

THE ILLUSION OF A FUTURE: THE ETHICS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS IN FATEFUL TIMES.

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Abstract:

Although Psychoanalysis arises under certain historical circumstances, Freud and Lacan place it beyond the cultural conditions of a given time. It is thus that in the present work the relevance of formulating an ethical position that produces a singular know-how, not subjected to the current fateful times, is considered.

There are two "acts" in this essay, acts that concern us intimately. It was not possible to work on one by renouncing the other, propelled to give rise to all our concerns. The production of this work was made possible through convergence, the point of union of each of our trajectories, which resulted in a joint effort where the "fertile difference was present in the multiplicity" not only a theoretical difference, but also in terms of language. This invited us to think and examine our work from diverse places, without hegemonic positions; we were challenged by the ethics of psychoanalysis and by the unfortunate malaise in culture that often causes the erasure of the dimension of the subject that seeks to make sense of reality, under the promise of the illusion of completeness and happiness. Thus, our essay itself reflects our positions regarding the "Ethics of psychoanalysis".

How to face the unfortunate condition that inhabits us without succumbing to the moral imperative that aims at achieving well-being and a serene life? Is it possible to sustain a singular doing, in the face of a system that promotes homogeneous ways of being and inhabiting the world? Is there a place for psychoanalysis at a time when the chalice of eternal life, the philosopher's stone, and mental health is offered through new treatments and innovative techniques? What is the role of psychoanalysis in relation to your ethical position? Why ask ourselves about the ethics of psychoanalysis today? What is important to review in light of a time that we describe as fateful? Is it possible to think of a time that is not fateful?

Misfortune, calamity, suffering, and unhappiness are part of that which is fateful. It is there, in what is presented as fateful, where we find the constitutive fear of nudity, of life, and of gaining the prisons of serenity, reiterated and regulated. Nothing speaks more in favor of the fateful than the search for happiness: permanent human restlessness in search of a unique path towards permanent states of completeness and plenitude. This illusion has led to the emergence of positions ranging from Greek antiquity with the myth of the androgyne, the philosopher's stone, the fountain of eternal youth or the chalice of eternal life, to current demands that point to an ideal of well-being and mental health.

Uncertainty about how to respond to that which is fateful, places us before two paths: The first concerns a temporality that we could cover in a progressive, linear way, which identifies a historical period; the second, invites us to consider the possibility of making a cross section and examining the "unfortunate" condition based on subjectivity, in the sense that the subject is constituted by a fundamental fault. It is precisely from this second perspective, that of subjectivity, that psychoanalysis takes place.

If we start from the first perspective, we can think that since earlier times, the problem of happiness has been raised by several authors who try to postulate the way to achieve it. Aristotle, for his part, affirms that "the supreme end of man is happiness" a circumstance that implies the choice of an objective and the direction of conduct in search of that objective. For his part, Kant proposes a deontological thought, a line that already implies a definition of correct and incorrect action, which places the approach on the mandate of a Master who decides what is good and what is evil.

The effects of these elaborations are manifested in the relationship of the subject with others as equals, others who make it possible to sustain these illusions with the help of the construction of consensus to establish links of order that allow a convenient coexistence. These consensuses come from circumstances that concern the moral, since they arise as a need to regulate behaviors, in such a way that customs, norms, myths, agreements, laws and necessary forms of order are produced. This implies a dimension that concerns conscience and will, since a rational, scientific and theoretical explanation of moral rules is

proposed, annulling any possibility for the existence of an unconscious that manifests itself when the individual is unprepared for the emergence of subjective truth.

Based on the second way proposed in previous paragraphs, it is Freud who, beyond the pleasure principle, establishes the utopian nature of moral designs as a means to achieve full happiness, which translates into ideals that can only be commanded by the death drive and that later Lacan will place on the side of *jouissance*.

Certainly, psychoanalysis emerged at a certain time, in response to the primacy of science to determine what is true and materially real, the path through which the scientific and technological developments that characterized the 19th century advanced, as well as the currents of thought that tried to apprehend it. With the advancement of science, men gradually became an object of study, and his voice became subordinated to the scientific discourse that spoke in his place. This situation was noticed by Freud from his work with hysterical patients, a request for which he did not find an answer through the techniques of medicine. The medical gaze, the drugs, the scientific research cancel the voice of the subject; his balance is sought in chemical regulations, in genetic inheritance, in biological tendencies, but not in its saying.

