
ABOUT A CONCEPT OF SHAME IN THE WORK OF JACQUES LACAN¹

Sérgio Eduardo Prudente²
University of São Paulo – USP, Brazil.

ABSTRACT. This article is a doctoral thesis synthesis in social psychology that were shown to a diachronic study of the affect of shame in the work of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. Therefore, the objective of this article is to make a conceptual delimitation of shame from Lacan's work. We chose as methodology to analyze the texts and seminars of his work in order to establish an internal connection of the basic conceptual elements for the goal. In this article, we list: 1) the image of itself, 2) castration, 3) the look, 4) social criticism and 5) practice, as radical aspects of shame, whose importance establishes an edge with which to isolate the shameful affection as a theoretical operator, according to the results of research carried out in the work of Lacan. This allowed the conceptual demarcation of shame, as well as the disclosure and its importance for both clinical practice and as social criticism index.

Keywords: Shame, affection, Jacques Lacan.

À GUIA DE UMA CONCEITUAÇÃO DA VERGONHA NA OBRA DE JACQUES LACAN

RESUMO. O presente artigo é uma síntese de tese de doutorado em psicologia social em que foi apresentado um estudo diacrônico do afeto da vergonha na obra do psicanalista francês Jacques Lacan. Portanto, o objetivo do artigo é fazer uma delimitação conceitual da vergonha a partir da obra de Lacan. Optamos, como metodologia, fazer uma análise dos textos e seminários de sua obra com o intuito de estabelecer uma ligação interna dos elementos conceituais, fundamentais para o objetivo. Neste artigo, elencamos: 1) a imagem de si, 2) a castração, 3) o olhar, 4) a crítica social e 5) a clínica, como aspectos radicais da vergonha, cuja importância estabelece uma borda com a qual podemos isolar o afeto vergonhoso como operador teórico, de acordo com os resultados da pesquisa realizada na obra de Lacan. Isso possibilitou a demarcação conceitual da vergonha, bem como a evidência de sua importância tanto para a prática clínica quanto como índice de crítica social.

Palavras-chave: Vergonha, afeto, Jacques Lacan.

A MODO DE UN CONCEPTO DE VERGÜENZA EN LA OBRA DE JACQUES LACAN

RESUMEN. Este artículo es una síntesis de la tesis doctoral en psicología social que se muestra a un estudio diacrónico del afecto de la vergüenza en el trabajo del psicoanalista francés Jacques Lacan. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de este artículo es hacer una delimitación conceptual de la vergüenza de la obra de Lacan. Elegimos como metodología para analizar los textos y seminarios de su trabajo con el fin de establecer una conexión interna de los elementos conceptuales básicos para la meta. En este artículo se indican: 1) la imagen de sí mismo, 2) la castración, 3) el aspecto, 4) crítica social y 5) la práctica, como aspectos radicales de la vergüenza, la importancia de establecer una ventaja con la que aislar el afecto vergüenza como operador teórico, de acuerdo con los resultados de la investigación llevada a cabo en la obra de Lacan. Esto permitió la delimitación conceptual de la vergüenza, así como la divulgación y su importancia para la práctica clínica y como índice de la crítica social.

Palabras-clave: Vergüenza, afecto, Jacques Lacan.

¹ *Support and funding:* Foundation for Research Support of the State of São Paulo - Fapesp 2015/08894-6

² *E-mail:* sergio_prudente@yahoo.com.br

Introduction

Shame is an eminently social affection. Its ontological dimension marks both discursive positions in society, as well as subjective, intimate and unconscious aspects. For Sartre (1943/2013), shame is the affection responsible for the most radical experience of alterity that is due to the unquestionable feeling of the presence of the Other. As an experience, shame reaches the body from the front, a condition that affirms the presence of a body in the world, this body being its necessary condition and material cause.

In psychoanalysis, according to Serge Tisseron (1992), an American tradition that treats shame as a social affection, and a French tradition, which considers aspects such as anality and the concept of ideal-self, stand out. However, in the classification of Tisseron, there were no Lacanian reference authors. It is speculated that this fact originates from the criticism, of André Green (1982, p. 120), that Lacan had excluded affection (in its broad sense) of his work. However, although widespread, this criticism does not resist to a reading of the Lacan's work, as emphasized by Prudente and Debieux Rosa (2012). In view of this situation, considering both that shame is a possible affection to be conceptualized in the Lacanian work, and that there are, in this work, clear indications of its clinical importance, we question: what is the status of the affection of shame in the work of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan?

The theme of this article is exclusively the Shame in the work of Jacques Lacan. Its objective is to establish a conceptual ground of shame through the critical reading of the work of this author. Every extension of the psychoanalytic literature on the subject was put in brackets. The *corpus laborandi* of the article is formed by texts and seminars of Lacan established and edited by Jacques-Alain Miller and published in Brazil by Jorge Zahar publishing company, unpublished seminars transcribed and translated for transmission, besides some commentators investigators of the Lacanian work. They also worked on texts in which references to Shame are documented, as well as texts in which notions and concepts that are crucial to the construction of the shameful affections appear. It is important to highlight that Lacan has never worked shame as a concept, many of his mentions to this affection are made in the *en passant* way. This was a challenge found in the present investigation. However, such a challenge is consistent with the research work. Therefore, it was necessary to "enlighten" an aspect of the work of the author to highlight it and circumscribe it as a theoretical production and clinical operator.

