

Can the analogical hermeneutics be a suitable philosophical mark for psychoanalysis?

Maximiliano Azcona*

Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Facultad de Psicología. La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Abstract: This article examines the claims of analogical hermeneutics supporters that this is an epistemological basis which is necessary for psychoanalysis. Firstly, reasons for the landing of the hermeneutic tradition in the Freudian field are exposed, associating it with the philosophical criticism on psychoanalysis in the middle 20th century and with the 'way out' many analysts found in the philosophical precursors of the contemporary hermeneutics. A new attempt to redefine the epistemic identity of psychoanalysis in the topicality is conceptualized as from the developments of the analogical hermeneutics of Mauricio Beuchot. Secondly, some critical objections that would prevent these reformulations are presented and defended, as they support the meta-theoretical tensions inherent to the Freudian program, thus potentializing its fertility to advance in the search for better fundamentals for the psychoanalytical clinic's rationality.

Keywords: psychoanalysis, epistemology, hermeneutics.

There is something very special in the spirit: so little is known about it and its relationship with nature!

I have a lot of respect for it, but does nature have it too? It's just a fragment of it and the rest seems to be able to fix it very well without this fragment.

(Freud, 1930, cited in Freud & Pfister, 1966, p. 128)

The hermeneutical program in psychoanalysis

Before epistemological critiques of the philosophers who represent the standard conception of science (Carnap, 1956/1967; Grünbaum, 1984; Nagel, 1959/1964; Popper, 1963/1991), a large part of the psychoanalytic community seems to have seen its disciplinary status threatened, assuming that psychoanalysis should conform to the hegemonic parameters of natural-empirical science in order to reach a legitimate foundation for its theorizations and praxis. All this is made under the assumption that if it did not achieve being consolidated as a science, then it would lose its value.

There were famous theorists who insisted on consummating the Freudian pretensions, assuming that psychoanalysis is, despite criticism, a "natural science of the psyche"¹ (Hartmann, 1927, p. 13). Legitimizing their own executioner, some analysts found it necessary to clarify the metapsychological hypothesis so that they could overcome the epistemological obstacle. The work of David Rapaport (1960/1067) can be seen as an emblematic attempt to submissively dialogue with the inherited conception of science. In this case, an essay is

perceived for maintaining the conceptual framework of metapsychology, whilst at the same time delimiting its empirical content in terms of controllable variables and direct observation.

Paradoxically, the collaborators Rapaport, Merton Gill (1976), George Klein (1976), Roy Schafer (1976), Donald Spence (1984) and Philip Holzman (1985), were some of those who took the opposite direction: criticizing the biologizing conception of metapsychology, they attributed a *scientific misunderstanding* to Freud and rescued the clinical method with an exclusive emphasis on the idiosyncratic meaning of unique experiences. A flagrant contradiction was denounced in Freud between his way of theorizing and the way he proceeded in the clinic; a contradiction that enabled the development of hermeneutical psychoanalysis, while its beginning was in the work of the creator himself (although that position was not assumed by him). In this way, psychoanalysis was found in a scope different from that of the natural sciences, since it privileges the approach of the meaning. This methodology should not, therefore, emulate naturalistic procedures but arrives from a hermeneutical foundation.

The hermeneutic or narrative version of psychoanalysis began to be sketched out in the 1960s and had the epistemological development of some philosophers such as Ricoeur (1969/2006) and Habermas (1968/1990) in its roots, who relied on the implications of the distinction between *nature sciences and science of the spirit*, sustained by authors like Dilthey (1883/1949), Rickert (1899/1943), Cassirer (1942/1973) and Collingwood (1946/1952). It resulted in a reformulation of the original program made by Freud to give valid answers to epistemological demands: it was an attempt to place psychoanalysis outside the orbit of discussions about its scientificity, arguing that it is an exegetical discipline, distinguishable from the

* Corresponding address: azonamaxi@hotmail.com

1 "Die Psychoanalyse, als Naturwissenschaft vom Seelischen..."

natural sciences to which it should not aspire to belong. Hence, this movement is considered not as the effect of new conceptual developments, but as a true *scope to the hermeneutics* (Blight, 1981). It is clear that this position ratifies, paradoxically, the epistemological distinctions of the traditional conception of science: by admitting that psychoanalysis cannot be evaluated by the evidentiary criteria of the empirical-natural sciences, the conclusion is that this not a science and it should be recognized as an interpretative art. Both approaches seem to adhere to a conception of Galilean science, which privileges empirical certainty and experimental quantification.