In addition to this, one of the premises with which the current era is standardized, is the "Happily ever after", that constantly invites us to seek the mechanisms to immediately satisfy what our needs are supposed to be, through an unlimited number of experiences and the constant consumption of objects such as fast fashion, social networks, surgeries and aesthetic interventions, as well as the use of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, which based on algorithms produce the fiction of the appropriation of being and the annulment of subjectivity, all in the name of satisfaction, well-being, beauty and happiness as primordial and superior objectives that bring us closer to the uncanny. We are talking about a time of urgency, in which the configuration of subjectivity is disrupted by the vortex of the immediate and the novel, in which the difference is veiled on the scene. This is how the faces of our dark times appear: mannequins that adorn their bodies with tattoos, holes, and marks.

Bodies that resemble murals in movement, that seduce with their image and gather glances through which bodies are offered to the Other.

The future of psychoanalysis is that of a symptom: it is the future of the symptom of our time, laden with pandemics, migrations, wars, violence, etc. How and from where can we think about the links to come, in the face of artificial intelligence, immediacy and the sense of urgency to plug, compose and make up the human?

Psychoanalysis as a practice that is oriented to give rise to the word that reveals the unconscious truth. It is born based on an ethic that belongs to itself, and that differs from the ethics of any other disciplines. The ethics of psychoanalysis places desire at its core as a cause, that is, made possible by the lack; in this sense, it does not respond to the desires of a given time but to the structure in which subjectivity is constituted. Its relevance lies in formulating an ethical position that produces a singular know-how, implying the need to postulate a place for what other disciplines have tried to close: anguish, anxiety, suffering, the hole; dimensions that cannot be removed but are constitutive of subjectivity.

This ethical position does not rest on the domain of consciousness, but leaves room for what Lacan, following Freud, would enounce as "Das Ding"; that is to say that the truth with which psychoanalysis works does not confer cunning or thought at the level of the self. The dimension that crosses the analytical demand is not without error, nor without the relationship of the subject in front of the truth of his desire.

In his seventh seminar, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan questions the nature of desire. When we say here that the ethics we are referring to is that of desire, a fundamental problem opens up that Lacan tried to formalize throughout the twenty years that followed that seminar. His reflections on "das Ding", in radical difference from "die sache", introduce what a few years later he would call *objet petit a*, as cause of desire. Since "Das Ding" evokes a fundamental lack, it cannot be represented or symbolized. From this relation with a void, Lacan formulated that which lies at the core of sublimation.

"In the definition of sublimation as satisfaction without repression there is, implicit or explicit, a passage from not-knowing to knowing, recognition of the following: that

desire is nothing more than the metonymy of the discourse of demand. It is the change as such. I insist on this, that properly metonymic relationship of a signifier with the other that we call desire, is not the new object, nor the previous object, it is the change of object itself." (Lacan, 2015, p. 360)

This lack constitutes the core of the subject, as constituted in lack; it implies its desiring condition. This lack is not repairable and cannot be compensated in any way. How, then, can we think of an ethic that arises from a fundamental void? Lacan guides us along the path of desire, a position that separates his clinic from other "psi" clinics, which aim at a false restitution of the relationship with primary objects. Psychoanalysis itself does not escape from falling into the traps of the illusion of the permanent demand for happiness through the re-establishment of fundamental relationships. Thus, we see that the unfortunate condition heralds the tragedy of a future in which the clinical work follows the illusion of progress or improvement:

"What I articulated this year consisted of showing them [...] the distance traveled, let's say, after Aristotle -and making them feel to what extent we take things on a different level, how far we are from the formulation of a discipline of happiness-." (Lacan, 2015, p. 359)

Lacan examines different approaches to articulate the ethics that is produced by introducing desire in relation to a fundamental lack. This sharp look evidences the enjoyment in which the highest ethical practices are sustained. In this way, we have that Kant, with his lofty morality, is not fundamentally different from Sade. Degraded morality in Sade is no more perverse than living based on the fulfillment of moral ideals, both commanded by mandates that come from the Super Ego. Both Kant and Sade, allow us to realize that the subject is positioned as the object that satisfies the irreparable lack in the Other; a lack that leads us to "beyond" the repairing of our own unfortunate condition, without realizing how it is perpetuated if ideals guide our actions.

Antigone, in her tragic condition, allows an articulation of the ethics of psychoanalysis. Faced with the choice of dying or giving funeral rituals to her brother's corpse, she opts for

dignity, thus being condemned to death. Antigone's ethics implies a choice against the ideals of being. That which operates in her is that the Other is that there are no guarantees, which produces a radical position in the face of her own death.

