

## Passions and their destinies<sup>1</sup>

*But understand well that, when I say all this, I am referring to the paths to the realization of being. Because, of course, they are not the realization of being, as they are only the paths of it, but they are the paths nonetheless.*  
*Jacques Lacan, The Seminar I*

Even though Lacan, in his teaching, uses the expression “passions of being”, referring to *Love*, *Hatred* and *Ignorance*, we know that he does so precisely by producing a subversion, since he starts from philosophy and what it instructs us about passions. And if they originate especially from “*Being*”, we must contextualize them through Lacanian premises to reflect on the question: what are the destinations of passions at the end of an analysis?

In *Seminar 22: R.S.I* (1974-75, unpublished), Lacan will say that the possibility of *representing and perceiving the “world”*, the very constitution of the subject, depends on the articulation between the *consistencies* of the *Real*, the *Symbolic* and the *Imaginary*, which were already there from the beginning of Lacan's teaching, but only later would he take them through the Borromean knot topology, taking a step further.

Lacan *shows*<sup>2</sup>, through this knot, beyond the symbolic overdetermination of the subject, the real point that lies in its very origin. By *demonstrating*<sup>3</sup>, therefore, the Real as a rope (*corde*, in French), as the foundation of an agreement (*accord*, in French) supported by the rope, it is shown how something is constituted, a “*good form*” that allows to enter into the Real that which is from the Imaginary, not without<sup>4</sup> the *sinthome* of what, in the symbolic, consists and manufactures the plot, the weaving, the *accord* linked to *the order of a body* to which the imaginary is suspended.

The constitution of the field of meaning depends on this. Sure, mental weakness – as Lacan calls it – but without it, the possibility of a subject accessing the fiction that we call *reality* is compromised. Dependent, linked to its orifices and the shapes taken by the *small object a* – which makes a hole in the body (LACAN, 1974, p. 98) – the *order of the body* only finds its origin in a symbolic knot that, through the edges of its orifices, constitute “*good form*”, which is always dependent on language. This means that the subject only knows something about *being himself* through something that

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2 “*Montrer*”, in French (Translation note).

3 “*Monstration*”, in French (Translation note).

4 “*Pas sans*”, in French (Translation note).

he/she cannot even imagine, and that comes from a barred Other, whose presence will only occur between the edges of his/her bodily orifices: passions are a consequence, therefore, from the fact that the subject only makes hi/hers entry into the world, he/she only “has” a body, because he/she him/herself *has become* the object of the Other’s *jouissance*.

But if the body, then, makes an *agreement*<sup>5</sup>, the unconscious is its discordant which, when speaking, determines the subject as a being, but a being that, ex-sisting, supports the desire as impossible to be satisfied, since the *object a* is its *cause* and not its *complement*, neither direct nor indirect, Lacan tells us. And yet, it is about the *being* crossing itself out in this metonymy, whose “I”<sup>6</sup> supports desire, as if it would forever be impossible to stand as such” (LACAN, 1974/75, class of 21/01).

The affect of ex-sisting, considering the unconscious, is the nodulation involving the hole, without which there would be no knot, the nodulation of the holes of the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary. Thus, the *subject is the being caused*<sup>7</sup> by this “*radical abstraction*” of language which is the *object a* (LACAN, 1974/75, class of 21/01). But this is also why Lacan calls it “*parlêtre*”, a being that speaks/speaks and, therefore, it is more *lack-of-being* than being, properly speaking.

It is said to be a radical abstraction of *language*, while it becomes an ornament, semblances that translate the passions of the body, the *pathein/patema*. It is *this passion of the body, an effect of language*, which is committed to the *being of passions*, which unfolds into love, hate and ignorance; which will flow through the holes in the body of the speaker, remembering that, “[...] if the subject did not speak, there would not exist the word “*Being*” (LACAN, 1974/75, class of 18/02).

There is not just one bias in approaching the speaker’s passions. But it is worth noting that *passion* is distinguished from *desire*, although they are both caused by the object and the consequence of which there is a hole in the field of language itself. However, what can distinguish them is: while *desire* insists on a perennial, indestructible and non-consistent metonymy, passion can present itself in an abrupt state of finite movements, *unchained* and far from “*good form*” in the sense in which Lacan (1974/75) points out in his *O Seminário R.S.I.*

Lacan, then, starts to take passions through the path, not of the being, but of the philosophical discourse, which is, precisely, the other side of psychoanalysis, but of the *lack-of-being* that characterizes our human condition, which is that of the constitution of a subject, that subject introduced into the world by Freud: the one that appears at the point of the structuring of desire itself, which appears in the gap opened by the demand dug by itself, since the subject, by

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5 It is worth remembering that “*accord*”, agreement, in French, are also “*accords*”, the chords of a song, a melody, an instrument.

6 In this case, we are dealing with the “I” as “je”, subject of the unconscious, and not “moi”, an imaginary function, since, in French, as we know, there are two pronouns to designate the “I” (Translation note).

