

Convergence Colloquium<sup>2</sup>  
DISCOMFORT, CASTRATION, OTHERNESS  
**Considerations on Demand and Desire**

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Paris, May 16–17, 2025

The Convergence Colloquium proposes a reflection on the relationship between analytical discourse, contemporary psychiatric diagnoses, and changes in symptoms and the structure of the subject. The text raises pertinent questions about how current diagnoses, such as autism, bipolar disorder, ADHD, among others, reflect changes in psychic structuring or whether they are, in fact, merely a new guise for the same structural issues.

When we differentiate ourselves from the phenomenological psychiatric field because we are within the psychoanalytic field and it concerns the listening of the subject of the unconscious, Lacan states that even when trying to be within it, “[...] my good man [...] there are disagreements” (Lacan, 1969/1970, p. 115). The discourse of the hysteric, who seeks a master, demands from an Other supposed to know, to unmask him through the “intrinsic falsity” (Harari, 2007, p. 273), attempting to produce effects of truth that are provisional. Moreover, it is suggested that the discourses of the hysteric, like those of science, are constantly re-edited.

If we consider the formalization of the four discourses in Seminar XVII, we know that it is the slave who holds knowledge, a knowledge rooted in doing, but it is “knowledge of the sign as sign” (Lacan, 1969/1970, p. 157). In the university discourse, and similarly in philosophy, knowledge attempts to seek its episteme, to distill knowledge, making it something pure.

If we think metaphorically about the chapter “The Steps of the Pantheon,” where there is a loss, not progress, because experience is separated from knowledge, and if we go hand in hand with science with gadgets, and those little things, “[...] simply those little things” (Lacan, 1969/1970, p. 158), they can bring an alienating threat

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because they could occupy the same place as us in the world. Although Lacan (1974), in "The Third," says it is unlikely that gadgets inject anima into man.

Artificial Intelligence, capable of answering questions with speed and precision, may present us with a new scenario. Would there still be the dimension of the enigma?

Algorithms work with organized and cumulative data as they are processed more. But the subversion of psychoanalysis remains present because, if we draw a parallel with the student's position in the university discourse, it is the one who asks questions. Of course, considering the effects of unspoken speech and unwritten writing by letters, where the imaginary consistency of the visual advances over the symbolic, is not without consequences.

Technological advances inflate the ego with omnipresence and omnipotence, being everywhere at the same time and managing to do unimaginable things. This is not very different from the return to childhood fantasies of magical powers and ancient civilizations.

Living in times where apps like Shopee, Shein, Mercado Livre, Amazon leave us far from the artisanal knowledge of crafts like hatters, tailors, and shoemakers. Times where the saturation of consumer goods and unimaginable possibilities occur before the subject asks the question, before encountering frustration. Let's think about the difference between contemplating an image with space and scrolling on the screen with the thumb. Perhaps we are flattened by the avalanche of image statements.

Let's consider Díaz Romero's (2020, 2nd Meeting, p. 4) hypotheses when addressing the incidences of scientific advancement on culture: let's remember the "secret pact" of the church with animal cloning, the famous sheep Dolly. Then, surprisingly, the talk of cloning stopped; something could no longer advance. Here, a withdrawal from the scene operates from culture towards science, a halt.

Continuing to think about the effects of culture concerning technology, comparing the beginning of the 19th century with the 21st. Mary Shelley's novel "Frankenstein," arising from the impossibility of enjoying the outdoors due to bad weather with her boyfriend and friend, they take on a bet to write, thus this science fiction was born as a way to give birth to the creature invented by man. From an unmet demand, desire is launched.

We learn from Freud in the dream of the "beautiful butcher's wife" that for desire to remain as lack, it must be satisfied in dissatisfaction. The resources of the symbolic cradle mark the ability to encode and decode the world. When one can read à la lettre, in the manner of the letter, that which insists, something advances. Not just any speech operates, just as not any reading interprets: it is when the bodily mark of jouissance, the letter, is traversed, when it touches the real of the signifier, that an event occurs.

When the subject dwells on the effects of lapses, misunderstandings, jokes, slips, symptoms, and dreams, it enables the emergence of the unconscious and how each one articulates with it. But what currently impregnates us with informatization saturated with meanings is not in the order of knowledge. Knowledge is on the side of flavor, in the possibility of twisting, articulating, playing with the effects of speech: in the inflection of the voice, in hesitation, in stumbling, in style. This escapes statistical calculations, just as the sexual also escapes the benefactor artificial intelligence.

The apparent expansion of possibilities—from the creation of artificial intelligences to innovations in assisted reproduction—calls us to question not only the gains but also the subjective effects. The manipulation of life and biological matter does not confer full mastery over existence to the subject; on the contrary, it can intensify anguish by confronting him with the impasses of desire and impossibility. The subject finds himself facing an excess of possibilities but without a symbolic compass to navigate this saturated field.

In this context, it is legitimate to ask whether the growing appeal to *jouissance*—in its most immediate forms and disconnected from the signifying chain—would not indicate a return of the effects of a failure in the operation of castration? The compulsive pursuit of pleasure, consumption, and instant satisfaction can be read as an attempt to plug the anguish that emerges from structural lack, constituting a mode of evasion in the face of reality. The subject, faced with the inconsistency of the Other and the fragility of the social bond, takes refuge in experiences that promise fullness, even if momentary, thus avoiding confrontation with the limits imposed by language and desire.

This dynamic, which tensions desire towards *jouissance*, suggests a subjectivity marked by a clash between the imperative of satisfaction and the impossibility that founds desire. The risk, then, is that contemporary culture, by privileging saturation with diagnostic avalanches and other scientific-technical displacements to the detriment of lack, produces subjects dislodged from the symbolic, with difficulty sustaining their own desire. Perhaps we are left to rephrase the Freudian question: what does a subject desire, *Che vuoi?*

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