



The paradigm of love and its varied conjugations: A historical and psychoanalytic perspective

O paradigma do amor e suas variadas conjugações: Uma perspectiva histórica e psicanalítica

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1 INTRODUCTION

This article seeks to understand love in the light of psychoanalysis, as well as from a historical perspective, regarding the process of its construction in relation to the history of men and women who lived in French courts and high societies between the 12th and 20th centuries.

In her book "How the French invented love", Marilyn Yalom presents a panorama, starting from ancient France more specifically in the 12th century, and how the French have been building the concept of love throughout history.

For this work, reflections on literary works were considered to contextualize and substantiate the conceptions of love over the centuries, especially since literature, in relation to genres such as novels, plays, poems, etc., addresses it in relation to human interactions, which is articulated to a certain historical period of publication of these works.

2 OBJECTIVE

Love is one of the fundamental working tools for the interaction between the psychoanalyst and the subject in treatment. Considering the importance of the process of subjectivation for psychoanalysis, specifically regarding the formation of the psychoanalyst. Through a bibliographical and exploratory research, we sought to understand, in this article, from the twelfth century to the twenty-first century, how love was based over the centuries, knowing that love varies from relationship to relationship,



from society to society, from subject to subject. As well as what leads a subject to love the other, in the light of psychoanalysis.

3 METHODOLOGY

The present work regarding the approach is a qualitative study, of a basic nature, exploratory as to the objectives and using as a methodological instrument the bibliographic research (Gerhard; Silveira, 2009).

4 DEVELOPMENT

According to Rosa (2005), the concept of courtly love ("*fin'amors*", "*amour fine*") emerged in the 12th century in southeastern France and later influenced the whole of Europe. It is characterized by the courtship of a man, single and noble, directed to a woman of high purchasing power and married, based on the sublimation of desire, brought in the form of poems. For Ferreira (2008), this conception referred to an impossible, suffering love, unlike passion where the loved one becomes an object that contains the idealizations of his lover. Still, in this sense, love would be a construction in search of the truth of man.

In the Middle Ages, considering the victory of Christianity - by annihilating the Greco-Roman gods and goddesses, which were instituted in an attempt to account for the Real (Ferreira, 2008) - medieval women were kept under submission to the opposite sex, represented "by the father, the husband or the priest" (Yalom, 2013, p. 22). Therefore, the matrimonial ties of the upper classes of society were negotiated (arranged) for the sake of the family's economic power. At that time, love was understood as "a destructive and irrational force". In this sense, the couple did not decide on their marital future (Yalom, 2013, p. 23). This marriage was "assembled" based on the choices of the families, usually consisting of a teenage girl between 13 and 17 years old, and a boy about 15 years older than the girl.

In this scenario, the sublimation of love is revealed. In this sense, literature emerges as a freedom for this, bringing, in relation to the lyrical poems and narratives in verse, published at the time, novels involving love stories of young knights in love with married *Danmas*. For Ferreira (2008), the sublimation of love has as its stronghold the impossibility of access to the beloved object. Medieval literature brought up the issue of adultery - which was condemned by religion -. In this sense, Ferreira (2008, p. 40)



elucidates that "in this context, love is built from two antagonistic fields: the profane and the religious".

It is worth noting here that during the construction of love, religion had a great influence. Fromm (2003) reminds us that Freud also points out about religion and how Psychoanalysis understands its functioning in psyche. For a brief speech about religion, it is understood that it occupies a space of human insecurity in dealing with its impulses, needing to buffer these spaces with obedience to the Law. Religion lives up to this place by reminding the subject of his own prehistory, in which there was an exchange of obedience for security in the family environment.

For Yalom (2013), courtly love was a model to be aspired to by Western men and women, whether or not adultery was considered. This type of love had already been reported in other stories before the 12th century, including in the biblical stories (see Song of Songs). What makes it different from *fin'amor* or courtly love, is that in the centuries before courtly love, lovers had only religion to authorize or not that amorous moment. From the twelfth century onwards, art in general, such as poets, actors, literature, contributed to the broadening of the experience of love, and thus to the lovers being able to speak of their feelings with a little more freedom.

William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, was one of the first troubadour lyric poets to dedicate himself to courtly love as a central theme in his works, considered the father of *fin'amor*. The themes of his poems referred to the "beloved woman, the *Domna*" (Yalom, 2013, p. 24). The Duke was considered by society as a brave man, with large properties, seductive and saw women as prey to be hunted. His first poems have a pejorative tone in relation to the treatment of women. Over the years, from his second marriage to the Countess of Châtelleraut, who was also married, his poems took on a friendlier tone and thus emerged courtly love, characterized by suffering in the face of a love triangle. Courtly love gained strength as one that is idealized, and *Domna*, less and less accessible, represents, in this sense, the central role of the love plot, subverting the relationship between the sexes, becoming "object of male desire and subject of his own desire" (Yalom, 2013, p. 47).