"Antígona presents itself as autonomous, pure and simple relationship of the human being with what he miraculously turns out to be the bearer of, namely, the signifying cut, which confers on him the insurmountable power of being, before everything, what he is" . (Lacan, 2015, p. 348)

Antigone embodies the fateful condition of subjectivity: "nothing is from what was not born and everything that exists only lives in the failure of being." How to think that Antigone embodies the desire for death? The ethics of psychoanalysis is produced with the death of being: "[...] by virtue of the signifier and in its most radical form. In the signifier, and to the extent that the subject articulates a signifying chain, he feels that he can be missing from the chain of what he is. (Lacan J., 2015, p. 362)

The psychoanalytic practice gives rise to the articulation of an ethic in which the subject has to deal with his own lack and which shows that there is no guarantee, that the Other is castrated. From this place, the demand for happiness tinged with certain cultural and temporal elements will always meet with the impossibility of its satisfaction. In the voracity of consumption of our time, in which "mental health" approaches promise to satisfy a demand, psychoanalysis places itself in a singular ethic: the ethics of desire.

This singular ethical position allows psychoanalysis to question the answers that other aspects yearn to postulate in the face of the fateful times and the subject himself. The scientific approach that promotes drugs as medicines a line of intervention locates discomfort in the organic and leaves aside the singularity of the subjectivity itself. The approach to the will and the conscience in the conception of an illusory future in the face of the current demand for immediate effectiveness on the symptom, responds to the utopia of obtaining happiness not as an ephemeral instant, but as an achievable completion.

Faced with the above, it is important that we ask ourselves: what are the relevant questions for psychoanalysis? Is it about the practice of that who analyses or the individual who demands it in fateful times?

If, as we have warned, neither time nor space are factors that intervene transforming the discipline, then a difference can be discerned between what the discipline itself implies and the effects it produces, since history itself gives us evidence that the discomforts that affect humans today are the same in any part of the world and at any time in history, which has led us to use myths to make everything bearable that is repeated. A look at literature, via Anton Chekhov in one of his short stories at the end of the 1800s, leads us to consider:

“I thought that the same wind had blown in the times of Riurik, Ivan the Terrible and Peter, and that in those times there was the same terrible poverty, hunger, the same leaky roofs, ignorance, sadness, the same desert around, darkness , feeling of oppression – all those horrors were, were and would be – and even if a thousand years passed, life would not be better...” (Chekhov, 2023)

Lacan, always drawing on various disciplines, makes a subversive proposal that can be seen in Seminar 7, in which he calls the ethics of psychoanalysis something different from what until then had been understood as ethics, as a synonym of morality, placing psychoanalysis in a different position, since the elements that come together in the display of his work have to do with the subject and the truth of his desire. As he himself points out at the beginning of the seminar:

“Under the term of ethics of psychoanalysis is grouped what will allow us, more than any other area, to test the categories through which I think I give them, in what I teach them, the most appropriate instrument to highlight what it brings new Freud's work and the experience of psychoanalysis that emerges from it”. (Lacan, 2015, p. 9)

At the risk of being repetitive, but for purposes of punctuality, it is worth noting that what encompasses morality from which Lacan departs, has to do with principles that govern behavior whose effects are intended to direct and judge. So, it is understandable the fact that Lacan distanced himself from the installation of a proposal of rigid principles, which would

have to be housed in an institution whose object would pretend to issue judgments based on the elaboration of arguments presented according to the history of whoever had interest in doing so, by way of court.

We would be far from placing ourselves in the law that governs the subjective, which is not about the establishment of specific and rigid principles that establish only one good and one bad, issuing a judgment on the human, which rather has to face the unconscious, which governs subjectivity and the mechanisms that determine it and regulate its relationship with the world, devoting it to actions outside of its will that, from an institutionalized perspective, could be amoral. Obviously, to speak of the subjective is to speak of the truth of the subject, and the possibility of this happening places us before the singular production of the reality of the subject itself, which can only be fantasmatic, while being influenced by material reality.

Regarding its conditions, let us think that both realities are governed by different laws and, therefore, material reality follows its own. On the one hand, psychic reality is regulated by the pleasure principle and the reality principle; Lacan refers to it as fantasmatic and psychoanalysis proposes the path of his doing there through the singularity and the impossibility of controlling said reality, since the elements that make it up are contained in a symbolic logic. On the other hand, material reality is regulated by an authoritative law that determines the rules and mandates that are to be prohibited and allowed, and its object is aimed at the social.