7 In French, “*causé*”, caused, in Portuguese, is homophonous with “*cause*”, which means to speak, to converse.

articulating the significant chain, will bring to light its lack- a-being that is inseparable from the appeal of receiving its complement from the Other, which constitutes the foundation of *love*, but also of *hatred* and *ignorance*, if the Other, as a place of speech, is, at the same time, the place of lack . Therefore, what is up to the Other to complete, to fill, is what he, precisely, does not have, because being is also what he lacks!

Passions of being is also “[...] what every demand evokes beyond the need that is articulated in it, and it is precisely from this that the subject becomes more properly deprived as more the need articulated in the demand is satisfied” (LACAN,1998 , p. 633-4), such is the example of *mental anorexia*, as it is when “[...] the child is fed with more love that refuses the food and uses this refusal as a desire [...], confines where we learn, more than in any other place, that hatred returns the currency of love, but it is where ignorance is not forgiven” (LACAN, 1998, p. 634). Because it is by refusing to satisfy the demand of the maternal Other that the child demands that the mother have a desire “out of her”, this is the path that is necessary for her to orient herself towards desire, Lacan tells us (idem, p. 634).

It is not our objective to inventory, in the work of Freud and/or Lacan, what they brought us as new in relation to what, for centuries, has already been treated by humanity, whether through philosophy, art or science, which seeks in the genes, in the hormones and *tutti quanti*, the causes of our happiness, sadness and/or our violence. But it must be said that, in psychoanalysis, in our clinic, ultimately, it is not about anything else: we deal, all the time, with passions, with eroticism as a “form” of ordering passions.

So, in the perspective introduced by Freud and Lacan, to think about the origin or destinations of passions, we will have to consider that, in human experience, the pegs never fit into the little holes, that is, no appeal makes it possible to receive a complement from the Another. This is, so to speak, the origin of the passions, of the passions that are there, not to “realize being”, but to demand, from the so-called human, where there is no instinct that offers edge or guidance, the ways of a eroticism that can accommodate the passions that compose it. But what is the reason for the evidence that the so-called human experience is crossed by such – as Freud calls them – *affects*? Are they all linked to the one that is inseparable from the so-called human condition, the only one that does not deceive us, *Anguish*? Are passions *misleading affectations*? We start from there to get to what interests us.

The human baby is condemned to its original helplessness, to radical difficulty, to *hilflosigkeit*. Absolutely nothing in its fragile organic structure can come, alone, to help it, to support it in the “disorder”<sup>8</sup> that inaugurates its entry into the world; absolutely nothing, no event – of structure –

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8 In French “*désarroi*”, which can have different meanings, significant, devebal (said of or word formed by regressive derivation, from a verb; post-verbal, regressive) which derives from the old French “*desaroyer*”, which is “put into disarray”, in drift. It is a profound disorder, or profound change that leads to an unpleasant and unexpected

even if it offers some support, an edge, like this mirage that is “*Being*”, can eliminate it. This “disorder”, therefore, will never abandon you, will never stop making its eruptions when something from the Real, from the unexpected, sometimes unbearable, comes to touch your always fragile “structure”, always subject to dysnodulations that, in turn, produce the gap through which the distressing *affectation*, *anguish*. This is the *Ding* (which Lacan takes from Kant), and which Freud had already called *das Ding*, the object that has always been lost (it is the loss of something that was never there), and which would be the very origin of all human experience, and of his destiny, which is therefore always tragic.

It is, then, because there is no other way out than to “let oneself” be inoculated by the passion of the signifier<sup>9</sup> that the speaking being is not constituted as the condition of submitting to the passions of the Other, “*causa pathomenon*”<sup>10</sup>, the cause of the most fundamental human passion, the *Ding*, already designated by Kant (LACAN, 1959-60, p. 68). Yes, from the desire of the Other conveyed by his affectations, by the convolutions of his/her demand: “[...] It is a matter of the subject how precisely he/she has to suffer from the signifier, and that in this passion for the signifier emerges the critical point of what anguish is occasionally just an affect that plays the role of an occasional signal” (LACAN, 1959-60, p. 101).

In his *The Seminar, book I* (1953-54), Lacan already located the passions based on his RSI triad, placing them as follows:

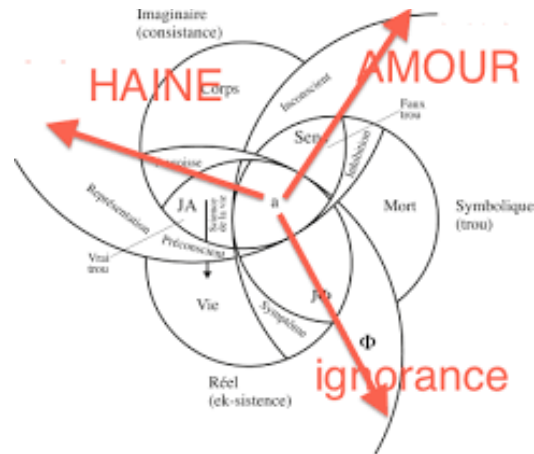
- at the junction of the Symbolic and the Imaginary, passion or rupture, if you will, or the limit line of what is called *love*,
- at the junction of the Imaginary and the Real, that which calls for *hatred*,
- and at the junction of the Real and the Symbolic, which is called *ignorance*.

