

Politethics of Psychoanalysis: there is no ethics without politics

Mauricio Eugenio Maliska

Maiêutica Florianópolis – Instituição Psicanalítica

One idea that we can infer from the *Seminar on Ethics* is that Lacan is in search of an ethics of psychoanalysis, which is not the same as saying an ethics for psychoanalysis, nor ethics in psychoanalysis. It seems to us that saying an ethics of psychoanalysis implies asking: what is the ethics of psychoanalysis? For this, the author takes a journey that begins with the idea of good or sovereign good in Aristotle (2021), insofar as he treats good as a virtue in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. This search for ethics leads Lacan to ask himself about the search for the good, that element that is so sought after and not found. In a text that dialogues with *Seminar 7, Kant with Sade*, Lacan (1998) relies on Kant to show that *das Gute* (the Good) is that element that would guide the movement of society in which the subject goes towards the good. The Kantian perspective points to the good as a universal value, exempt from any object, because for Kant the object is linked to the pathological and the good would be above that. This search for the good, whether in Kant as a categorical imperative, or in Aristotle through the sovereign good, desired as a virtue, leads Lacan to return to the Freudian *das Ding*, as the thing sought is found without being reached.

Das Ding enters *Seminar 7* as that element in which the thing is the unnameable, that which one does not quite know what it is and that the search for the thing is done by the search itself and not by what is actually found, since is never found. Lacan will say that the *das Ding* is something else, it is not a signifier (representative of the representation), it is the thing at the unconscious level. “The thing in fact is nothing” (Safouan, 2006, p. 114). Vladimir Safatle (2006, p. 155) points out that for Lacan, the Kantian *das Gute* and the Freudian *das Ding* are symmetrical categories, that is, in Kant, the good sought is never reached, in Lacan, the thing is something that is sought without never find. For Safatle (2006, p. 155), Lacan promoted a certain substitution of the notion of *das Ding* for the *object a*, maintaining

this characteristic of unattainable, this notion of an inapprehensible object. As Moustapha Safouan (2006, p. 114) says: “what man seeks is what he finds without reaching”.

If the *das Gute* in Kant is the good as a duty, it is located in the field of norms, in the field of morality, of prescriptive and normative obligation, such as a categorical imperative. The ethics that Lacan tries to develop throughout *Seminar 7* is an ethics of becoming, becoming as change, as becoming... This is what Lacan points out with the Freudian aphorism: “*Wo es war, soll ich werden* / Ali where that was, I must come”, so where that was, I as a subject of the unconscious, not as an *ego* – this imaginary element, but as this subject, I must come there where that was. The coming to be is linked with the constitution of the subject insofar as a subject comes into being there, but also with the effect of the analysis, because what is expected in the analysis is that the subject can come to be, can become something other than “*You are...*” which constitutes him as a master signifier. This master signifier that subordinates the subject and places him in a slave position, in a position of obedience in which the duty takes over, since the duty is correlated to the command, to the imperative, to this Hegelian master who in his etymology goes back to the *Dominus*, a master who enslaves the subject and he makes himself enslaved by the master. Something quite different is the master in the Aristotelian conception, in which mastery is linked to the *Magister*, that is, this master who articulates knowledge and transmits it, for this very reason this term gives rise to words like *magisterium*. It is a master, but not one who enslaves and dictates obligations, but one who manages to articulate knowledge, transmit it, produce some mobilization of desire in the subject.

Analysis, then, is the possibility of freeing oneself from the dominating master and being able to recognize another master, the one who teaches, who articulates with knowledge, the one who gives possibilities for the subject to advance in his own way and at his time. Among other things, the analysis is the possibility of leaving the pathological element of pain, which Lacan (1998, p. 785) points out as physiologically greater than pleasure, something that our Brazilian poets Tom Jobim & Vinicius de Moraes already knew and could sing in the song of Happiness: “Sadness has no end,

happiness does...". Analysis is the possibility of reversing this equation, not exactly making happiness never ending and sadness yes, but being able to make man seek happiness in his end, as Lacan (1997, p. 23) pointed out in the *Seminar 7*. It is not exactly a naive or romanticized happiness, but happiness in your relationship with *Tykhe*, with this encounter with real, which through analysis can generate the effect of a good encounter. A bonheur (happiness), as they say in French ces, remembering that this term comes from bonne heure (happy heure). That is, happiness is a meeting with *Tykhe*, a meeting with the goddess of fortune, of chance, a good meeting, unexpected, there is happiness. Wouldn't it be one of the effects of the analysis, the subject being able to surrender more easily to this *Tykhe*, to these non-programmed, unusual encounters, in which something of the real can bring a certain happiness? Wouldn't that be a happy effect of the analysis, the neurotic being able to get out of his obsessive programs to find the chance of the real and that would produce happiness? It seems that this could also set in motion another relationship with jouissance, different from that claiming posture of the right to jouissance, the subject can realize that the field of the right to something is already the field of jouissance. Could the analysis modify this claim for rights and make enjoyment associated with something else more productive in the subject's life?

