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A new imaginary



NEW IMAGINARY IN *FARMACOPORNOGRAPHY*'S TIMES

ROBERTO CORDERO *

ABSTRACT

The present work examines the treatment done in the work of Paul B. Preciado about the relationship between the imaginary register and the real, independent of its copulation with the symbolic. The imperative to *jouissance* and the fall of the Other in the *pharmacopornographic* order explodes the image of the Cartesian body, while at the same time makes possible new modes of *jouissance* that give consistency to the body. In this context, the contra-sexual practices are proposed as a field to investigate an imaginary that establishes meaning.

KEYWORDS

New imaginary | Body | *Pharmacopornographic* | Contra-sexual

“The truth of sex is not revelation, it’s sex design”
(Preciado, 2008 [2014] p.36).

Towards the end of the *Seminar XXIII* (Lacan, 1975-1976 [2015]), Lacan proposes an orientation by the real as a new bet for psychoanalysis. Since the real forcludes the meaning, an orientation by the real makes psychoanalysis no more than a “short circuit that passes through the meaning” (p.120). How to think this passage through the meaning? Lacan gives an indication: “it is necessary to crash, if I may say so, against a new imaginary that establishes the meaning” (p.120).

In the eighth class of this seminar, meaning is defined as the copulation between language and one’s own body, that is, the symbolic with the imaginary. Such articulation between both registers took different forms along Lacan’s teaching. When the imaginary sutures the hiatus caused by the tongue cutting over the flesh, and operates by veiling the *trieb* objects in the field of the Other, it is possible to locate the imaginary register subordinated to the symbolic. A similar articulation is shown in the developments about optical scheme in *Seminar I* (Lacan, 1953-1954 [2013]), when the coherence of the virtual image as gestalt that orders the real, depends on its articulation with the Ideal anchored in the field of the Other. In both cases the sense is established from the symbolic. So, how to think a new imaginary that establishes the meaning, to sustain an orientation by the real? This question leads to investigate the relationship between the imaginary register with the real, independent of its copulation with the symbolic register.

To delve into this relationship, Indart (Tudanca, Gil, Gorenberg and Rodríguez de Milano, 2017) proposes to take into account two references. On the one hand, the real image in the optical scheme, that which remains as “a necessary rest in the physics of that model” (Tudanca et al, 2017, p.143) so that, in a second time, the virtual image can be knotted into the field of the Other.

*Centro de Día Psicoanalítico #4
roberto.cordero.j@gmail.com

This first reference would be useful to interrogate how the imaginary could be sustained without that later moment of anchorage in the symbolic, that is, how the real image would operate independently. On the other hand, he proposes to return to the Freudian notion of narcissistic libido, opposed to the object libido. For Indart, the imaginary is not articulated to the body for orient it in the “external world” situating objects, ends and goals, but to give rise to “something of the life body opaque *jouissance*” (Tudanca et al, 2017, p. 139). This would have as effect to inflate the body imaginary consistency. From both references, Indart concludes that a possible way of orienting oneself in this search implies for the contemporary psychoanalyst to be attentive at the *jouissance* that preserve the corporal imaginary and give consistency to the body, that is to say that are not the *object a* *jouissance*.

Present work intends to take in count this indication. For it, the work of Preciado -philosopher¹, queer activist and an international reference in gender studies, and body and sexuality policies- will be explored. Preciado proposes a deconstructivist reading of body production technologies in contemporary history, starting from the end of the Second World War. In this context, he describes capitalism development based in two major industries, the pharmacological and the pornographic, to look for “the traces of what is already the end of the body, as it has been defined by modernity” (Preciado, 2002, p.20). His description of the modes of consumption, *jouissance* circulation and bodies production reveals the symbolic precariousness to establish meaning, placed by Miller and Laurent (Miller and Laurent, 1996-1997 [2013]) as the Another that does not exist. At the same time, during his work, Preciado outlines a new notion of body that takes consistency in this deregulated circuit.

What can Preciado’s work teach to psychoanalysis about the modes of relation between the imaginary and real register, in contemporary times? What possible forms of body consistency does his work describes?