Obviously, the articulation of both laws in human subjectivity produces effects that we can only envision from the understanding that there is a different logic that regulates each one. However, both are important and coexist in human existence and fulfill functions that cannot be ignored.

Thus, when we talk about the ethics of psychoanalysis, we are necessarily qualifying the law that governs subjectivity and what commands it, in such a way that it seeks that the subject can be responsible for acting in accordance with the truth of his desire, more beyond the implementation of codes of action of those who exercise it and the times in which they

exercise it, which would be framed in the morality that has effects on material reality, which allows us to remember the situation of discomfort that this causes in the subjects .

Thinking of psychoanalysis as an ordering function governed by ethics, would lead us to conclude, as Allouch (2010) points out, quoting Freud, that his method would be a calamity that evidences the incompatibility between the two, since "there is no properly psychoanalytic ethics" (Allouch, 2009, page 17). Which reinforces the approach that Lacan makes years later in Writings 2, regarding the fact that "[...] morality [is] recognized since Kant as an unconditional practice of reason", where the unconscious would not take place". (Lacan J., 2009, p. 744)

Expanding on the above, if we talk about a qualification on an action of the analyst in the exercise of his praxis, we would be analyzing the causes related to said exercise; We would not be referring to Psychoanalysis as a discipline, nor to its object which is the analysis of the subject in relation to the truth of his desire. As Allouch puts it, "There is only one error and it consists in the fact that this function of the cause, in the Freudian analytical method, can only be referred to the analyst and not to the analysis", which would imply that the assessment of the ethical determination would fall on the elements that are chosen to be valued with respect to the analyst's exercise, that is, what is decided to report. (Allouch, 2009, p. 120)

It is important to make these considerations, since, if psychoanalysis is going to condemn itself to the evaluation of its ethics as the exercise of analysts, it is worth asking ourselves: Would psychoanalysis then continue to exist? Would its interest be in the truth of the subject's desire or would it become an instrument of force aimed at complying with given norms that, as such, would annul subjectivity? To all this, psychoanalysis does not intend to offer an answer, but rather to give rise to questions that are not anchored in a given era. The ethics of psychoanalysis provides an approach that allows situating "the thing that speaks to us, rather, that speaks to us" (Lacan J., 2009, p. 420).

Psychoanalytic listening points to the real of subjectivity in its singularity, to that which has not been read and which, by way of surprise, emerges in the unprecedented of the

subject in a subversive way. This subversion is subject to the representation of the word, which is taken by the signifiers that inhabit the subject himself. The sublimation in the plurality of its artistic manifestations is underestimated by the fateful condition of malaise in culture, which points to the classification and mass production, even of creative work.

The ethics of psychoanalysis, as well as all artistic expressions, point to the truth of the subject's desire. It will be Lacan who points out: "all art is characterized by a certain way of organization around that void" (Lacan J., 2015, p. 163)

ABOUT ART

and finally arrive, like you, to extraordinary ports!

Flee with you from civilization!

Losing with you the notion of morality!

To feel my humanity change in the distance!

Drink with you in the southern seas

new wild mixes, new upheavals of the soul,

new central fires in my volcanic spirit!

To go with you and undress –ah! out!-

my dress so civilized, my softness of actions,

my innate fear of prisons

and my serene life,

settled and static, reiterated and regulated!

Álvaro de Campos, Maritime Ode. (From Campos, 2014)

Pessoa's text voices the desire that inhabits the subject to flee from the serene civilized, static and regulated life. Craving to get naked and drink the new wild concoctions, burn with the fires of the spirit and be inhabited by desire.

Pessoa's heteronyms reveal the division of the subject: that there is no one without the Other and that the proximity between them is what displays the being of language in exile from the civilized homeland. Through their writing, Pessoa, Caeiro, Campos, Reis or Soares, face misfortune; a misfortune and suffering that the human condition implies. In this way, in

Pessoa's literary work, he is made in multiple ways without submitting to a single path of sovereign completeness.

Under this tenor, Álvaro Campos shows the work of the artist, moving away from the object (noun) to worry about the subject (the one who suffers), giving way to a subjectivism close to the awareness of the absurd; that is to say, that it is not the object that produces the suffering, but that it proposes a subjective appreciation that, while it is named, is distorted. It no longer matters what is around the lyrical voice: a face that looks, a body that names, a tree that touches. What matters is who is looking, what is being named, what is being touched, and the effect that it causes on the person who is looking, naming and touching, to fall into nonsense.