In other works, I have critically examined the general arguments of the proposal to redefine, whether totally or partially, the epistemological identity of psychoanalysis in hermeneutical terms (Azcona, 2014, 2017; Azcona and Lahitte, 2014). Concluding, although Freud's psychoanalytic method is essentially interpretive, there are significant reasons that prevent its identification with methodical hermeneutics: there are profound divergences not only in their origins and objectives, but also between the anthropological-linguistic and axiological assumptions explicitly or implicitly assumed. In addition, it is possible to derive certain objections to the traditional conception of science from certain epistemic presuppositions of the Freudian method, so it is not necessary to appeal to the vocabulary of the hermeneutic tradition (especially of philosophical hermeneutics) to argue against it.

Analogous hermeneutics and psychoanalysis

Despite the above considerations, in recent years the importance of relating psychoanalysis with what has been called, from the works of the philosopher Mauricio Beuchot, *analog hermeneutics*, has been raised. Juan Tubert-Oklander asserts:

It is not enough to say that psychoanalysis is a hermeneutical discipline, since there are different types of hermeneutics, those that determine very different ways of conceiving texts, their meaning and their interpretation. Traditionally, *three possible modes of signification* have been raised in hermeneutics, representing three forms to distribute the predicates: *univocism*, *equivocism* and *analogy*, which in turn correspond to the different ways of understanding the interpretation in psychoanalysis. The difference between them depends on the degree of certainty that each hermeneutic assigns to the interpretations. (Tubert-Oklander, 2013, p. 287)

According to Beuchot (1997/2009, p. 160), who has designed this proposal for analog hermeneutics,

the intention is not to fall into mere equivocism or absolute univocism but to get a plurality of meanings

that are restricted to an order, so it can be said that it is an analogy (intermediate between univocism and equivocism).

Univocism implies, then, that for each meaningful expression there is only one underlying meaning; therefore the interpretations are necessarily true (when they reveal the meaning) or false (when they say anything else). As the interpreter's task is limited to discovering the covered meaning of the text, by avoiding the introduction of subjectivity, the meaning is defined exclusively in terms of the ontological reference of the text (the non-textual referent of the text) leaving aside the sense, which comes from the structure of the text and the code on it is founded. This perspective is very old and is in line with the epistemological conceptions that are usually categorized as *positivist* and that were originally at the base of the analytical philosophy of science. On the other hand, in the virtue of the natural polysemy of any text, the *equivocism* assumes that multiple interpretations can be derived without a valid criterion to differentiate between good and bad: all are cognitively equivalent and their choice depends on convenience, aesthetic preference, or any other subjective attribute. Similar to the work of the artist, the work of the interpreter does not exist in the discovery, but in the creation. This perspective is as old as the previous one and is currently represented by *postmodern* conceptions of knowledge².

Well, the novelty of analogical hermeneutics is to put the accent on the notion of *analogy*³, understood as something that lies between the extremes mentioned:

moves away from univocity, which allows one to open the spectrum of knowledge, facilitating the understanding that there is not the only one truth or valid interpretation, but several possible interpretations; but, as it also moves away from the equivocity, those various possibilities of truth are given by a hierarchical way, and also avoids relativism; only a healthy pluralism is allowed. (Beuchot, 2004, pp. 38-39)

According to this perspective, the criterion we need to assess and classify the interpretations with consists in the consideration that the

ontological substrate of the text as an object and of the non-textual reality to which it refers – that is, its *reference* –, but it is a partial and delimited ontology – what Gianni Vattimo calls a 'weak ontology'—,

2 A critical analysis of the psychoanalytic reception of some postmodernist postulates can be found in *Hypermodernity and theorization in psychoanalysis* (Azcona, 2015).

3 The analogical hermeneutics "is placed in the line of Paul Ricoeur, who proposed the metaphor as an interpretive model . . . follows the same tradition, but tries to take it further" (Beuchot, 2004, p. 38).

necessarily limited, but enough to operate and keep thinking. (Tubert-Oklander, 2013, p. 289)

This is something that Beuchot (2003) called an *analog ontology*. According to the analogical perspective, for example, the truth must be conceptualized in terms of similarity and not in terms of identity, because, among other things, the first admits the graduation and the second does not. It is a partial and relative truth, which allows the interpreter to continue to develop his thinking and his actions in the face of reality.