This article does a diachronic reading. However, this does not imply a mere chronology of the concept of shame throughout the Lacan's work. The attempt of the text is to discern articulations from concepts that make possible the engenderment of another concept that was not highlighted, that of shame. This implies also including the internal chronology of concepts to integrate them into a spectrum of traits that makes possible to shed light on a reading of the affection of shame. In this way, the methodological decision taken was to read in Lacan the way that shame affects self-image, castration, the look, and the modes of enjoyment (*jouissance*) in the social bond. This allowed us to establish an internal architecture with a movement of conservation of chronological aspects in the work (concepts and notions in different theoretical moments) and the overcoming of them (their respective transformations and re-readings) in the direction of a theoretical synthesis.

The self-image

A first mention of shame in the work of Lacan is already present in his first seminar, when the author observes that "the whole phenomenology of shame, decency, prestige, the particular fear engendered by the gaze" (Lacan, 1953-1954/1979, p. 246). Its condition of "pivot of the symbolic relationship" is still highlighted in a game of crucial recognition in the constitution of the subject. From the scene of a movie where a little girl plays with her own image in front of the mirror, Lacan observes: whatever covers the image, it only centers a misleading power to divert alienation, which already situates desire in the field of the Other, to the prevailing totalitarian rivalry, because the similar imposes a dual fascination (Lacan, 1966/1998, pp. 74-75).

It is highlighted with this scene, the experimentation of the image that individualizes itself in relation to the field of the Other, but individuates to some extent, since it must compete with this field, which engenders its alienation to it. Later, in 1975, Lacan returns to this same movie when speaking of the

stage of the mirror, and observes that: "I speak is what gives body to the imaginary" (Lacan, 1974-1975/s.d., p. 45).

However, if the "phallus is what gives substance to the imaginary", it is vital to know how this process occurs. If from decency, the first fabrication of the body image can supposedly arise, it is understood that what is in question is the very investment in the body self-image. The investment in the mirror image seems to be the foundation of decency, without which the subject could not inhabit his body as his own body. If we have self-image, we have decency; we have a type of care with this image that contains in itself a lack that always exerts tension between the public and the private.

Vieira, in *The Ethics of Passion*, defines decency as "the art of materializing, even partially, what cannot be unveiled" (Vieira, 2001, p. 215). This is what is covered with the veil, or with the gestures of the little girl in the movie commented by Lacan. In addition to the veil, we have something that we cannot reveal, something in the image, an object of a gaze, which causes us shame. Then, against the lack in the body, or in the image of this body, an investment in the mirror image and everything against that lack, the decency.

Shame, then, by way of the image of the subject, is what decency veils, conceals. Therefore, what shame reveals is that which is lacking in the ideal image of the hidden body, which decency opposes and which is revealed in shame. Quinet points out that: "Below the curtain we have the association of the gaze with the (-φ) of castration.

The visual reality of *percepiens* is sustained in this curtain that veils the lack in the Other and the presence of the object a as a gaze" (Quinet, 2004, p. 99). Therefore, shame is the field of revelation of this lack that marks the image of the subject faced with this that is revealed in the mirror, through the eye. The investment in the narcissistic image aims to respond to a desire for coincidence to the ideal of self that dictates the tonality of the affections related to his/its image gazed by the Other. It is by this way that we can establish the conditions of advent of the shame and the narcissistic wound that it contains.

Since Fort-da, it is observed indications that point to the conditioning of the child to the presence of the other. From this, Lacan deduces that the "first symbolization is linked to the first articulations, which we recognize in Fort-da" (Lacan, 1957-1958/1999, p. 194). Fort-da is the significant pair that allows the first symbolizations, the maternal Other, that founds the subject and elevates him to the symbolic plane in the game of absence/presence that the spool allows.

On the one hand, Fort-da consists in the control of oneself by the other; on the other hand, it consists in the pleasure of the child in assuming such control, that is, his appearance/disappearance in the mirror. The child, thus, reveals this that disappears and announces it as disappearance, where he may appear again. This game points to what, in the subject, is a place left empty and that can assume several names: in the symbolic register, from the beginning, where it disappears under the signifiers that represent it and also in the register of drive (*trieb*), where language affects him in his body and cuts off his pleasure. But also, in the imaginary register, thus shown by the child playing with his disappearance. In the separation of the Other, in Fort-da, there is also the separation of his gaze and the gaze of the child: It is completely clear that I see *out*, that the perception is not in me, that it is on the objects it apprehends. Yet I perceive the world in a perception that seems to depend on the immanence of the see myself seeing myself/self-seeing (Lacan, 1964/1992, p. 81).

It is in this reflexive relationship, given in the separation of the gaze, that the child takes possession of the own representations, through the appropriation of his gaze. This allows him consciousness and ability to imagine himself vanishing under the gaze of the Other, conducting his own game of concealment as the object of this gaze. The gaze of the Other is then elided because it is no longer imagined:

This is why it is, more than any other object, unknown, and probably also for this reason that the subject can symbolize with so much happiness his own evanescent and punctiform trait in the illusion of the consciousness of finding himself seeing himself/ self-seeing, in which the gaze becomes elided (Lacan, 1964/1992, p. 83).

Here, the child who makes himself appear by the impact of his presence/absence on the mirror. The elision of the signifier of the subject will then also be its consequence on the imaginary plane. There, where the child begins to represent himself in the signifiers, he arises elusively, as lacking-to-be. Then, there is the need to cling to an image, followed by its superegoic declination. In the Fort-da, it is opened

up, in the imaginary register, the desire to be. In the confrontation with the desire of the Other, the child will gradually symbolize this desire that will be support for the phallic signification.