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event. (<https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr/article/A9D1771>, last accessed on 04/07/2024 (Free translation).

<sup>9</sup> To address the issue of the “passion of the signifier”, Lacan resorts to the function of myths and other contributions by Lévi-Strauss, especially on the symbolic function and the “signifying organization” from which it “originates” and depends, whether on the individual level or of the collective (and both are not opposed), a subject, and which Lacan will name “Autre”, Other, as the Other’s desire (LACAN, 1959-60, p. 101, *Staferla*).

<sup>10</sup> [...] to accentuate the radically bad character in which man finds himself, regarding what is at the heart of his destiny, this *Ding*, this cause that I designated the other day as analogous to what is [...] designated by KANT [...] this “pathomenon cause”, this cause of the most fundamental human passion (LACAN, 1959-60, p. 68, *Staferla*).



On this occasion, Lacan reminds us that, immediately, even before an analysis begins, something that is of the order of transference, the appearance of the extreme forms of love and hate are already virtually present and, to the extent that a subject puts him/herself speaking, under transference, when the subject enters analysis, he/she is in the position of someone who ignores. There is no possible entry into the analysis without this reference, and it is absolutely fundamental. This occurs exactly as speech progresses... Ignorance as a passion, insofar as it is at the very foundation of the analytical situation, is also one of the primitive components of transference (LACAN, 1953-54, p. 282, *Staferla*).

But to consider our initial question, it is necessary to take into account that the subject who arrives, who seeks analysis, upon entry, “is” a *pathetikoi*<sup>11</sup>. He/she is a subject inoculated, woven, organized, in his/her origin, by the passions of the Other, becoming, him/herself, a “being” of passions. Thus, we propose to think about the path of an analysis by bringing it closer to what we could call the effects of the tragedy. To do so, we will have to consider – at least this is what is known about the structure of the tragedy – that it was intended, based on a certain way of organization and staging, to provoke the purgation/purification, the *catharsis* of passions, of *fear* and of *pity*. As Lacan (1988, p. 298) tells us, *catharsis*, in this case, as being an *appeasement* produced by a certain music but which, for Aristotle, would be, rather, an effect of *enthusiasm*.

Would those taken by the effect of a certain music, by enthusiasm, be the *enthousiastikoi*, as opposed to those taken by the passions, the *pathetikoi*?

We could think that, an analysis - insofar as the subject, when speaking, sings his own music, ~~that~~ when chaining his signifiers lets the musicality of *lalangue* escape, *tearing himself* away from the body fixed, taken, inoculated by passions, woven by identifications and subjected to the *jouissance*

11 In *Seminar 7, the Ethics of Psychoanalysis* Lacan (1988, p. 298), when commenting on the tragedy *Antigone* to think about the very structure of the tragedy, evokes the *pathetikoi* and the *enthousiastikoi* as two distinct positions in relation to the effects of the music of a tragic play: the *pathetikoi* were the “prey” of passions, of *fear* and *pity*, however, for others, the *enthousiastikoi*, music provoked enthusiasm.

of the Other – could we think that an analysis, even if it has cathartic effects, but going further, due to the effect of *lalangue* music on the body, would produce *enthusiasm*? making the *pathetikoi* suffer a subversion of their position of submission to the passions by making them move on to something else? Wouldn't that be why Lacan invented the device of the pass? so that analysts could testify about the effects of *lalangue*'s musicality on the body, not depathologizing it, but subverting these passions in such a way that something else is produced there, a new “satisfaction”, a “new instinctual vicissitude”?

This is also why we could imagine that such a route would be similar to the dithyrambic procession, in which the music played exposed the women's bodies and made them dance. In the same way, can we assume a proximity of what remains at the end of an analysis, not necessarily with women, but with the feminine, with its construction? With the construction of a hole that creates a gap, ~~a gap~~, and makes a previously rigid, fixed body that suffered from passions dance: a margin of freedom that, although it cannot be a promise, can well be intended in a work of analysis, at the beginning of which there is the *genuine artificial love* of transference that will found an experience, a field in which the passions that inhabit a subject will appear, in action, in the act of saying.

Could we think of an analytical path as being the place and time of a “transmutation of original ~~and original~~ passions”, of a kind of “detoxification” of the passions of the Other that weave us and inhabit us? Could it be the enthusiasm, to which Lacan refers, the effect of an analysis that produces *An analyst*, “a new passion”, a “new love”, the one that is a sign that we change discourse?

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