

An ethic of the "parlêtre" (Lacan)

In 1966, in the text of the *Écrits* entitled *La science et la vérité*, Lacan closely associated psychoanalysis with the birth of modern science in the 17th century; without which, he asserted, the Freudian discovery could never have taken place.

By freeing itself from the question of the subject and excluding it, science in the modern sense of the term took a decisive step forward and experienced a prodigious rise. It does not, however, tell us where the good is, where the bad is, or "how far to go" - hence the creation of "ethics committees" in our time.

If the scientific approach no longer wanted to know anything about the subjective dimension, for Lacan, the latter, like a feedback effect, returned two centuries later through the clinic.

"Let me speak", the hysterical patients said to Freud, inaugurating the "*talking cure*".

This was the beginning of the discoveries of psychoanalysis. Starting with the existence of an unconscious structure in which each "living person speaking" in his singularity, finds himself caught up with his body "to the point where he would not be there for lack of being able to speak about it", says Lacan in *Radiophonie*.

The subject of psychoanalysis is a divided subject, divided by speech and language. As a *parlêtre* he has to insert himself into a symbolic dimension in which he is however already inscribed from before his birth. And this inscription has a cost: that of a radical loss of *jouissance* in the relation to the other and to his body.

This lost part of *jouissance*, lost forever and called by Lacan "petit a", causes in the subject a desire identified by Freud as indestructible. A desire which, when it is too much in pain, takes on a symptomatic form.

However, since Freud and even Lacan, the symptoms have evolved and no doubt also say something about the time in which they appear, and have taken on new forms: in particular under the effect of a certain erosion of the symbolic dimension, to the point where the real, in a sort of coalescence with the imaginary, manifests itself today in a somewhat invasive way.

The phenomenon of addiction, for example, is growing exponentially and has multiplied. It now takes many different forms and spreads in a wide variety of ways. Like the paradigm of a kind of hypnotic relationship with the object, it directly involves the reality of the body, but not without damaging it...

Another great "disorder" from the United States, taking up in its own way the *French Theory*, runs through our society today: a *Gender Disorder* so designated in 1990 by Judith Butler. A disorder, however, relativised as being aligned with others in the controversial DSM, which claims to be scientifically objective and wishes to 'depathologise'.

With the help of pharmaceutical laboratories and insurance companies, the notion of the symptom was thus dismantled and with it a Freudian-inspired psychiatry that listened to what could be said about the truth of the subject.

Gender then came to repress the question of sex on the societal level, if not to disavow it or to force it.

This led to the creation of medical consultations for 'gender dysphoria' where, over the years, more and more adolescents have been seen. Where there used to be ten per year, there were soon ten per month. Under the effect, one might say, of a kind of 'hysterical contagion', this new offer was apparently led to no longer bother with the distinction, essential for psychoanalysts, between demand and desire.

This has also led parents with their six/seven year old child, such as the "Little girl" in Sébastien Lifshitz's film broadcast on television, to turn to these consultations, whereas a few months may be enough for experienced psychoanalysts to lead a child to elaborate a fantasy which, above all, calls to be heard and recognised; and thus spare the child from passing his or her fantasy directly into the real of his or her own body, with all the consequences that may then ensue...

In the name of 'scientificity' and efficiency, however, psychoanalysis is tending to be discredited, if not banished, from health care institutions, in other words, from a discourse whose ravages, unfortunately, we can only observe more and more...

If the cause of desire, in its radical nature, commits us in some way to the death drive, the latter, through the mediation of the symbolic governed by the phallic function, is called upon to make a diversion - the one that Freud speaks of in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in relation to death.

Desire must still be able to structure itself, notably with the Oedipus, and it must not be saturated with jouissance.

But under the effect of an unbridled neo-liberalism and a degraded symbolic function, is desire today not stifled or adrift? As jouissance can no longer be regulated, tensions rise and spill over, and violence is unleashed, accompanied by a discourse in which it is only a question of "aggressors" and "aggrieved".

The use of language, the lexicon and syntax are abbreviated, impoverished, homogenised, carried away, one might say, by the real and the imaginary.

And when the signifier register crumbles, its structuring and mediating function is reduced accordingly, calling upon immediacy, the impulse and ultimately, in repetition, the death drive. There is nothing to prevent the subject, thus weakened, from finding refuge under the aegis of a leader in what Freud called "mass psychology" or "crowd psychology"...

How far will the real, associated or even coagulated with the imaginary, prevail over the effects of the so-called 'natural' language, which metaphorises, as it were, the law of the species? To forget this, to ignore it, is it not to stick to an instrumental and reductive conception of speech and language, in the ignorance of their constitutive function for the desire of the subject in its singularity? What happens when the digital revolution, artificial intelligence and techno-sciences take hold, or even try to supplant them? Here we will have to refer to the work of Nestor Braunstein, on what he called before leaving us *The discourse of the markets*.

We are living in an era, it seems, where science is beginning to unfold all its consequences and where ethical questions are being asked with particular acuity.

If in 1966 Lacan considered that "the subject of psychoanalysis is not something other than that of science" - that is to say: no science without psychoanalysis and no doubt reciprocally, no psychoanalysis without science... - he clarified a few years later in an interview with France-Culture in July 1973 how he saw the function of psychoanalysis and, consequently, the role and responsibility of psychoanalysts: "Analysis is not a science" he said. "It is the discourse without which the discourse of science is not tenable by the being who has accessed it for more than three centuries ! The discourse of science has irrespirable consequences for what we call humanity. Analysis is the artificial lung through which we try to ensure that we can find jouissance in speech so that history continues.

At a time when Chatgpt raises the question of crossing a new threshold for the human subject, this reflection by Lacan, which dates back fifty years and confers such a function on psychoanalysis, can only encourage psychoanalysts not to abandon the compass of their desire.