This is the entry for an identification to the other (similar). This moment where the child will want to identify with the imaginary phallus. However, when the child perceives the lack in place of the maternal Other, the child starts to want to satisfy the image of this which is lacking and which comes as something that fell from this mother and which the child will now try to fill. It is in the process given in the game of presence/absence of the mother that the symbolization of the desire of the Other will occur, in which the child will equate himself with the imaginary phallus, which may respond to or conceal the trauma of the maternal castration. When trying to satisfy this phallicized image, the child is placed before the maternal lack.

The child, then, offers himself as a nonexistent phallus. This is what Lacan refers to in saying that "the child engages in the intersubjective dialectic of the bait! To satisfy what cannot be satisfied, that is, that desire of the mother that, in its basis, is insatiable" (Lacan, 1957-1958/1999, p. 198). There is no successful exit when the engagement takes place via a deceptive object addressed to a desire that cannot be satisfied. As an impostor object, which shows what one is not, the subject constructs a journey "around which the self assumes its stability" (Lacan, 1957-1958/1999, p.198). The child makes himself, then, phallus to this mother, "he can identify with the mother, identify himself as phallus, or present himself as the bearer of the phallus" (Lacan, 1957-1958/1999, p. 198).

The mother/child pair, in this connection, indicates the place of identification where the mirror image will be progressively revised in the establishment of the symbolic relationship between the mother and the child. The image that captures the subject becomes a phallicized image. It is, in its foundation, this image that will be the model, for the child, holder of the traits that it will assume in the sight-giving to the Other. That is, a phallic image made of an identification with the imaginary phallus and that, in another part, constitutes a veil on which we can base the love:

The veil, the curtain before something, still is what best illustrates the fundamental situation of love. It can even be said that, with the presence of the curtain, what is beyond, as a lack, tends to happen as an image. Over the veil is painted the absence. This is no more than the function of any ordinary curtain. The curtain assumes its value, its being and its consistency precisely because it is what on which the absence is projected and imagined. The curtain is, if we may say so, the idol of the absence (Lacan, 1956-1957 / 1995, p. 157).

Thus, behind the mirror image is set a double lack, the organic (*Hilfflosigkeit*) and the symbolic, which will remain beyond the image and the veil that covers it. This lack will be of the order of the "pleasure of revealing to the other what this is supposed not to have, to plunge it at the same time into the shame of what it lacks." (Lacan, 1956-1957/1995, p. 277). What is not there, which cannot be revealed, is precisely the phallic signifier that marks the desire of the Other. For the child, this signifier is in the dimension of the being the phallus: "But the child, in turn, only fishes the result. To please the mother, if you allow me to go faster and use figurative words, it is necessary and sufficient to be the phallus" (Lacan, 1957-1958/1999, p. 98), to become a phallic object for the Other, in order to try to veil the self-castration and of the Other.

Therefore, the symbolic lack is situated behind the specular image of the child, and can thus be defined as missing phallus (-φ). To the extent that the subject can incarnate this image, it becomes a sort of paradoxical defense that preserves him, even in despair, in the face of the possibility of his similar can affecting it. In any case, this image, whether of his body or of his similar, is highly invested with libido, transforming itself into the ideal-of-the-self.

In this defensive character of the image, there is a fetishistic aspect. In the jubilation of the unification and self-apprehension of the subject, the image serves as a type of fetish that comes in the gaze of the mother, in the expectation of being able to place himself before its lack. In the look of this Other, the child places himself as a phallus that tries to reach something whose dimension he does not bear. Given this, the self is formed as an instance that crystallizes the imaginary identifications symbolically sustained in a logical relationship. Thus, both the mirror image and the self of the subject are constituted and give sight in a close relationship with the frustration of an identification of this image with the -φ. This marks a

structural and ontological imposture, which Lacan called shamontology (*hontologie*) (Lacan, 1969-1970/1992c, p. 191).

The castration

Therefore, behind the image, there is a lack and also a castration. That is, the symbolization of this lack in the significant dimension. The image, by carrying the weight of castration, has in itself a quality of something rejected, which marks an ambivalent relationship with the superego. The mark of the castration on the image undergoes superegoic rejection. This mark will be the main *point* that the gaze will judge having as a rule the ideal-of-self. Lacan pointed out something in this sense by saying that:

The (-φ) insinuates itself under the \$ of the fantasy, favoring the imagination that is proper to it, that of the self. The imaginary castration – which the neurotic has suffered at the outset - is what sustains his strong self, which is so strong, we would say, that his own name bothers him, that the neurotic is, deep down, a nameless (Lacan, 1966/1998, pp. 840-841).

That is, in the face of castration, the subject shows himself as what he is not, through avatars of what he does not have, to cover what comes as failure. Such avatars are the very identifying images that assume a role of narcissistic supplement, which will always return missing. The image, while sustains the subject in the fantasy, torments him by the elusive and always distressing nature that it presents. Between these two aspects, the fascination of the beautiful and the terrible occurs in the form of something familiarly unknown, as an intimate mystery that this image possesses.

Thus, an image that sustains identity occurs in the test on the sexual issue, where the body still does not call and, as a logical consequence, the issue of the encounter in act, of the Other sex, does not arise. Lesourd (2012, p. 19) observes that the object of access to a jouissance, the phallus, is interdicted to the child and reserved for the adult. Therefore, adults are apt to the pleasure, while the child looks forward to the use of the phallus and the access to the pleasure.

