

Introduction to Issue: Thinking Sex with Alenka Zupančič

Cindy Zeiher & Mike Grimshaw

Zupančič's *What IS Sex?* is more than just a guide to thinking about sex and the subject of sex because when we are inevitably thrown into chaos by this task she helps us to preserve clear thinking. The subject of sex is and always has been an important topic for philosophy and psychoanalytic theory. Zupančič's approach offers something different to previous discussions in that she not only reinvigorates sex at the intersection of philosophical, psychoanalytic and ontological inquiry, she also considers sex in terms of a symptom emanating from this very engagement. Here sex is no longer an ontological impasse but rather a signifier which tantalises the gap between knowledge and the subject.

The subject of sex for psychoanalysis has always been a singular starting point for inquiry and this is where Zupančič pivots her interrogation of sex, not only as a way of navigating the messiness of its ontology but also via psychoanalytic theorisation of the hysterical question regarding sex: *che vuoi?* or, what can I be for you? This question reconfigures how sex and the subject of sex have been, and arguably still are, theorised via constructivist and mediatised images.

Today we are surrounded by so much sex in so many different ways that we no longer really know how to respond. Zupančič provokes us into asking not only what we as sexed subjects invest in sex but also how we can from this position make ourselves accountable. For, as Lacan reminds us, we need to think about what we are complicit in when are faced with that which perplexes us.

The contributions which follow are responses and engagements with Zupančič's ontology of sex. Each contributor has been invited by Zupančič to continue the provocation of not only what sex is, but also of how we can interrogate it together with what investment it has in ontology.