Just like art, psychoanalysis opens the door to give way to what is left out of man's search for his good; it is from that which is ineffable, that psychoanalysis is summoned: the nonsense, the nonsense, the equivocation, the extremity, the hole. As Lacan stated:

"Because the most innocent intention is confused once it can no longer hide that its failed acts are the most successful and that its failures fulfill its most secret desires. [...] Wandering in what they consider the least true by essence: in dreams, in the way in which the most gongorous witticisms and the most grotesque nonsense of puns defy sense, and in chance -not in its law, but in its contingency-" (Lacan J., 2009, p. 379)

Both psychoanalysis and art are subversive, revolutionary. Both appear as discursive manifestations that reflect the society of the moment, warning us about its dangers and discomforts. Lacan would already say it: "the artist is always ahead of us". (Lacan J. Interventions and Texts 2, 2001)

In his subjective position, whoever makes art enables the creation of certain meanings that surround the Thing. As Harari points out:

"The artist is the one who transforms a ghost into a good of collective recognition. It could be said that he is someone who transforms the private into the public but

understanding the private in the sense of a lack, of an absence. What is private for the artist is similar to what is private for the common people: society cannot fail to recognize that it puts this circumstance within its reach, that it dares to express what others do not dare to express" (Harari, p. .155)

Both the artist can be the author, and the analysand, a hero in the tragedy of his life, turning it into a drama, by way of desire. Here there are no happy endings, but rather productions that make the path of desire and its truth possible. Just like the slip, the work of art is located in a place that accounts for something that goes beyond what is intended to be said. In the words of Harari: "what matters to psychoanalysis is not denouncing what is wrong there, but listening to a truth that is said in different ways" (Harari, p. 137).

When talking about art and psychoanalysis, it is pertinent to consider sublimation and its undoubted relationship with malaise in culture, which gives rise to the manifestation of subjectivity through art.

"The third outcome of an abnormal constitutional provision is made possible by the process of sublimation. In it, the hypertensive excitations that come from the various sources of sexuality are given drainage and employment in other fields [...] Here one of the sources of artistic activity must be discerned [...]" (Freud, 1905)

At first, Freud shows the relationship between sublimation and artistic creation to later continue its development in correspondence with its social implications. As far back as 1908, in "Cultural sexual morality and modern nervousness," Freud begins to outline the relationship between drives and culture. Even James Strachey would qualify this text as "the first thorough examination that Freud made of the antagonism between culture and the drive"; and there sublimation, that meeting point, as we can see in Pessoa's poem, the desire of the subject who finds himself -who runs up, who hits- with the demands of civilization, will be impossible to materialize, but not completely, there will be a possible way out to find out about it by turning those demands: art, in this case writing, as a product of sublimation.

Freud states that a good number of our cultural achievements are due to sublimation, and in this regard, he says: "Our culture is built on the stifling of drives. Everyone has given

up a fragment of his heritage, of the fullness of his powers, of the aggressive and vindictive inclinations of his personality. From these contributions the common cultural patrimony of material and ideal goods has been born". (Freud, 1908)

It will be art, from its status of cultural heritage and through the artist as a creation, that will make it possible to account for the suffocations that arise from the antagonistic encounter of two realities of which culture is, in turn, cause and effect. The bet of psychoanalysis will be an account in a different way that manages to circumvent the repression and the symptom, giving rise to revelations of the mental life of which it was not known that something was known.

Regarding creation, Lacan relates the function of sublimation to art proposing that "an object can fulfill that function that allows it not to avoid the thing as a signifier, but to represent it, while that object is created" [...] "Sublimation has the possibility of doing something with the void and that is what the feat of art consists of" (1959-1960). It is this operation, as Lacan indicates, that elevates an object to the dignity of the Thing, a courageous act that few dare to agree to, to surround the void and put it into play as it refers and gives an account of itself to make something with it.

The ethics of psychoanalysis is not the illusion of a certainty, but of a future that links dreams, with symptoms that bet on life, that put a stop to the insistence of the death drive in these dark times. Thus, the word claims its word, being the invocative drive the one that takes the space inhabited by the subject.

The spirit in which psychoanalysis is founded is still valid, whatever the time, and it is precisely this position that differentiates it from other disciplines.

As a conclusion, it is opportune to quote what Miller proposes: "[...] technical issues are always ethical issues, and this for a very precise reason: because we are addressing the subject. The subject category is not a technical category. The category of subject, as such, can only be placed in the ethical dimension. (Miller, 2006, p. 4)

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