The child, in this sense, plays with these masks in the antechamber of the adult identity. For Freud (1907-1908/1969a, p. 151), when becoming an adult, the subject sees himself, fancifully, as just another, subjected to the obligations towards which he must act as an adult. Thus, the subject strives to forget which superegoic artifices he is made, while the child has fun with his plays. With the fascination of becoming an adult, the child invests in the image, endowing it with a phallic quality. To complete such an image, it is necessary to fill the lack in the Other; however, within the scope of the desire of being great, this will be the very narcissistic wound that will mark the subject. Freud notes that:

a child feels inferior when he verifies that he is not loved, and so is the adult. The only body organ truly considered inferior is the atrophied penis, the clitoris of the girl (Freud, 1932-1933/1969b, p. 85).

For Freud, this is the basis of the *inferiority complex*. However, as Lacan points out, there is a distinct phenomenon in which the child clings imaginatively, the phenomenon of turgescence: “the fact that the penis from smaller becomes larger, at the time of the first infantile masturbations or erections, is nothing more than one of the most fundamental themes of the imaginary fantasies” (Lacan, 1956-1957/1995, p. 307).

The imaginary “coming and going” of this phenomenon is a game of deception that fascinates the subject in his phallic identification, in the sense that one day he may have something ideal. This aspect of subjectivity is fundamental to think of disappointments with the body itself. To the extent that the imaginary dimension puts the possibility of being loved as “coming and going”, we can situate the affective dimension of shame.

As a semblance of phallus, the child is constituted as an object of love. However, this ideal, phallic image, which would satisfy the child and his mother, behind what he wants to hide, is the imagetic destiny and external to the subject. The subject, for not being the phallus, tries to identify himself with it, so that he may or may not satisfy that image. In order to succeed, he becomes a deceptive object, where his imposture reveals itself for him as well as for the Other.

As a consequence of this imposture there is a threat of a subjective destitution, where the imposture can produce a fall of the imaginary identifications to the phallus that will always be the memory of this that it carries in the reality, that is, something insufficient for the boy and nonexistent in the girl. Realizing this, in the destitution, gives a painful tone to the gaze at the self-image, seen at the point where the child would look at himself reduced to the lie of his being, now seized by a “feeling of inferiority” (Freud, 1932-1933/1969b, p. 85).

The subjective destitution of the child will be the instant of this precipitation, in the sense that he, at a given moment, will imagine himself as nothing, left aside by the Other. For Lacan, “the child then conceives that he can no longer fulfill his function in any way, being nothing more, being nothing more than this something that seems to be something, but which at the same time is nothing, and which is called metonymy” (Lacan, 1956-1957/1995, p. 251).

Now she will be affected by shame, and this may be the moment when the sign of such fall will be inscribed as a subjective destitution. Therefore, the child will be mortified in this nihilation. It is what Jurandir Freire Costa observed when he said of shame that: “shame resembles melancholic defense, but the target of the drive hate is the subject himself and not the “embedded object” (Costa, 2012, p. 11).

Faced with this, Lacan points out that: “The fundamentally deficient character of the phallus of the little boy, even the shame that he may experience from it, the profound insufficiency that he can feel” (Lacan, 1956-1957/1995, p. 197). Thus, shame enters as an elementary aspect in the first narcissistic experiences that affect the child and that unfold into later effects in the living of experiences of castration.

Shame arises as a sign of what is missing, this indicates its incidence from imaginary castration ($-\phi$) and, not limited to it, shame engenders the feeling of inferiority (according to Freud) and nihilation (Sartre and Lacan). When Lacan writes “that decency designates: private. What is it deprived of? Precisely, that the pubis only makes passing to the public, where it exhibits itself, as the object of a lifted veil” (Lacan, 2001/2003, p. 558), he points to this that the veil covers, the shame that decency avoids, namely, the imaginary castration, this that taints, marks and hurts narcissism, leaving an indelible trait that returns in the image ground as a castration for the subject through the self-image that is his own reflection and direction for his Self.

The imaginary identification with the phallus, in the subject, is the veil that structures the illusion of an image supported from the ideal. However, the shame denounces the imposture of this image because it is the strongest affection, and that marks the return of a mark that makes castration. If the Other is the one who looks at the *paranoid self* (Lacan, 1964/1992b), in the moment that this mark is revealed, in the sight-giving and the finding himself being seen of this image, it affects him, since it will not correspond to what he would like to give to that look. Shame affects the image of the subject as it reaches it. The shame reveals what should be left hidden, the reality of not being, in the case of the girl, and not having the phallus, in the case of the boy.

The decency

We have seen how decency can cover the imaginary castration. This occurs because decency covers the subject with a phallic image that is a type of reverse of the shame. Decency identifies the subject imaginarily to the phallus to defend him from these lacks; it is the very veil of castration that hides the real.

If the signifier:

can only play its role as veiled, that is, as a sign, itself, of the latency with which all that is signified is coined from the moment it is elevated (*aufgehoben*) to the function of signifier. The phallus is the signifier of this very *Aufhebung* (suspension) which it inaugurates (initiates) by its disappearance. That is why the *Aidós* (decency) demon arises at the exact moment in which, in the ancient mystery, the phallus is unveiled (Lacan, 1966/1998, p. 699).

Lacan (1966/1998) comments that relationships that revolve around being and having always report to a signifier, the phallus. This has two consequences: 1) “give the reality to the subject in this signifier”; 2) “not accomplish the relationships to be signified” (p. 701).

