

RECOGNIZING ONESELF IN THE UNCONSCIOUS. THE ETHICS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS.

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...He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence¹...

William Blake in Proverbs of Hell

In Television², Lacan refers to the ethics of *bien dire* (good speech),...*to the duty of good speech or of recognizing oneself in the unconscious...* He posits this in relation to sadness and depression, and asserts that *... it is not a state of the soul, it is simply a moral failure, as Dante and even Spinoza articulated: a sin, which means moral cowardice...*

Baruch Spinoza considers desire as the essence of man. In his work Ethics, he regards as weak-spirited he who *represses desire for fear of evil³, when it's often man himself -he says- the cause of such sadness or happiness.*

Different ways of saying that rejection of the unconscious desire is not without consequences. I refer to the unconscious as the logic of incompleteness. Lacan uses two mathemes to name it: S2 Unconscious knowledge and –when returning– S1 Unary signifier, the efficacy of a hole, of the lack which is cause. With the return of the trace representing the subject, a liberating trace that disalienates, we bear witness to the enactment of castration. So, we venture to say that the rejection of the unconscious ultimately implies rejection of castration that may be repressed, foreclosed, or denied. Recognizing the unconscious is admitting that beyond the egoic dimension we are inhabited by desires, mandates, temptations, but above all, by an instance, a logical processor that acts on us and produces effects.

¹ Blake, William. Bilingual Antology. Alianza Editorial. Page 157

² Television is the text that was emitted and broadcast for the French Broadcasting station in 1973.

³ Spinoza, Baruch. Ethics. Editorial Gredos. Page 145.

In his Ethics seminar, Lacan extensively works on the Aristotelian proposal underpinned by the supreme Good, by a supreme being, God, and marks the differences. The ethics of Psychoanalysis is inscribed in another register. From Freudian developments he points to the radically unconscious that rules our acts. *There is no doubt*, posits Lacan, *that man seeks happiness just as is present in Aristotle*⁴. What Freudian thought introduces is the fact that there is nothing natural for it to occur. Beyond the principle of pleasure that puts to sleep, the drive awakens. The compulsion to repeat linked to the death drive allows laying the foundation for an ethics of the singular.

In his seminar on The Ethics, Lacan takes up the concept of lost object which Freud had worked at earlier. He names *das Ding* and proposes to think of it as the loss of illusion of the great Other. A dream of lost paradise and the attempt to find that object again. *It is in its nature*—says Lacan— *that the object as such is lost. It will never be found again... The Freudian world...entails the fact that such object, das Ding, insofar as the Other absolute of the subject, is what is attempted to be found again*⁵.

There is no completeness. A radical difference from the ethics founded on a supreme being, God. In different ways, Lacan posits the voiding of the being, the void of the being. He names the subject *manque-à-être*, lack of being. He uses the neologism *parlêtre* alluding to the language and the being. *The word trims the being, some part of the being is lost*, says Isidoro Vegh in his text *Retorno a Lacan* (Return to Lacan). *Yet also*—he points out— *the being shows that the word is insufficient to cover it*. The question of the being in psychoanalysis is presented under the form of a paradox, it entails to stop being, a void which is cause. The fact that the subject makes progress in his desire occurs not without a loss of *jouissance*. *Jouissance* linked to desire is not the same as *jouissance* linked to the *jouissance* of the Other, inexistent but effective.

⁴ Lacan, Jacques. The Ethics Seminar. Editorial Paidós. Page 22.

⁵ Lacan, Jacques. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis Seminar. Editorial Paidós. Page 68.

In The Direction of Cure, Lacan proposes that the analyst *would be better off taking a position of lack of being rather than being*⁶. He pays with words, with his own person. In different moments during the cure, he sustains the place where transference convenes him supported by the analyst's function of Desire. He becomes *semblant*, the effect of discourse. It is necessary not to identify the place where the transference convenes. The function of desire in the analyst is based on a lack and operates by establishing the maximum distance between the ideal and the object, *it places us, as analysts, opposite to what Freud*⁷ *called hypnosis, as a mass of two*⁸. Abstinence is a way of operating the desire of the analyst, who suspends *jouissance* to not surrender in his desire and avoid resistance to analysis.

