

HELPLESSNESS ¹

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In his seminar on ethics, Lacan clearly identifies what ethics means for psychoanalysis and how he thinks of the end of didactic analysis during that time.

He tells us that the only good thing that matters for psychoanalysis is "desire". If the cure is aimed at material goods, economic achievements, or the search for eternal comfort, it is a scam.

Does this mean that psychoanalysis promotes asceticism, lack of comfort, or renunciation of material goods as an end of analysis? It's not about that, but it is about nuances in relation to them. If the cure is aimed towards the "achievements" of the subject, nothing happens; the same thing happens if we direct it towards "psychological normalization or rationalizing moralization," "only traversing the phantasy," or "a fair relationship with the real."

It's not about that, Lacan tells us at this point in the seminar; at the end of a didactic analysis: "It is a matter of the subject coming to know and reach the terrain and level of the experience of absolute unease and helplessness in the face of one's own death, at the level where anxiety is already a protection."²

Anxiety outlines a subjective danger by responding to the demand of the Other without questioning whether I desire what they demand of me, becoming alienated to it, in a position of the object of the Other's phantasy.

There is no danger at the ultimate level of the *hilfflosigkeit* experience (that is, in the face of one's own death, the subject cannot expect help from anyone [helplessness]). For the

¹ VIII Congreso Internacional de *Convergencia, Movimiento Lacaniano por el Psicoanálisis Freudiano*. Barcelona, 24, 25, 26 y 27 de mayo de 2023. Translation in english by @Letraducciones

² Jacques Lacan. *La ética del psicoanálisis: Seminario VII (1959-1960)* Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1988. Clase Nro. 23 (29 de junio de 1960) pág. 362. The translation is ours.

parlêtre, the limit of that region is expressed in "(...) touching until its end what is and what is not."³

At this point in his work, Lacan also tells us: "At the end of didactic analysis, the subject, as a result of it, is responsible for his desire, his actions, for the price he pays for this desire."⁴ It is not about ending it in a position of comfort regarding the ethics of goods, as we said before, nor is it moralizing. It's about questioning. Have I acted in accordance with the desire that inhabits me?

A true didactic analysis must work on the limit of goods, and the question of my action in the analytical practice must arise.

If we rethink "helplessness" in light of Lacan's latest seminars, that is, one step beyond the *Proposition of October 9th, 1967*, which is from the same time as the Seminar *The Logic of Phantasy*, we can say that an end of analysis is not equal nor identical to the cuts that occur during said analysis. Here arises a question: Could we articulate that helplessness that Lacan enunciates in the Seminar on Ethics with a subjective destitution?

The end of analysis, according to Isidoro Vegh, is a time of mourning comparable to the Kleinian depressive position; it is a mourning for what the analyst represented as the representative of the object *a*⁵.

A time when the phantasy cannot be made consistent, desire cannot be sustained because the phantasy cannot be made consistent in a time of subjective destitution. Helplessness.

If we think about it from the Borromean knot, we can take one step further. There is a main hole, that of the Symbolic, which contaminates its lack to the other two registers. Additionally, there is a true hole between the Real and the Imaginary which, by "carrying the analysis far enough," allows us to discover "the non-existence of the Other" or "the castration of the Other." We can articulate this "helplessness" that Lacan proposes to us in Seminar VII. As we mentioned before, where we touch upon what man is and what he is not. He is not

³ *Ibidem.*

⁴ *Ibidem.*

⁵ *cf.* Isidoro Vegh. *Paso a paso con Lacan*. Buenos Aires: Letra Viva, 2013. p. 271. The translation is ours.

immortal, helpless before death, which is covered and worsened by the symbolic death of the signifier. In this position, there is subjective mourning, a denial of truth and castration.

To conclude, we could say that we are moving from the logic of incompleteness to the logic of not-all. From the logic of the unconscious to the logic of feminine enjoyment. In light of these recent seminars, can we read this helplessness in that passage?

As the analyst falls from the SsS and retains the place of object *a*, the subject is confronted with helplessness, with the inconsistency of the Other. There are no gods to guarantee, and the subject is faced with his truth without the veil of being and non-being. He traverses the phantasm and position himself differently before the Real, before the castration of the Other and his own castration.