POTENTIAGAUDENDI

Preciado (2008 [2014]) proposes a concept to understand the body in relation to the capitalist circuit. There, the body is inscribed as an “orgasmic force” or *potentiagaudendi* that circulates - at the same time that it is produced - in that production-consumption circuit. This definition is taken from the philosophical notion of “power to act or force to exist” (Preciado, 2008 [2014], p.41) elaborated by Spinoza (2000) and implies the conjunction of “somatic and psychic forces” (Preciado, 2008 [2014], p.41) in a constant movement that “transforms the world into pleasure-with” (Preciado, 2008 [2014], p.41). This force is characterized by its indeterminate capacity, by not recognizing the symbolic oppositions, nor the differences between subject and object, nor the possibilities of “being excited, excited or excited-with”. Nor is it something that can be possessed, conserved or assigned to belonging, that is, there is no possibility to identificate this power as one’s own or of another. For Preciado, “*potentiagaudendi* exists only as an event, relationship, practice, becoming” (Preciado, 2008 [2014], p.42).

If this *potentia* only exists and is produced as circulation, the living body is defined as its substrate. Therefore, the body can not be understood as a prediscursive biological basis, outside the circuits of production. The body itself is configured as an effect of the circulation and production of *potentiagaudendi* in the capitalist circuit. It could be said that, for Preciado, the body is the consistency of a constant force, unreachable by the symbolic and set to circulate without any regulation.

For Preciado, the capitalist circuit stands in a continuous and unlimited cycle of excitement-frustration, supported by technoscience. For this reason, the pharmacological and pornographic industry are its representatives par excellence, to the point that Preciado names them as “*pharmacopoenographic order*” (Preciado, 2008 [2014]). In this context, he conceptualizes a

body that is produced as a commodity in which technoscience inscribes his fantasies. The notion of body that emerges from the concept of *potentiagaudendi* is a product of the relationship of the living with a circuit of unlimited excitement-frustration. The objects and images that the *pharmacopornographic* order puts to circulate without any type of symbolic mediation have effects on the consistency of the body. This allows Preciado to think a body in which not only the limits of the skin are diluted, but it also explodes the limits of biological-synthetic, human-prosthesis, organ-function, subject-object. Viagra, for example, is not a supplement that improves a pure and deficient natural body, it could be the production of an eternally young body, starting from the inscription in the flesh of a fantasy of unlimited sexual potency, while makes millions of dollars. Or the one to produce sportsmen-machines that do not feel the limits of the lack of oxygen in the height. Likewise, after Viagra, it will not only have sex with the reproductive organ, or it will play football with feet and lungs: the circulatory system will have a new function.

PROTHESIS

Preciado appeals to the notion of prosthesis to think how the capitalist circuit done consistency to the body. She traces its genealogy in the Aristotelian concept of *organon*, which “designates the instrument or piece that, together with other pieces, is necessary to carry out some regulated process” (Preciado, 2002, p.128). *Organon* is a necessary element of *techné* (technique) to facilitate an activity and, therefore, condenses knowledge, norms and modes of relationships from which reality can be apprehended. From this definition, Preciado say that the notion of “organ” has nothing to do with the living, but with the idea of technological prosthesis.

Prosthesis represents the way in which the technique appropriates the flesh and reconfigures the body each time it is used. Upon entering into action, the prosthesis strengthens the body, making it more productive according to the demands of the market. At the same time, it introduces the knowledge and modes of relations that the *pharmacopoenographic* order imposes, creating bodies to the measure of their fantasies. Google Maps allows you to navigate in any unknown place and perform accurate displacement calculations. After this App, the sense of orientation, time and space will be strange to the off-line state. In *Embrillos del cuerpo* (Miller et al, 1999 [2016]) it locates a clinical case in which a patient is destabilized when her doctor suppressed- from one day to the next- the medication she used for fifteen years. The drug called “Pondéral. Prolonged action” operates as an element that orders a body for that particular *parlêtre*. In terms of Preciado, it is possible to capture the prosthesis function there. If the prosthesis emerges as that which made possible to reinsert a body into the productive process -generating at the same time a new consumer- it also models the body image giving access to new modes of *jouissance*. Preciado’s notion of prosthesis presents the potential to model the image at the same time as it explodes the image of the Cartesian body. The prosthesis not only questions the organ-function relationship, but also makes each object a possible organ. The external-internal pair unfolds and with it the idea of belonging and possession also falls. To treat the concept of prosthesis, Preciado appeals to the use of the silicone dildo in sexual practices, indicating that this object questions the erogenous limits of the Modernity’s body. In this way, dildo

(...) comes to question the idea that the flesh limits coincide with the body limits. Thus, the distinction between sensible subject and inanimate object is disturbed. By being able to separateit self from the body, dildo resists the force with which the body appropriates for itself the pleasure, as if it were something that comes from the body itself. The pleasure that the dildo provides, belongs to the body only insofar as it is re-appropriation. (Preciado, 2002p.70)

CONTRASEXUALITY

In the same movement in which the *pharmacopoenographic* order explodes the Modernity body, new possible ways emerge to give it consistency. Not only biotechnology, prosthetic and surgical techniques make a “new appearance of nature” (Preciado, 2008 [2014], p.154) when are combined with representations coming from cinema or architecture. Pornography is also a body production technology.

