

[en] Convergencia conference in Paris

MALAISE, CASTRATION, ALTERITY

May 16-17, 2025

(CLG/CEG Meeting 15th may)

Address: USIC

18 rue de Varenne, 75007 Paris

What do we today call “castration”, what do we call “alterity”, and what are their implications for the malaise of our times?

The Other and the others - our fellows - are structurally necessary for our subjective constitution: there is no subject without its inscription in the field of the Other. The Other is part of us, and his voices speak to us and through us, unbeknownst to us. Voices of desire or love, but also of hatred and refusal.

The contradictions of our desire are expressed in our fantasies and symptoms, in a dialectic of alienation and separation. A baby expects its mother to relieve it of the impulses that agitate it. Children need their parents' love and recognition to channel their desires. Adolescents and young people expect those of the opposite sex to support their sexual identification and share sublimations. Adults expect recognition at their work and within the family. We always expect others to relieve us of the irreducible dissatisfaction of our desire.

Unconscious desire is the desire of the Other, i.e., his lack of being, his castration, as such impossible to fill.

Today's malaise has evolved since Freud's or even Lacan's time. In addition to the classic conflict between the repressed and the return of the repressed, we are increasingly faced with excesses of jouissance that cannot be resolved and call for a symbolic cut. The superego becomes much more sadistic and discharges itself much more violently.

Psychiatric diagnoses of borderline states, bipolarity, hyperactivity, autism and drug addiction are multiplying.

It's worth noting that this growing power of jouissance only serves to exacerbate isolation and loneliness, in other words, the undermining of social bonds, and the difficulty of giving meaning to existence.

The capitalist discourse pushes people to act, with its typical feature: anonymity. Many individuals are now anguished by their identity (sexual, national, racial, etc.) and by the fact that they can't find an answer to the question of their lack of being anywhere but in the imaginary.

Analytical discourse is opposed to all this. It is subversive because it gives the subject a voice to express his malaise and the contradictions of his desire. This can enable him to invent a unique solution, in his own name.

The aim of this symposium is to address this issue, which questions the absence or inconsistency of structuring limits for the psyche, both from the point of view of the diversity of its clinical effects and its current societal and political effects.

In its early days, psychoanalysis helped to free the individual from the weight of the stifling norms and prohibitions of bourgeois morality, and to advance individual freedoms, including those of minorities and women. Today, however, the situation has been completely reversed, as the civilizing prohibitions and the principle of temperance are being undermined by the ever-widening reach of globalized, predatory and standardizing capitalism, which abolishes all borders, all singularities and all differences, resulting in endless struggles and wars?

What place, including in language, for the division of the subject in a new world increasingly governed by artificial intelligence, the digital and the virtual?

We look forward to seeing you in Paris in May to discuss these questions.