According to Tubert-Oklander, the analog bases of these hermeneutics could be rediscovered, in the creator of psychoanalysis himself:

with the univocist Freud, who sought a scientific certainty in the interpretation, there is another Freud that recognized the partial character and the multiplicity of possible interpretations. However, it never falls into relativism, since at any moment it loses sight of the reference to the ontological reality of what is being interpreted. What it raises, then, is pluralism, based on the extreme complexity of the object of study, that never will be completely covered, but not abandoning the attempt to get to know something about it. This is a Freud who would have coincided, probably, with the perspective of analogical hermeneutics. (Tubert-Oklander, 2013, p. 290)

This analogical character of the Freudian interpretation, coinciding with this form of hermeneutical understanding, would have a reach to the present days of our psychoanalytic practice: “the analyst confronts the analysand’s expressions knowing that he will not reach a full and perfect understanding, but be subject to limits” (Beuchot, 1997/2009, p. 162). Recognizing this,

the analyst realizes that his own subjectivity is always infiltrated (in this case, the counter transference), and must also know the possible the scope that the interference of his subjectivity can have to better understand the scope of the objectivity achieved. (Beuchot, 1997/2009, p. 162)

In addition to the analogy, Beuchot has raised, in line with a characterization of Humberto Eco (1968/1986, p. 172), the need for hermeneutics that consider iconicity, those nonverbal signs that aim to reproduce some aspect of one’s experience, making use of sensory images — be they visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory or kinesthetic — to recreate it. He argues that the iconic signs are different from the verbal signs because they are not limited to just referring to something, but they attract and lead us to something. According to Tubert-Oklander, this duality of the forms of representation coincides with one postulated by Freud about dreams: the secondary process is a mode of verbal thought and the primary process is an iconic mode of thought.

Although Freud, strongly influenced by the rationalism of the enlightenment, conceived the latter as a primitive mode of thought, which should be subordinated to the logic and rationality of the secondary process, some of the later developments of psychoanalysis suggest that there is a complementarity between both processes . . . the greatest possible access to knowledge is that which is achieved through what some authors, such as Silvano Arieti, Luis Chiozza and André Green names the *tertiary process*, in which the primary and secondary processes converge, achieving an analogical balance between imagination and rigor . . . These ideas arise, to a large extent, from the proposal of Donald Woods Winnicott. . . (Tubert-Oklander, 2013, p. 292)

Because of these coincidences and the type of knowledge to which they lead, Beuchot separates a series of consequences on its epistemic validation:

In this way, we can speak of a hermeneutical truth in psychoanalysis. The proof of the truth in this cannot follow the shapes of the other disciplines, it should receive a specific validation: hermeneutics. The verification procedure is the improvement in the patient or analyzed person, not only as a utilitarian result, but by integrating other criteria, it is the ability to give coherence to the narrative of the analyzed person, combined with the interpretation given by the general theory; it is also used to make plausible the interpretation of this text as narrated and acted out by the analyzed person. It is also to make possible the repercussion of this interpretation on the conduct and life of the analyzed person. It is a truth rather than coherence: it comes to practical truth. (Beuchot, 1997/2009, p. 163)

This plurality of criteria proposal seems to be in line with the classic approach of Paul Ricoeur (1977/2009). Beuchot considers, moving away from the Freudian perspective and becoming closely related to the rest of the hermeneutic pretensions for psychoanalysis that:

is the power to reconstruct the plot of a life as a coherent narrative which helps the patient. Blocks and confusion prevent him from seeing this plot and the analyst has to carry out the humble and patient work of weaving the loose ends together. (1977/2009, p. 166)

In our view, with this point there is a fundamental *bifurcation with Freud’s psychoanalysis* that is envisioned, since nothing is further from the Freudian proposal than *weaving loose ends* to provide a *coherent narrative* to the cure. By contrast, the work of the analyst in the field of neurosis is fundamentally undoing and indicating the

incoherencies; without it being entirely subsumed in a consciencialist exercise.