The symbolic possession of the phallus determines the differentiation of the sexes. The veil, in its function to cover and at the same time achieve as image what is behind, veils the phallic signifier that marks places. In the case of women, Lacan calls attention that not having the phallus symbolically makes them to participate in its possession in another way, by the absence (Lacan, 1956-1957/1995, p. 155). The veil, in this way, masks such absence as a curtain that hides something behind. "It can even be said that with the presence of the curtain, what is beyond, as a lack, tends to occur as an image. Over the veil is painted the absence" (Lacan, 1956-1957/1995, p. 157).

Thus, decency is a veil that embodies the phallic signifier of desire. On the one hand, decency provides benefits to the subject by providing phallic ostentation in a dimension where signification is a measure of value. On the other hand, decency defends the subject, avoids and warns for the imminence of the loss of this value, or of its destitution in the real. Therefore, "decency is ambiceptive of the conjuncture of being: between two, the shamelessness of one constitutes in itself the violation of the decency of the other" (Lacan, 1966/1998, p. 783).

Decency and shame are distinctive marks of the subject. The subject who denies decency gives up a dignity of what is beyond the object, something that would relocate him to a condition of residue, remainder of an operation that, in itself, does not correlate with the Other and would make love impossible. This is what the failure of Alcebiades in relation to Socrates is all about:

Now, it is precisely the fact of having failed in this attempt which, for Alcebiades, covers him with shame and makes his confession something so heavy. The demon of Aidos, of decency, which I reported before you in due time, in this sense, is what intervenes here. That is what is violated. Because, in front of all, it is unveiled in its feature the most shocking secret, the last spring of desire, which always compels, in love, to conceal it a little, its goal is the fall of the Other, A, in another, a (Lacan, 1960-1961/1992a, p. 178).

In the seminar *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1959/1960, p. 359), Lacan emphasizes the clinical importance of producing decency, because, as a barrier, it makes resistance to the analysis and, for this very reason, points to something that puts on the same Level "the phallus fantasy and the beauty of the human image" (Lacan, 1959-1969/1988, p.359). Therefore, decency points to the ambiguity that hides the shame. Ambiguity that pays "the most dishonorable homage to what is shameful" (Lacan, 1959-1969/1988, p. 359), giving dignity to what would be unworthy if it were not endowed with the condition of sublime.

In decency underlies the human condition of speech, because it masks, in the symbolic, the void that the subject carries in himself. It masks the mortification operated by the signifier through the sign it produces, in the sense that it remits the subject to an Other. In the words of Tisseron, "decency erects defenses against the risks of intrusion of others in our intimate sphere, the shame recognizes that this intrusion has already occurred" (Tisseron, 2006, p. 19).

The gaze

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre (1943/2013) addresses the problematic of the relationships with the other through the questioning of intersubjective dynamics, recognition and the problem between the *ego* and the *Other*. Sartre introduces the gaze and the shame as fundamental aspects of the issue of the experience of the other, formulating a phenomenology of the gaze, which has as main feeling the shame.

Lacan follows the thought of Sartre until 1964. With a different conception of gaze, he moves from an enthusiasm with the Sartrean phenomenology to a hesitant reaffirmation of his vivacity, accompanied by a direct criticism. The exact point of the divergence is highlighted by Assoun (1999): "when I am under a gaze, ... I do not see it as a gaze". Is this a fair phenomenological analysis? "no ... the gaze is saw ...". It is not, in fact, "a gaze that is seen, but a gaze imagined in the field of the Other" (Assoun, 1999, p. 101).

To Assoun, the disagreement of Lacan with Sartre lies in overcoming a conception of gaze grounded in the presence of the other, a similar, who looks and dislocates the subject from his point of apprehension of the things. This is the nihilating ontology of Sartre, which sustains an intersubjective dialectics. In the seminar of 1964, Lacan will say that everyone has an ontology, but what interests him is the pre-ontological hiatus, that is, "return to what is before any reflection,thetic or non-thetic" (Lacan, 1964/1992,

p. 81). This implies understanding the gaze, as object a, as something that “may come to symbolize the central lack expressed in the phenomenon of castration” (Lacan, 1964/1998, p. 77).

Safatle (2006, p. 318) observes that, unlike Sartre, this perspective adopted by Lacan recognizes that the subject carries in himself and in an essential way, something of the order of the opacity of the objects. This occurs insofar as something of the body stands out and interposes reaffirming the otherness of the Other in his structural link with the lack and the desire. In Sartre, the otherness is confused with a transcendence that looks at the other and locates him as an object, removing him from an objectifying power, discarding all concupiscent relationship with the other.

So the gaze does not make the other a nihilized (transformed into nothing) subject, correlated to something objective, caught by surprise. In Lacan the gaze is sustained on a function of the desire. The ashamed subject is not, for Lacan, a passive being because of his condition of object, but a subject surprised in his desire. The subject is ashamed not of his being for the nothingness, but of the being animated (moved) by a cause and that this cause is also the object that he is, the object a, the cause of desire.

The being excited by the gaze as object a consists of the adoption of a scopic drive (*trieb*) that engenders a desire to see. When confronted with the eye that gazes with pleasure at him, it opens up the situation for the appearance of a gaze imagined in the field of the Other, which restores a point of view in which he situates himself as a subject who desires, castrated. Therefore: “You perceive there the ambiguity of what it is when we speak of the scopic drive. The gaze is this object that was lost, and suddenly found again in the conflagration of the shame, by the introduction of the other” (Lacan, 1964/1992, p. 173).

