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Prelude 3

Our ethics, “praxis of theory”... and the others

The title invites a comparison between the ethics specific to psychoanalysis and other ethics, and beyond the discourses in which they are situated, one may also approach this comparison from the standpoint of the ethics of other practices within the “psi” field.

A simple definition of the ethics of the analytic discourse: “Ethics of psychoanalysis, which is the praxis of its theory,”¹ stated by Lacan at an essential moment: constructing in practice a structure founded on the theoretical principles of the Psychoanalytic Discourse.

An apparently simple proposition, yet profound, which situates analytic praxis, theory, and ethics, as well as the formation of its professionals and their associative modes, etc., at the antipodes of the dominant discourse. It is a mode of doing that falls out of tune within the symphony of contemporary discourses.

Falling out of tune is a trait of Lacanian psychoanalysis, a discordance that is anything but whimsical, justified by an ethics.

¹ Lacan, J. (1964). *Founding Act* (R. Grigg, Trans.). New Lacanian School. Retrieved from <https://www.amp-nls.org/orientation/founding-act-1964/> (Accessed November 2025).

An ethics defined as “the praxis of theory” can be considered the hinge axis between the two surfaces it articulates: theory and praxis, each already discordant with the general melody.

A small example of what underlies the practice: an instrument and “active principle” —whether acknowledged or not— common to every practice involving the human (not only those of the psychic domain) is suggestion. Almost always disguised as scientism in many therapeutic practices, and in others as well, it “guarantees” the achievement of today’s ideals.

In the gadget market, suggestion performs its task well.

The vast network of human and technological discursive structures, together with advertising —now amplified by social media— takes charge of agalmatizing goods and activities, more or less useful, that aim to satisfy need or craving, promising an enviable plenitude. That is the ideal, the objective: a supposed state of well-being, one’s own and that of one’s circle, sometimes at any cost.

Such is the commitment of most psychological treatments, and undoubtedly this also entails their own ethics. Thus, it is worth asking: Is this goal actually achieved? And beyond that: at what cost? or over whom?

A well-known president, supposedly all-powerful, Nobel-aspiring, and owner of half the world, declared not long ago on his social networks: “Once you already have everything, a ‘resort’ is never too much,” referring to a region sadly known in Mediterranean geography, at the price of the extermination of its inhabitants.

This is a discourse that spreads and contaminates the individual and collective sphere in all its aspects.

Yet it contains its own paradox. Insofar as they generate the illusion of satisfying what is lacking and propose to fulfill the need — responding to the demand, pushing/insisting on a bio-psycho-social well-being (explicitly stated objectives in some therapies) — it is an illusion that, as analytic experience teaches, ensures dissatisfaction and a straying of the being within its very existence.

At the antipodes, a discourse that aims at confronting and assuming one’s own limitations, at uncovering a structural lack, at the “dis-illusioning” of the belief that had sustained the existence of the one who began with a demand for relief — a discourse that orients toward the assumption of singularity at the price of radical solitude, toward knowing that which no one wants to know, etc. — is entirely discordant with the symphony of current ideals and with the market.

Paradoxically, this leads to an encounter with satisfaction, composing a score that does not aim at relieving discomfort but rather at not evading that which neither he nor she nor humanity wishes to know.

It is an effect that emerges in the course of a practice “without value” (Prelude II, Sara Rodowicz), sustained by a theory, within an ethics reduced to silence (Prelude I, Sandra Berta), values that are far from commercial.

And to hinge this with praxis:

Psychoanalysis, with Freud, also owed something to suggestion, but he soon set it aside, allowing Lacan to regard it as useless, almost a safeguard against it. The safeguard against suggestion emerges from an analysis carried through to its end², the point at which suggestion becomes useless.

The end of a game that begins with the moment transference is established by the analysand's grace³.

The game begins, and the analyst — to whom the analysand supposes knowledge — must know how to ignore what he knows⁴ and operate without prior calculation. A silent operator, waiting, without judgment, without expectation, without therapeutic objectives, who only, or above all, listens; who is not present as a being but as an empty place to be filled by that which causes the analysand's desire, whatever this may be. This stands at the polar opposite of any goal or consumer product in today's market.

However, it works, and it works by way of a know-how with that bestowed knowledge, and through the praxis of a theory. Knowledge bestowed by the one who sought relief. A supposed knowledge about their malaise, their being, and their destiny. This involves depositing immense power, and no small demand, in the hands of the person who occupies the function of analyst.

Ignorance, uncertainty, waiting, patience, solitude of judgment, and at the same time considerable power in receiving the analysand's demand.

To sustain oneself in this practice of this theory without falling into the use or abuse of the power bestowed, into narcissistic temptation, or into charity and altruism, is what requires an ethics, a very particular ethics, one that orients the analyst's desire, that sustains

² Lacan, J. (1973). Television (D. Hollier, R. Krauss, & A. Michelson, Trans.; pp. 535–572). In *Television: A challenge to the establishment* (p. 04). New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company.

³ Lacan, J. (1967). *Proposition of 9 October 1967 on the Psychoanalyst of the School*, p. 04. Lacan Circle of Australia. Retrieved from https://lacancircle.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Proposition_of_9_October.pdf (Accessed November 2025).

⁴ Lacan, J. (1966). Variations on the Standard Treatment (pp. 269–302). In *Écrits*. New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, p. 290.

the analytic act through which an analysand may pass, perhaps, to the place of the analyst whom they have deposed, assuming the position of waste.

Would this be possible without an ethics that orients desire, that sustains the act, an ethics that articulates praxis and theory?

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