The ethics of psychoanalysis, present in these effects of analysis, will only be able to produce these effects of happiness, for example, if it is constituted around an emptiness, the emptiness of the vase that is made with a hole. And the vase is the thing, that hole that installs the void. Ethics is the art of analytical work, a work that implies being able to deal with emptiness without becoming distressed, being able to articulate something in that emptiness beyond jouissance, something that touches desire itself. For Lacan, the dimension of good constitutes a powerful wall in the way of our desire, so that it is necessary to break through the wall to access desire. For this very reason, Lacan will say that the ethics of psychoanalysis is beyond the good, it is an ethics of desire.

Antigone appears as this character who does not give in to her desire, as the one who faces the rulers of the city, completely fearless as a being for death, in which

the heroine stands out for not having given in to her desire, because “the only thing she if he can be blamed, it is for having given in to his desire”, says Lacan (1997, p. 385).

If we conclude with Lacan that the ethics of psychoanalysis is the ethics of desire, then we have an ethics of lack, in which castration is taken as a central element. At the center of this ethics there is a lack that mobilizes the subject. The ethics of desire does not mean that the subject can do what he wants, but that he can do what he does not want, what he avoids at all costs, which is the encounter with his own lack. A lack is established because there is an interdiction of the sovereign good that is the mother.

To say that ethics is a principle is something totally different from morality as a set of rules of conduct or code. Morality is installed in duty, in inspection, in prescriptive and normative obligation. Morality is at the foundation of a categorical imperative articulated with guilt. Ethics, on the other hand, is a principle, the ethics of desire is, as we have seen, a becoming, a becoming in which there is no prescription, normalization, script, but a transformation that takes place at the heart of the analysis.

Since ethics is a principle, far beyond the *Ethos*, it is also this intangible element, impracticable in the practice of psychoanalysis, since the ethics of psychoanalysis is not restricted to a manual of norms and conducts or codes of ethics with a hundred rules. The ethics of psychoanalysis is situated in the impossibility of this practice, recalling the three practices that Freud considered impossible: educate, govern, psychoanalyze. There is an impossibility of psychoanalytic practice and ethics, so ethics would be situated in a real register of psychic experience, as it proves to be inaccessible, impossible as is the fundamental characteristic of real.

If ethics, in practice, is impossible, we can only make this possible through the act, in this sense the analytical act is a political act insofar as it has effects on the one who speaks and for whom he speaks. The analytical act is political for engendering an effect of one over the other, thus, it is only in the dimension of the act that ethics can be caught, even if it is by the ends of a real that does not allow itself to be symbolized. The analytical and political act is the only possibility of an ethical exercise, in which ethics is sought without ever being achieved. But if ethics itself is not achieved, the analytical /

political act is the form of this ethical exercise, insofar as it produces an effect on the subject and the other, and this effect on the other is a political effect, because it is in the relationship, it is also in the *polis*, mediating relations with the city, with the interlocutors, with the scenarios and characters, etc.

In this way, ethics can only be achieved through politics, as politics is the possibility of materializing ethics, which is why we named our text *Politethics of Psychoanalysis*, that is, there is no ethics without politics, and this is the possibility of the former. Politics is doing, it is the materialization of this abstraction called ethics. For psychoanalysis, we can also consider that there is no clinic without ethics, an ethics of saying the good, which is not the same as saying the good, but of a good saying that is concretized in an act, it is the word seen in action. If the analyst's desire is nothing more than his interpretation, as stated by Lacan (1997, p. 10), in the same way, we can say that ethics is nothing more than the analytical / political act, therefore an anapolitical act. The act marks the place where ethics takes place, an ethics of choice, of well-speaking, of the analyst's position.

This is what makes psychoanalysis an ethics without obligation. Psychoanalysis has pointed to something beyond the feeling of obligation and the omnipotence of guilt. It is therefore an ethics in which choice is made as the main element of desire. This choice that years later Lacan (2007) will punctuate as *Haeresis*, that is, the good choice, which is not just any choice. At this point, the choice is a political act, which is not simply an option chosen among many others, but the only one possible according to the desire that inhabits the subject.

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