Thus, the voyeur becomes a point framed by the gaze of the Other and, therefore, he can see himself again through the other. The shame knocks down the subject insofar as it replaces him abruptly as another, enjoying immersed in the satisfaction of the scopic drive. The sign of his scopic enjoyment is his redness before the other, a *jouissant* (Quinet, 2004, p. 103). A moment in which it is tried to be subtracted as an object. Therefore, the subject affected by shame is the subject of the drive when caught in the drive enjoyment, by the Other. Thus, conceptually, shame is understood as the sign in the body of the castration of the scopic drive by the Other.

Shame as a critical element

So far, shame has stood out as a fundamental part of a relationship with the Other and with the gaze. Therefore, it can also be conceived as an effect of the social bond and discourse. At the end of the seminar *The Reverse of psychoanalysis*, Lacan (1969-1970/1992a) reaches a shamontology (*hontologie*), in which he emphasizes a shame of living that is the shame “of that which does not deserve death”. At the heart of this comment is a criticism to the subjectivity of the contemporary subject which points to the affective consequences that the context of the late capitalism engenders, namely, the loss of shame and the rejection of love. This would be the servile and impudent form of consumption that directly affects the social tie and the degeneracy of the master signifier: “It is not surprising that you are servile, you can say that there is no more shame” (Lacan, 1969-1970/1992c, p. 212). “Here, the degeneracy of the signifier is safe - safe because it is produced by a failure of the signifier, that is, being for death, insofar as it concerns the subject” (Lacan, 1969-1970/1992c, p. 191).

The double track that engenders the shameless servility is: 1) the change in the place of knowledge to the Master, which generates a production of knowledge as a commodity, which Soler (2011, p.94) called impudent sayings; 2) the rejection of castration and the rejection of things of love (Lacan, 1971-1972/s.d., p. 49).

An alteration of the social bond brings the subject closer to the condition of commodity. It can be read in Lacan a conception of proletarian no longer as a social class, but as a paradigm of the subjectivity of the contemporary subject: “There is only one social symptom: each individual is really a proletarian, that is, he has no discourse with which to create Social bond, in other words, countenance” (Lacan, 1974/s.d., p. 01).

In the degeneracy of the master signifier, which is the element that would guarantee the unstable foundation of the identifications, there is a plus-the-jouissance always conditioned by a debt. Therefore,

it is possible to say that the modern aspirations are not directed at the accomplishment of something under the coordinates of the symbolic duty of the signifier, but rather of an attempt of coincidence whose order is to identify with ready images and identities. Degeneracy implies an emptying of the symbolic character of the debt and the empty permanence of the imperative of the jouissance that is repeated in the superegoic character.

Benjamin (2013, pp. 21-22) had already pointed to this aspect, in capitalism, as a permanent duration of a cult that celebrates “*sans revê et sans merci*”. This cult is blame-placing, which represents a diabolical binomial of guilt/debt without the possibility of expiation. This leads to a state of universal despair. Such a subject is pressured to no longer have the said symptoms, to be proactive, happy, focused, athletic and of satisfactory sexual/financial/physical performance. It is what Lacan called ideology of the subject suppression (Lacan, 2001/2003, p. 436), which seeks a human without symptoms in the manner of the automaton, reduced to an object *a*, (*a*) bject.

In this condition, it is observed a type of identification paradox in the subject. What causes him shame is not his replaceable and quantified character of commodity, but the condition of not being so, that is, of not being replaceable. It is the reverse of the story *The Bicentennial Man*. This story tells the process of physical and affective humanization of a perfect functioning robot that, from its gadget condition, begins to pursue human fragilities, buying perishable human parts, which makes it fragile to time, finite, and places its Being-to-death before the value of life. Now he dresses, which denotes shame through the pudicity that covers private parts.

That is, the subjectivity of the contemporary subject seeks precisely his condition of product, dehumanized gadget, desexualized, as an automaton, because the condition of irreplaceable carries with it a mark and an alterity that restores the enigma of the desire in the master-signifier. The imposture of this subject slides between the poles of the shame of being a gadget and the shame of not being. The shame is no longer in the historical, cultural, familiar framework, which would place it in a symbolic chain. The shame, now, focuses on not being what is determined by the market, as a shame of a defective product. Such an aspect contains in itself a paradoxical character: at the same time that the commodity is immortal by its infinitely reproducible character, it is fleetingly obsolete for its short duration both in life and in necessity. The paradoxical character is engendered in the subjectivity of the contemporary subject, who dreams of this infinite state of the commodity, which denies time, history, difference of generations; however, suffers from the perishability and the constant threat of being exchanged or fall into disuse for its uselessness. With this, the proletarian subject turns in the malaise of the character intrinsic to the commodity. He is the anathema of the *Bicentennial Man*.

Final considerations

Speaking on producing decency within the scope of the seminar *Les non-dupes errent*, Lacan (1973-1974) points out the difference that sustains the non-sexual relation. Decency veils this difference by pointing precisely to where the clinic should be directed: “I am saying that this can blow up a lot of things if the praise is governed only by decency. This shocks, of course, that this shocks, but this does not violate the decency ...” (Lacan, 1973-1974/s.d., p. 93).

The “hole where the master signifiers sprout” (Lacan, 1969-1970/1992c, p. 191) is precisely that of the shame of the lack-to-be, its trait of distinction that affects it in its identifications, which the subject covers with the veils. Here we have two aspects of the master signifier, S1: a) that of the significant enchainment in which the Unconscious works and which concerns the identifications, b) in the unconscious knowledge of the signifiers that do not represent the subject, but affect his jouissance. In this second aspect there are the signifiers that condense jouissances, the unary traits.

