

## HORIZON AND CHALLENGE <sup>1</sup>

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Love, hate, ignorance. Passions as a manifestation of the encounter and disencounter to which we are constrained by our condition as humans and speakers. And the topic that brings us together also proposes: “the challenges in the direction of the cure.”

The word “challenge” is interesting. At its root, it means to withdraw faith or trust, a way of questioning the established, but it is also an invitation that calls for a response. What challenges did our masters in psychoanalysis encounter? What challenges have they left us? What questions do we ask ourselves today and what are the attempts at answers for the validity of the psychoanalytic discourse?

Just over 90 years ago, in July 1932, Albert Einstein asked Sigmund Freud in a letter exchange: “Is there any way to spare humanity the ravages of war?” <sup>2</sup> A question that serves as a challenge and places passions in the fabric of social pain in bygone times that resonate with striking relevance today.

Freud's response links the passions of “love” and “hate” to the instincts –Eros and Thanatos– to the unconscious. And while it shows how hatred and violence in their most radical forms currently lack a channel towards life, it introduces hope at the end: “(...) everything that promotes the development of culture also works against war.” <sup>3</sup>

Freud's discovery, a true cultural revolution that registers as a narcissistic affront, marks –from its beginnings– a radical change that touches upon the pretended freedoms and rational knowledge of the Western world up to that point.

Freud, in an inaugural move, invited those women whose symptoms notably discomfited medical discourse to speak. The word and listening are present as foundations from the beginnings of psychoanalysis, and in the gap that the word opens, loves and hatreds.

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<sup>1</sup> Text presented at the International Colloquium *Love, Hatred, Ignorance: Challenges in the Direction of the Cure, Convergence, Lacanian Movement for Freudian Psychoanalysis*, May 31, 2024. The translation is ours.

<sup>2</sup> Sigmund Freud. *¿Por qué la guerra? (Einstein y Freud)*. En: *Obras Completas de Sigmund Freud*. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu, 2003. Volume XXII, pág. 183. The translation is ours.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*. Pág. 198.

Transference was described as both a “driving force and obstacle”, and as the possible means for the analytic experience.

Jaques Lacan introduces the theme of passions from the beginning of his teaching, linking them to the concept of transference and connected to the three registers: real, symbolic, and imaginary. He goes beyond the love-hate pair and warns us that ignorance, sometimes overlooked, is what enables entry into an analysis when the subject engages in the search for truth.

Due to the division that constitutes the subject as evanescence between signifiers, being is irretrievably lost and is established as lack in being, bringing to light that absence with its call to receive the complement from the Other. In *The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of Its Power* he tells us: “What in this way the Other is given to fill, and which is properly what it lacks, since to him also being is lacking, is what is called love, but it is also hatred and ignorance.”<sup>4</sup>

It is from the insistence that commands that search –where the passionate contours itself as suffering– from where our experience proceeds. Experience of the unconscious as an unknown knowledge that reveals itself fleetingly and as an effect between signifiers. It is this journey that enables us to occupy a singular position, from where to operate with that discomfort.

And it is along this line –between the journey of analysis and its practice– where Lacan leaves us a warning that can be read as a challenge: “It is better then that he who cannot unite the subjectivity of his epoch to his horizon should renounce.”<sup>5</sup>

Our era, in which it is expected that the human is capital, shows us the fierce advance of a discourse that doesn't create bonds, a cunning drift that "runs smoothly" at full speed, installing along its path the notion that there are no impossibles, one can enjoy everything and without loss.

Capitalism attempts to bring passions into the logic of mercantilism, suspending the particular so that it enters into the calculations of costs and profits.

Hatred thrives on ideals and pretexts ranging from the everyday to the atrociousness of segregation and extermination. Love becomes entangled in algorithms under the promise of a flawless and guaranteed encounter.

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<sup>4</sup> Jacques Lacan. *La dirección de la cura y los principios de su poder*. En: *Escritos 2*. Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2008. Pág. 607. The translation is ours.

<sup>5</sup> Jacques Lacan. *Función y campo de la palabra y el lenguaje en psicoanálisis*. En: *Escritos 1*. Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2008. Pág. 309. The translation is ours.

The unconscious pretends to be rejected by placing, right there where ignorance could open some questions, the imperative of “knowing oneself”, without hesitation and without wasting time. Faced with discomfort and suffering, all kinds of answers are offered as labels that make the singular homogeneous. The market requires strength and productivity.

In the face of this panorama, what can psychoanalysis, as a discourse among others, say? How can it respond to the challenge that the subjectivity of the era poses to us in everyday life? “Interpreter in the discord of languages”<sup>6</sup>, as Lacan tells us, psychoanalysis can and must respond from its ethics, which, despite the changing clothes of the times, remains as the possibility of confronting the progress of current speeches.

Our daily work still calls us to house discomfort in its singularity from a privileged position: the desire of the analyst, a propitiatory void for the emergence of the subject as an effect among the signifiers with which each person delineates their suffering. Is this task not a challenge that we try to respond to in the direction of each cure?

Now, linked with the same ropes as those whom we receive, we are not exempt from letting us being dragged by passions. Not only in our consulting rooms but also in our schools or institutions. Doesn't it happen sometimes that loves and hatreds, vanities, and other trivialities hinder the task?

Making room for the challenge will then be to question ourselves again, celebrating the opportunity to bend the established destiny a little and guide the compass of desire towards a new horizon.

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem.* pág. 309.