

## Ethics

We say "Psychoanalytic ethics and the others" because "ethic[s] **is relative to discourse**",<sup>1</sup> and thus there are several, depending on what orders social bonds. Following the four [types] distinguished by Lacan, there will be the ethics of the master, the hysteric, and the university. To this, we must add the ethics of the bonds of time, our time, where the object of psychoanalysis, Lacan's object *a*, is now "at the social zenith," having eclipsed the master signifier in favor of bonds mediated solely by the object. These bonds are individually elective and optional, and therefore as precarious as each individual's appetites, which does not prevent them from being embraced *en masse*, provided that the same object becomes a common factor for the many.

Psychoanalytic ethics, on the other hand, is the ethics that, whether recognized or not, guides the psychoanalytic act on a day-to-day basis in psychoanalysis, whenever there is psychoanalysis. It shares with the ethics of our time the characteristic of being **optional**; it is not for everyone, but requires a specific, new desire, the desire called by Lacan ... the desire of the analyst. No less unspeakable than any other, but a desire of exception whose concept remains to be clarified, because contrary to what vectors each individual desire, it is carried neither by the signifying chain of an "I", nor by the object it engages. Yet, it is this desire that causes the analyzing desire. Lacan speaks of this **ethics of desire**, which counters the imperatives of the loud voice of the superego, and whose path - "avenue," according to Lacan's term – follows that of the demand, and in *Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation*, Lacan calls it an ethics "of silence"<sup>2</sup>, an ethics "converted to silence" by the fact that desire, "incompatible with speech", is unspeakable.

The **ethics of the act**, that is, of what operates, comes from there. It presupposes this desire and this silence, but it is not oriented by them, since only "the demand that is to be interpreted"<sup>3</sup> can express its object. It is by not thinking, that the analyst operates, and what does not think is the object *a*, insofar as it "is sustained by pure logic"<sup>4</sup> — that of quantifiers. As a result, **"in the ethics that is inaugurated by the act – therefore a new [ethics], – (...) logic commands."**<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lacan, J. *Television*. Translated by Denis Hollier, Rosalind Krauss, and Annette Michelson. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Lacan J., "Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation: Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure", *Écrits, The First Complete Edition in English*. Translated by Bruce Fink, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006, p. 572.

<sup>3</sup> Lacan, J. "Postface au Séminaire XI". *Autres écrits*, Seuil, 2001, p. 505. [Free translation]

<sup>4</sup> Lacan, J. "L'acte analytique", *Autres écrits*, Seuil, 2001, p.377. [Free translation]

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 380. [Free translation]

The ethics of the act is, consequently, **without norms**, because if logic commands, norms whether Oedipal or sexual, are overturned, and a practice "without value" emerges, one that is therefore foreign to all axiology. A crucial point, undoubtedly, for all those questioning the political scope of psychoanalysis and its role regarding the various ideologies of our time, whether labeled progressive or reactionary, as all of them are normative. So, what does logic command? Not anything that we are to choose; it shapes [our] practice according to the real of language, to its impossibilities, and its necessities.

**Not without a desire to know**, however, is the ethics of the act. The ethics of the act isn't, however, without a desire to know. Regarding the Sadean bedroom as well as the ancient schools of philosophy, Did Lacan not say that they "pave the way for science by **rectifying the ethical position**"<sup>6</sup>? This is confirmed by the few proponents of *gay savoir* who, according to the *Italian Note*, were at the origin of psychoanalysis.

And if one wanted to recognize in these commandments of logic an ethic "with clean hands, because it has no hands," as it was once reproached, one should examine where it leads those who come within its reach. Logic indeed presides over **the direction towards which each analysis tends**, regardless of where [this analysis] comes from or the particular language in which it happens, due to the real of language that is handled therein, namely:

- going beyond the "half-said" of truth, and of repetition, both of which are necessary
- reaching the point where the subject supposed to know in transference gives way, it is a "fault", Lacan says, the stopping on the impossible, where "all strategy wavers," and where there is a hole in possible calculation
- Yet it precisely here that everyone "has their **chance at insurrection**"<sup>7</sup>, far from being imprisoned by this structure, and it involves the question of what imposes itself on the one-by-one basis, there where the Other's regency comes to an end. Certainly, there is no standard end, and surely no ideological compactness, but rather the singular, liberating option of a unique desire, and/or the fixation of a symptom, a choice of jouissance, or a singular *sinthome* saying... "The obscure decision of being" in act. In any case, nothing to form a mass.

So many points on which an *aggiornamento* would indeed be useful.

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<sup>6</sup> Lacan J., "Kant with Sade", *Écrits, The First Complete Edition in English*. Translated by Bruce Fink, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006, p. 645.

<sup>7</sup> Lacan, J. "Radiophonie, Reponse à la question II", *Autres écrits*, Seuil, 2001, p. 408. [Free translation]

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