Gallant love or *galanterie* emerged in the 13th century and remained until the end of the monarchy in the 18th century, and implied an evolution of courtly love. In it one can perceive a set of exquisite manners expected by the nobility, which the knights needed to follow to treat the opposite sex, in other words, it was desirable that the true knight tamed not only his horse, but also his "beloved" (Yalom, 2013).



Courtly love, in the previous century, brought the idea of a devotional love to a single *Domna*. Gallant love, on the other hand, had no such guarantee of fidelity. The gallants were not only the great knights, but men in general, who were free to court women of all social classes, although marriage at the time could only take place between people of equal social class (Yalom, 2013).

With the valorization of gallant love by the French high nobility, there was an "authorization" of the society of the time regarding sexual exploitation, mainly practiced by kings. These collected lovers, while the queens were for procreation and to ensure the continuation of the family in the reign (Yalom, 2013).

From the eighteenth century onwards, gallantry came to resemble more "short-lived sexual adventure with little or no sentimental depth" (Yalom, 2013, p. 108). By this time, excessive gallant love had become synonymous with libertinage, and men and women, young or not, participated. It is important to point out that the libertine was considered that man who seduced a woman, regardless of her social class, without also considering her naivety, due to immaturity, to have sex with her and then abandon her, even pregnant. However, some women were also part of this game of seduction, they were called gallant lady or also *coquettes*. The first liked to devote herself to one lover at a time, while the second kept several lovers at the same time (Ferreira, 2008).

For Ferreira (2008), love becomes dichotomous, as there are two different positions of the subject in the scene, one in a phallic female position and beloved object, and another in which the subject is in a male position, lover and vassal of *Domna*.

For Jean-Jacques Rousseau, quoted by Yalom (2013, p. 117), the "beginning of the cult of sensitivity in France, which privileged nature over culture, emotion over reason and spontaneous love over all the artifices of gallantry", which led him to be the precursor of the Romanticism movement. This movement has its basis in the Enlightenment triad: "Freedom, Authenticity and Goodness" (Ferreira, 2008 p. 81). For the author, not even this new romantic movement, established by Rousseau, was able to buffer the illusion of suture called happiness, in which love and enjoyment meet for a "happy ending".

With the inauguration of the Romantic movement, a new form of love gained ground among the nobility, maternal love. Young men fell in love with older women or vice versa, an Oedipal theme, especially in France where the relationship between mothers and sons and daughters had a socio-erotic model. In this sense, as Ferreira (2008, p. 02) cites, love had two distinct and contrary functions. At first, "with the function of



sublimation", which inserted the impossible in the plot and, in the second moment, as "function of idealization", which refused this impossible.

Subsequent to romanticism, there was a need for the de-romanticization of love. Some writers in the mid-19th century, considered realists, believed that love was a "trick the mind plays on itself" and transformed romantic love into realistic episodes of adultery and "banal clichés" (Yalom, 2013, pp. 288-223).

The defeat of Prussia in 1870 also contributed to French pessimism about romantic love. The fall in the French birth rate in those years caused love to follow a path of mass reproduction, leaving romance aside. For Ferreira (2008), this love is disappointing, as it no longer guarantees happiness, love that requires sacrifices, "an impossible dream".

Towards the end of the century, there was a change in the concept of love. The gay nineties (the joyful 1890s) brought a new guise, a love that learned from the excess of romanticism and realism. In this sense, love is considered ephemeral, theatrical (Yalom, 2013). From the dramaturgy of the twentieth century, French soap operas brought spectators the "love that devours everything" (Yalom, 2013, p. 328). From the failure of love to the birth of a new myth, the signifier "Happiness" was introduced into social circles, including, based on the public policies of the time, as a "fundamental guideline for the construction of a new European society" (Ferreira, 2008, p. 81).

This search for happiness brought to the society of the time the idea of incapacity, because they were not able to realize that this "happiness" would never be possible to achieve. At the beginning of the 19th century, love stories with heroes and heroines, representing phallic men and virtuous women, appeared in literature. In this sense, we observe the desexualization of women as a basic principle for them to be loved. In this sense, the woman needed to present values that elevated her to a being of wonders, embodying an ideal of virtue. On the scene, literature presented romantic oedipal desire with rebellious and resistant characters. As for laws and social limits, the search for truth (which caused suffering) represented a means of enjoyment.