Therefore, shame is wherever master signifiers flow, both in the sense from where these signifiers should represent the subject to other signifiers, and in the pollution that affects what lies behind the narcissistic passion of the subject, which denounces the lies of the being and the shameful vacuity that he dissimulates. It is for this reason that the term of the analytic experience is to produce S1 the signifier

of the most “idiotic” *jouissance*, but also of the most singular *jouissance* (Lacan, 1972-1973/1985, pp. 126-127).

Thus, when Lacan proposes the strategy of causing shame, he points to a moment in which, in the capitalist culture, the value of the word and thus the singularity that it conveys is reduced. Soler noted that Lacan:

preferred to point out that the power of the master never operates only from brute force, but from the verb, because the discourse is ordered by a master signifier, who is not in conformity with the incarnate master: here he is not a master, on the contrary, he sustains the master (Soler, 2011, p.95, our translation).

Therefore, when Lacan affirms that the analytic discourse is what can face the discourse of the capitalist and disrupt it, it is to the extent that the analysts can play as waste, thus serving themselves for the withdrawal of the discourse from the capitalist (Lacan, 2001/2003, p. 519). In an intervention in the journey of cartels of the *École Freudienne de Psychoanalyses*, Lacan (1976) questions what is an analysis:

What is analysis, after all? It is, anyway, this thing that is distinguished from this, it is this very thing that is distinguished, it is because we allow ourselves a type of irruption from the private to the public. The private, this that evokes the wall, the small cases of each one. The small cases of each one, this is a perfectly characteristic core, of the being of sexual cases. That is the core of the private. It is funny that this public is where we make emerge this private, that the “public” has a connection with what is manifested. For the etymologists, with *publis*” (neologism between the signifiers *public* and *pubis* to denote the tension between what sexual intimacy is and the public), it is to know this that is public, it is what emerges from this that is shameful. How to distinguish private from this that we are ashamed? (Lacan, 1976, p. 263. our translation).

Private is what evokes the wall, the “small cases of each one”; the shame is distinguished from it because it is this tension between what is the sexual intimacy and the public, denoted in the neologism *publis*. Lacan thus provokes: “Shame, what advantage?” (Lacan, 1969-1970/1992c, p. 193).

Such a provocation points to the intimacy of shame, its own truth, \$, whose countenance relies on the knowledge and its avatars (science, religion, etc.). Truth and shame are distinct from knowledge. However, the subject of the psychoanalysis is the subject of science, of the knowledge, and this restores him to the universality of language. This is the general form of the subject, the subject of the cogito, historically defined and amenable to repetition. However, beyond the wall and decency, there is the shameful of the *publis*, that is, the connection of sense with *jouissance*, “not to forbid the relation called sexual, but to crystallize it in the non-relation that it is worth in the real” (Lacan, 2001/2003, p.558).

This non-relation in the real, which is demarcated in sexuality, is the very “emptiness in which the idea of whole is motivated” (Lacan, 2001/2003, p. 375). Therefore, the ethical character of the shame is in the passage of the intimacy of the *jouissance* trait to the public, that is, in the realization of what, to be singular, is necessarily given in the universal.

Shame reveals the hiatus that decency covers with virtue. It is proper of the hole where the Real *ex-siste*, instant of rupture and gap from which the consistency of this hole comes out. It is in the moment of *de-structuring* that the mode of singular *jouissance* is established on the edge that the Unconscious borders with the structure of the language, because this structure is the edge of the real 1973-1974/s.d.).

In this way, decency conceals the non-sexual relation that sustains the “mystery of the speaking body, the mystery of the unconscious” (Lacan, 1972-1973/1985, p. 178) and its attempt of response to the “drama of love” that would put into effect the sexual relation. Decency preserves the possibility of the fulfillment of love as a mirage whose consistency is sustained in a, that is, decency conserves the hope of the relationship in order to repeat it as *Automaton*. However, shame is *tychic*, it arises from the difference caused by the trait and from what is “presented in the form of what is unassimilable in it” (Lacan, 1964/1992, p. 57), a trait of distinction of the most intimate *jouissance*, so intimate that it is strange, disruptive and desubjectivating. Such trait of distinction is the pure difference engendered by the signifier One, cause of the *jouissance* (Lacan, 1972-1973/1985, p. 36).

If the psychoanalytic clinic makes possible a listening of the symptom, it does it identifying the rest of this symptom as coordinates of the *jouissance*. This allows the subject to experience shame by surprising himself with what is unique to his *jouissance*. This is a moment of dissolution of the experience of identity that allows the patient to position himself from the production of the difference, from the non-being, from his being-to-death. This can only be accomplished through the narcissistic experience of the fantasy that has as its fundamental dimension the experience of otherness.

It is through this principle that shame can be an indicator in the direction of the cure, because it points to a capacity of restoration of the desire, in opposition to the pressures that lead the subject to identify himself to the manufactured object *a*, to the object, that hinder and impede the link of the *jouissance* in the discourse.