In the time of the analytic act, that false being, the *faux être* which operated during transference, is lost. *One is that truth*⁹ as a void, irreparable, incurable, poses Lacan in the Psychoanalytic Act Seminar; the pass from I do not think to I do not exist, a rejection to be that object that obstructs the lack. The act also relates to the analyst who "*becomes the residue*"¹⁰, the non-being of the SSK.

The twists and turns in psychoanalysis, deciding to take one's own analysis to unknown frontiers, make us aware of the *jouissance* that inhabits us, and of the tangled paths where we can lose the compass of desire, not only aware but also responsible for the real. Which does not equate to being guilty. We know guilt is incestuous, it evidences the prohibition of the Other to act according to desire. Lacan points out that *the only thing one is to blame for is having surrendered desire*¹¹. He explicitly points out that the Ethics of Psychoanalysis involves not surrendering desire.

⁶ Lacan, Jacques. *Ecrits. The Direction of Cure*. Siglo XXI editors. Page 569.

⁷ In *Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego*. S. Freud. *Amorrortu* tomo XVII.

⁸ Vila, Maria Eugenia. *The Desire of the Analyst*. Eficacias Clínicas. Reunión Latinoamericana de Psicoanálisis. Rio de Janeiro, 2017

⁹ Lacan, Jacques. *The Psychoanalytic Act Seminar*. Class of January 10, 1968. Translation for internal circulation at EFBA.

¹⁰ Lacan, Jacques. *The Psychoanalytic Act Seminar*. Translation for internal circulation at EFBA.

¹¹ Lacan, Jacques. *The Ethics Seminar*. Editorial Paidós.

The psychoanalytic journey promotes a constant interrogation of the hieroglyphic writings of the unconscious which is structured as a language, and it is in the analysis itself that discourse is arranged. Thus in addition to the signifier, it entails *jouissance*, the object a, and the subject. The unconscious ciphers and the analyst deciphers enigmas. Because *jouissance* is forbidden they pass into the conscience as rebus, writings to decipher. Recognizing oneself in the unconscious relates to letting yourself be taken by your formations, the equivocal, the Freudian slip, setbacks, and be worked up by those intricacies through which the division of the subject manifests itself.

The ethics of *bien dire*, good speech, also correlates with *savoir* and *faire* on those remainders of *jouissance* which do not pass over and over again through the logic of the unconscious. It entails how the subject responds to the real. Placing new *jouissance* channeling for those remainders that do not subside enables us, in the social ties we transit, not to slip, so to speak, to avoid excesses in parasitic *jouissance*. It is the subject's responsibility, his answer speaks to how the subject positions himself faced with the impossible, the real. Thus the subject will do there with what is possible.

In his seminar *L'insu*, Lacan upholds the unconscious as the logic of incompleteness linked to the imaginary and the real. It is related to the subject of the RSI structure, a toric structure that encompasses the void. Structured as a language, the unconscious inhabits *lalangue*. *L'unebevue*, homophone of *L'Unbewusst* locates the equivocal which are not only homophones but also more than one meaning, a random mixture of phonemes, words, phrases. Play takes place on the surface of the discourse, and amidst speech produces its own writing. A speech that ex-sists the spoken,...*it is not coupled there but for ek.sisting...*¹² Speech relates to the enunciation, the ethics of *bien dire*, i.e., *the unconscious speech*,¹³ with its –sometimes–tangled, furtive, amusing ways of manifesting themselves bring the subject,

¹² Lacan, Jacques. *L'etourdit*. Other writings. Editorial Paidós.

¹³ Vegh, Isidoro. Reading of *L'etourdit*. Editorial Escuela Freudiana de Buenos Aires.

which is effect... *that appears in the lightening of an instance, in the void of the verb to be*¹⁴.

Lacan brings together the *surrendering in desire*¹⁵ with betrayal, betraying oneself, betraying the desire “metonymy of the being.”

Recognizing oneself in the unconscious enables us to enjoy what Jorge L. Borges articulates in his poem ‘You are not the others’... *Your matter is time, the unceasing time.*

You are every solitary instance.

¹⁴ Lacan, Jacques. The instance of the letter in the unconscious or reason from Freud. Escritos 1. Editorial siglo XXI.

¹⁵ Lacan, Jacques. The Ethics Seminar. Editorial Paidós. Pag 381.