Evading this separation that we have pointed out, the supporters of this form of hermeneutics sustain the existence of remarkable coincidences between such developments of psychoanalysis and those of analogical-hermeneutics to the point that both perspectives could enrich one another. Psychoanalysis could gain a “greater understanding of the epistemological substrate of its own interpretive activity, and of the structure and the laws that govern all the signs and texts formed by them that this conception of hermeneutics gives” (Tubert-Oklander, 2013, p. 293). Analogical hermeneutics seems to be picking up the role left by the tireless career of the representatives of the hermeneutical tradition during the second half of the 20th century, first externally and then from inside: redefining the Freudian program in hermeneutical terms by appealing to a disciplinary need (Tubert-Oklander & Beuchot Puente, 2008). This is well noticed in the statements of Mauricio Beuchot, who maintains that “the hermeneutic paradigm is the most convenient epistemological model [to psychoanalysis]” (Beuchot, 1997/2009, p. 155). Although it seems that, if it is expressed in terms of convenience, it is because it presupposes the possibility of adopting another type of epistemological foundation, which is being considered is that “hermeneutics can equip Freudian psychoanalysis with a suitable base or an appropriate epistemological model” (1997/2009, p. 163).

In addition, the authors make it clear that the proposed dialogue between hermeneutics and psychoanalysis is not desirable between any hermeneutics and any psychoanalysis:

it will be more productive if we establish it among those versions of psychoanalysis that emphasize the relational dimension and the forms of hermeneutics that seek an analogical medium between the identity that univocism demands and the difference that rescues equivocism, such as the analog-hermeneutics of Mauricio Beuchot. (Tubert-Oklander, 2013, p. 293)

As can be seen, the works of Beuchot from analogical hermeneutics have the virtue of admitting the existence of several hermeneutical perspectives with which psychoanalytic orientations could dialogue. Nevertheless, a foundation is proposed in analogical hermeneutics that, despite distinctive characteristics, preserves a series of assumptions that are incompatible with those theoretical-technical aspects of the Freudian proposal that exceed the narrative dimension. We consider that the problem regarding the fundamental bifurcation point that we have raised, it has already been approached by Jean Laplanche in his considerations on this subject and in dialogue with the ideas of Paul Ricoeur. It is convenient that we minimally recover the arguments of this debate, to extract from this

the implications that seem to have any attempt of the use of psychoanalysis to redefine the hermeneutics.

Laplanche and Ricoeur: discussions about the hermeneutization of psychoanalysis

Jean Laplanche has addressed the problem of whether or not psychoanalysis is a form of hermeneutics, possibly representing the most adverse position in relation to this. Starting his writings in *Psychoanalysis as anti-hermeneutics*, the author asks:

How could psychoanalysis - even if only with its fundamental work, *The Interpretation of Dreams* - not have been naturally found with the hermeneutic movement that has taken flight since the end of the eighteenth century, precisely as a theory, a method and a practice of interpretation? (Laplanche, 1995/2001, p. 199)

For this French analyst, this identification can only be made on the condition of not knowing the psychoanalytic procedure. He recognizes Ricoeur as a representative of this lack of knowledge and reproaches him for “not considering in his interpretation of Freud, the method of Freud himself” (1995/2001, p. 199). Laplanche assimilates in *his* way one of the central theses of philosophical hermeneutics: “there is no interpretation without a code or translation key. Hermeneutics is defined as a reception, a transposition or a reading, a text, a destination, a *Dasein*; reading evidently based on a precomprehension or prior protocomprehension” (1995/2001, pp. 199-200); and insists on maintaining that the Freudian discovery goes in the opposite direction. To understand this idea we must return to its characterization in the evolution of the psychoanalytic method: Laplanche proposes to distinguish a decisive separation in the methodical proposal of Freud, showing a bifurcation point from which opens, next to the initial nominalism of the decompositions in singular elements, a variant of readings with universal keys. The balance of this bifurcation seems to be the existence of two mutually exclusive methodological perspectives in Freud himself: first an *associative-dissociative* and then a *symbolic*. Once this separation is made, Laplanche maintains that the hermeneutic version of the psychoanalytic method, defended by researchers, such as Ricoeur, is equivalent to the symbolic version of Freud’s method; and intends to reject them equally⁴. The reason for this rejection of

4 Laplanche does not hesitate to qualify “unfortunate” to the change operated in the Freudian method around 1900, by “appearance of those reading codes called *symbolism* and typicality” (Laplanche, 1995/2001, p. 201). It’s about a “return of the synthesis of ‘reading’, of hermeneutics” (Laplanche, 1995/2001, p. 206). In Laplanche’s theory, the only true hermeneut is the human being in his condition as a child, insofar as he is determined to decipher the enigmatic message that comes from the other. For this very reason, any hermeneutical practice of psychoanalysis would be nothing more than a “redoubling of repression” (Laplanche, 1995/2001, p. 210). Contrary to the complementarity sought by Freud