The role of the analyst is to operate a sabotage by making himself object *a*, "he makes himself, that is: he makes himself produced; from the object *a*: with the object *a*" (Lacan, 2001/2003, p. 375). From this place, the analyst can denounce the Other who is concerned in making the subject feel ashamed to live. This Other who is seen as the one that has a knowledge on the *jouissance* and that, for this reason, assumes an imperative position in the subjectivity of the subject. An analysis aims to restore the point of the desire that is engendered from the relationship of the subject with the lost object. This is the goal of repetition, the drive path that targets an object. In addition, in this path, we can gather the marks, the traits with which the edges of the *hole where the master-signifier gushes* become present, a fundamental mark of the shame, of the non-being and the *jouissance* without which life is not worthwhile.

References

- Assoun, P. (1999). O olhar e a voz: lições psicanalíticas sobre o olhar e a voz. Rio de Janeiro: Companhia de Freud.
- Benjamin, W. (2013). O capitalismo como religião. São Paulo: Boitempo.
- Costa, J. F. (2012). Os sobrenomes da vergonha: melancolia e narcisismo. In J. Verztman, R. Herzog, T. Pinheiro, & F. Pacheco-Ferreira, F. (Orgs.), *Sofrimentos narcísicos*. Rio de Janeiro: Cia de Freud: UFRJ; Brasília, DF: CAPES PRODOC.
- Freud, Sigmund. (1969a). Escritores criativos e devaneios. (Edição Standart Brasileira das Obras Psicológicas Completas de Sigmund Freud, Vol. 9). Rio de Janeiro: Imago. (Original publicado em 1907-1908).
- Freud, Sigmund. (1969b). Novas conferências introdutórias sobre a psicanálise. Conf. XXXI A dissecação da personalidade psíquica. (Edição Standart Brasileira das Obras Psicológicas Completas de Sigmund Freud, Vol. 22). Rio de Janeiro: Imago. (Original publicado em 1932-1933).
- Green, A. (1982). O discurso vivo: uma teoria psicanalítica do afeto (R. J. Dias, Trad.). Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves.
- Lacan, J. (s.d.). O Seminário. Livro XIX. O Saber do psicanalista. Recife: Centro de estudos freudianos do Recife. (Original publicado em 1971-1972).
- Lacan, J. (s.d.). O Seminário. Livro XXI. Les non-dupes errant. Recife: Centro de estudos freudianos do Recife. (Original publicado em 1973-1974).
- Lacan, J. (s.d.). R.S.I. O seminário. Recife: Centro de estudos freudianos do Recife. (Original publicado em 1974-1975).
- Lacan, J. (s.d.). A Terceira -7º congresso da École freudienne de Paris. (Original publicado em 1974).
- Lacan, J. (1976). Journées des cartels de l'École freudienne de Paris. Maison de la chimie., Lettre de l'École freudienne, 18, 263-270. (Original publicado em 1976).
- Lacan, J. (1979). O Seminário. Livro I. Os escritos técnicos de Freud. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor. (Original publicado em 1953-1954).
- Lacan, J. (1985). O Seminário. Livro XX. Mais, ainda. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor. (Original publicado em 1972-1973).
- Lacan, J. (1988). O Seminário. Livro VII. A Ética da Psicanálise. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor. (Original publicado em 1959-1960).
- Lacan, J. (1992a). O Seminário. Livro VIII. A Transferência. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor. (Original publicado em 1960-1961).
- Lacan, J. (1992b). O Seminário. Livro XI. Os Quatro conceitos fundamentais da Psicanálise. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor. (Original publicado em 1964).
- Lacan, J. (1992c). O Seminário. Livro XVII. O avesso da psicanálise. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor. (Original publicado em 1969-1970).

- Lacan, J. (1995). O Seminário. Livro IV. A relação de objeto. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor. (Original publicado em 1956-1957).
- Lacan, J. (1998). Escritos. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor. (Original publicado em 1966).
- Lacan, J. (1999). O Seminário. Livro V. As formações do inconsciente. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor. (Original publicado em 1957-1958).
- Lacan, J. (2003). Outros Escritos. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor. (Original publicado em 2001).
- Lesourd, S. (2012). Adolescentes Díficeis ou Dificuldades da Cultura? In R. Gurki, M. Debieux, & M. C. Poli (Orgs.), Debates sobre a adolescência contemporânea e o laço social. Curitiba: Juruá editora.
- Prudente, S. E. L. & Debieux Rosa, M. (2012). Sujeito protopático: o Eu ilusório e o afeto em questão. *Psicologia em Estudo*, 17 (4), 679-687.
- Quinet, A. (2004). Um olhar a mais: ver e ser visto na psicanálise. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed.
- Safatle, V. (2006). A Paixão do Negativo. Unesp-Fapesp, São Paulo.
- Sartre, J. (2013). O Ser e o Nada: ensaio de ontologia fenomenológica. Tradução: Paulo Perdígão. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes. (Original publicado em 1943).
- Soler, C. (2011). Les affects lacaniens. Paris: PUF.
- Tisseron, Serge. (1992). La Honte: psychanalyse d'un lien social. Paris: Dunod.
- Tisseron, S. (2006). De la honte qui tue à la honte qui sauve. In: *Revue Le Coq-héron*, 184 (1), 18-31.
- Vieira, M.A. (2001). A ética da paixão: uma teoria psicanalítica do afeto. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor.

Received: Jun. 08, 2016
Approved: Nov. 07, 2016

Sérgio Eduardo Prudente: Psychologist, psychoanalyst, master's degree in clinical psychology by PUC-SP, doctorate degree in social psychology by PUC-SP with doctoral apprenticeship at the Université de Paris 13 - Nord, postdoctoral student at the department of clinical psychology of the University of São Paulo - USP, Fapesp scholar 2015/08894-6.