spite of the big Other's regulation. Lacanian desire is rather what covers jouissance's non-satisfaction. Phallic jouissance is the name of this cover, which covers the sexual relationship's impossibility. The Other jouissance is this impossibility, the incompatibility between this jouissance and the big Other. On the other hand, the Other jouissance is also irreducible to desire.

It can therefore be said that phallic jouissance is the cover that hides the Other jouissance's impossibility. Taking the logic model of the One plus a as a measurement, phallic jouissance is the One created to cover the void behind, and the Other jouissance is the small a produced as a retroactive effect. On the relationship between these two jouissance, Lacan specifies: "What is produced is the jouissance that shouldn't be / could never fail. That is the correlate of the fact that there's no such thing as a sexual relationship, and it is the substantial aspect of the phallic function" (ibid.: 59). The jouissance that shouldn't be / could never fail, as discussed, is the Other jouissance. As the correlate of the impossible sexual relationship, this Other jouissance is the substantial aspect that the phallic function lacks. As the replacement of the Other jouissance, phallic jouissance is also the very obstacle that prevents the full expression of the Other jouissance.

Conclusion

In talking about the corresponding substantial object while the subject is using language, Lacan mentioned three types of substance: thinking, extended, and enjoying (ibid.: 21–24). The thinking substance is the part in the objective world which the term "I am thinking" grounds and presents; the extended substance are those parts that complement the thinking substance, and those that are in the "pure space," where the parts are external to each other (ibid.: 23). Thus, it can be inferred that the thinking substance and the extended substance make up the One, the temporary substitute of the whole, since the extended substance is external to or exists that thinking substance. Where is the enjoying substance in this picture of Oneness? The enjoying substance is that supposed and fantasized substance that simultaneously results from and makes up the replaced One. Phallic jouissance results from the impossible and necessary relationship between the sexual relationship and the big Other, while the Other jouissance is the retroactive effect of this relationship. Thus, the enjoying substance is self-split, which

simultaneously covers and escapes, and which creates the self-split as a result and retroactively traces itself as a reason. It is simultaneously form and content.

All these substances are related to the dimension of speaking, as Lacan said (*ibid.*: 21). Through “uttering stupidity,” the subject gains access to the substantial dimension that spreads or disperses through the imaginary, symbolic, and real world. Still, these worlds will never make up a whole of the substantial world since to speak involves the *jouissance*. No matter whether it is the phallic *jouissance* that sets up meaningful existence and that “stops not being written,” whether it is the *jouissance* of the big Other that is posited as the lost *jouissance*, or whether it is the surplus *jouissance* that the subject can access through the help of psychoanalysts, this will never make up the whole since we are always already in the language and these different kinds of *jouissance* are retroactively posited within the range of language.

Therefore, the key difference between the Lacanian not-whole female sexuality and the current advocacy of multiple sexual orientations by feminism is the simultaneousness of form and content in Lacanian structure. The female form simultaneously establishes the female way of enjoying *jouissance* and renders some *jouissance* spilled or left out of the range, thus making the not-wholeness of female sexuality. There is always already a disequilibrium between fantasized satisfaction and reasonable suppliance of enjoyment in the symbolic. This inherent impasse of female sexuality completes the man’s fantasy of wholeness through the woman as object *a*. The not-wholeness of women is necessary to establish the Oneness of phallic men, but also contingent as there is always already something left out. It is this out-of-placeness that leads to the insurmountable distance of sexual relationship.

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