Psychoanalysis emerged with a subversive discourse to the happiness propagated at the time. Freud already denounced the lack and impossibility of satisfying man's desire (Ferreira, 2008). Freud (1930/2021, p. 112) points out that, in relation to the culture of his time, he states that it was still well controlled by men, and the function of women was to take care of families and to satisfy their husbands sexually.

The loved one appeared in this period as a phallic object. In this psychoanalytic scenario, it will lead the subject to the purpose of the libidinal drive. Ferreira (2008 p. 14)



points out that such an object, named by Lacan as object a, "is what is most variable", and also completing the conclusion with Lacan that the "origin of desire is in the lack of the object"; in other words, it is always necessary the void so that desire can appear.

In the 21st century, homosexual love was emphasized, defended by laws that guaranteed legal rights, as well as in straight marriages. "Sex before marriage, living together with or without legal commitment, divorce, successive involvements" (Yalom, 2013, p. 340). The acceptance of lovers in marriages by both parties resulted in a new view on lifelong marriage. The financial autonomy of women in this century has made a difference to this whole change in the marital scenario, although there are still many privileges for men, this change in the family financial scenario proves to be "a wild card in the game of love" (p. 340).

Love has been built over the centuries and will always be under construction, does it accompany the changes in society or does it provoke these changes? Perhaps to answer this question, a more in-depth anthropological study is needed, which is not possible at the moment. In an excerpt from the film *The Tobacco Shop* (2018), directed by Nikolaus Leytner, Freud's character said to the young Franz Huchel, comparing the knowledge of love to water: "you don't need to understand water to take a dip". Based on this premise, an investigation into love would become unnecessary, however, what psychoanalysis brings us, and that being able to interpret the minimum possible of the path already traveled helps to tread new ones.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Love is a fire that burns without being seen, it is a wound that hurts, and is not felt;

it is a discontented contentment, it is a pain that hurts without hurting.

It is a not wanting more than a well wanting; it is a solitary walking among people;

is to never be content;

is a care that wins by getting lost.

It is to want to be bound by will; it is to serve the one who wins, the victor;

is to have with those who kill us, loyalty.

But how to cause can your favor in human hearts friendship,

If the same Love is so contrary to you? (CAMÕES, p.)



Literature is part of the process of building paradigms of love. In this sense, we sought, in this work, a panorama from the twelfth century to the present day, to understand, based on the perspectives of each time, how love was being built until it reached the love of the current century. The excerpt from Camões' sonnet refers to gallant love, a sonnet that manages in a few, beautiful and well placed, to translate some of the analyst's work on this theme that puts men and women, even today, in situations of suffering and causing the most varied types of enjoyment. Yalom (2013) elucidates that

...the myth of Happiness is based on the belief in another who, through love, would make the perfect fit between two beings, making One being. But for this it is necessary that the beloved fulfills the moral attributes offered by the Christian discourse. The lack, which belongs to the structure, is denied, transforming it into contingency (YALOM, 2013, p. 81).

Love-passion, this idealized love, seeks for a "perfect fit" to make the subject ignore the lack that constitutes his own structure and that of the loved one. For Yalom (2013), when Freud brings the notion of drive, it is clearer to think that, if there were an object that would, in fact, satisfy man's desire, this would close a circle and the subject would no longer be desirous, as it would be complete. Moreover, this is not what happens, the human being is moved by what is missing and, in order to desire, incompleteness is necessary so that there is an alternation of objects. Through the attempt to occupy the structural void, love arises.

The word love has gained several conjugations during its formation process in human history. Freud (1930/2021) states, in *The malaise in culture* (p. 110), that this has explanations in genetics. In human prehistory, genital love was uninhibited and, in the unconscious, it continues to be so, but called sensual love, directed to pairs for the creation of a family.

Understanding this multiplicity of meanings of love is a challenge. To believe or not in its existence is up to each subject, because, like the sublimation in the love songs, poems and novels of the Medieval Era, it still remains an enigma. This article concludes that man will not always have answers in relation to love. In the last century, Freudian theory has shown that, because the subject is lacking, he desires and seeks the truth, which leads to great artistic, cultural and technological elaborations. This was made possible by the fact that libidinal drives, or any energy that drives the subject, were given the name of love.



In this sense, it is investigated how each sex reacts to the aspirations that love brings considering the various ways of loving. In this sense, it is observed that, in the history of humanity, there are several conceptions that characterize love: courtly, gallant, comic, tragic, maternal, romantic, seductive and others.



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