According to Preciado, it is a source of image production that - in the words of Linda Williams - becomes a body. In his work, pornography would be a masturbatory device that produces “the visual illusion of the irruption in the pure real” (Preciado, 2008 [2014], p.204), activating mechanisms of excitement outside the will of the spectator, des -subjecting whoever looks. In this sense, it could be thought from psychoanalysis that the consumer of pornography is reduced to being gaze object, as Lacan (Lacan, 1964 [2003]) is included in the painting, in front of the can floating in the sea. However, taking up the Indart’s work (Tudanca et al, 2017), this aspect of pornography would not be the most convenient to study how a “new imaginary” is articulated. There Indart opposes the phenomenon of selfies, which could teach about the way in which for somebody the opaque *jouissance* of the body takes consistency in the image. Some *parlêtre* can, from the treatment of their body image in social networks, articulate an order in which register themselves. That is, establish meaning from the relationship between the imaginary and the real. Faced of this technology -which print the heterocentrated fantasies in the bodies, while pushing towards the *pharmacopornographic* imperative to masturbatory *jouissance*- Preciado proposes another practice. Contrasexuality as queer resistance practice would be a different way of treating the body. For the contrasexuality, the body is a platform of resistance and political action in which it is possible to intervene -with the technologies of the *pharmacopoenographic* order- subverting what is proposed as “natural order”. If the queer movement appropriates an insult that indicates the abject, to reintroduce that waste as a potential for political subversion, in contrasexuality the same logic is played, but with the flesh at stake.

Contrasexuality promotes a particular treatment of the no sexual relationship. For this movement, “bodies recognize themselves not as men or women, but as talking bodies” (Preciado, 2002, p.18) that can shake the heteronormative ghosts intervening in the real without veils. These operated or transformed bodies, or their apparently monstrous sexual practices in the view of the heteronormative order, open the way to nominations, collectives, movements that in some cases make possible some inscription in the field of the Other. As Fajnwaks (2013) indicates, “what is at stake in queer cultures is the search for a nomination from a privileged way of sexual *jouissance*, outside of a norm founded on gender” (p.99).

Among the aspects of the imaginary-real relationship that can be captured in these aspects of the work of Preciado, it is possible to take at least three points. In first place, and in line with Miller (1989-1990 [2011]) places in *El banquete de los analistas*, in the capitalist circuit, the reality is not supported on to the ghost -as it happens in the master discourse-. There, the excess of unregulated *jouissance* is supported on reality as such, that is, the ghost becomes real. In the *pharmacopornographic* order, fantasies become flesh, and this disarms the Cartesian body that, through thought, founded the inner-outer pair to keep reality at a convenient distance. The imperative to *jouissance* would not preserve the Cartesian body imaginary.

Secondly, although in the proliferation of technologies and medias in *pharmacopoenographic* order, a fertile field is opened up to diverse possible knots between the imaginary and the real, Preciado’s analysis does not always seem enough to specify when it is at stake a treatment of the opaque body *jouissance* by way of the image, or when the imaginary treatment is in relation to the deregulated *jouissance* excess outside the body.

Finally, in the course of Preciado, contrasexual practices could possibly be taken as a fertile field to investigate how, in some cases, meaning is established by the imaginary register, in relation to a *jouissance* that gives consistency to the body.

¹ In January 2015, as a political act of queer resistance, Paul B. Preciado decided to leave behind the name with which he had been registered in the Civil Registry, and with which he had signed his three books published until these moment: Beatriz Preciado. "Every time someone calls me 'Paul' erases with me what the normative genre wanted to do with me" (Curia, June 5, 2015), says this philosopher and activist. In the present work, both grammar genres are written when Preciado is qualified, because when he/she speaks of him/herself, makes it indistinctly each time.

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