Laplanche is his consideration that Freud's discovery was originally made with the associative-dissociative method; a method that constitutes, by antonomasia, an anti-hermeneutic⁵. That's because this original procedure assumes that the access mode of unconscious representation via free association, from one *thing*, something *without an unconscious sense* and *lacking any conscious synthesis*. It is an analysis procedure: separation of associative elements that "disdains any search for meaning, any prior understanding . . . that it is not a translation, an understanding or a reading at all. The method is the *detranslation* in search of elements called unconscious" (ibid. p. 201-202). It is a method that, distinct from the added symbolic method, rejects synthesis, insofar as it silences the unconscious:

the original analytical method does not point to a second sense, coextensive to the conscious sense, but to significant elements that were originally excluded, repressed, without being organized in a second discourse. That is to say, it is not a second self, eventually truer than the first . . . Now, the symbolic method . . . is opposed to the analytical associative method because it is fully *reading a hidden sense*... (Laplanche, 1997/200, p. 225; italics from original)

As we said, the aforementioned thesis leads Laplanche to explicitly oppose Ricoeur in his definition of hermeneutics as an art of textual interpretation through rules. Recall that Ricoeur had demarcated, from his own theorization, methodological consequences for psychoanalysis; for example in his paper *The Question of Proof in Psychoanalysis* where he argued that "a good psychoanalytic explanation must satisfy the rules of universalization established by the investigation procedures about the deciphering of the text of the unconscious" (Ricoeur, 1977/2009, p. 53). However, we must point out that this statement is followed by an important clarification that Laplanche had not considered: "the universalization of deciphering rules rests on the strength of the analogical extrapolation that leads symptoms and dreams to other cultural expressions" (1977/2009, p. 54). That is to say that with universal rules Ricoeur seems to refer less to specific content that is susceptible of generalization than to the hypothesis about the formation mechanisms of transactional phenomena. In addition to this, Laplanche's proposal contains a dark spot: if the associative-dissociative method looks for *unconscious elements* (metaphorized as *things*) then *necessarily* it needs a conceptual framework to be able to direct the search, just like any other kind of search needs. We understand that what Laplanche rejects is the preexistence of general narratives for the decoding

of data in a standardized way, insofar as this would undermine the singularity of each psychic functioning. In particular, Laplanche seems to refer to the diversity of unconscious fantasies, correlated with the diversity of subjects. But this should not feed the fantasy of supposing that there could be observations of psychic phenomena completely free of prior conceptualizations: we always observe from theoretical frameworks (call them *scheme, theory, tradition, paradigm, research programs, anything*) and that supposes to structure previously, in some way, the field of observation.

Then, Laplanche's argument (the "narrative approach" is a kind of "nomological subsumption" in which the phenomena would be case-examples of some universal plot) it seems to not coincide with what Ricoeur was proposing. Some time later, the French philosopher nominated this type of relationship reviled by Laplanche as "theoretical understanding" and explicitly disengaged it from the kind of understanding that hermeneutical psychoanalysis should perform (Ricoeur, 1985/2004). Instead of subsuming phenomena to universal laws, Ricoeurian narrativism proposes to create a unique plot for each set of events at play, thus granting them a meaning. In the words of the author, it is an "understanding comprehension" which must be clearly distinguished from the previous one⁶ and whose implementation frees psychoanalysis of interpretative stereotypes (1985/2004).

As is known, Ricoeur develops his *theory of triple mimesis*, where explaining and understanding are distinguished but also complementary. In addition, as is known, Ricoeur defends the irreducible mixture of Freudian discourse, in which *causes* and *motives* are glimpsed; which should work as a basis for a *semantic of desire* (Ricoeur, 1965/2007). This has led him to distinguish the technical dimension of the theoretical dimension of psychoanalysis: while the first one is a kind of *trade*, the second implies a form of hermeneutics because the self-knowledge that the analysis offers is mediated by stories. According to Ricoeur the psychoanalytic methodology is, we would say, *partially hermeneutical*.

In accordance with the above, it seems that the ideas of Ricoeur and of Laplanche could coincide on a central issue: both criticize the universalizing and subsumptive tendency of the Freudian models of interpretation. According to Ricoeur, psychoanalysis consists in the synthetic configuration of a plot for the understanding of the historical-singular events that it deals with and, for Laplanche, it is necessary to rescue the associative-dissociative method of Freud and its nominalism.

for both versions of the method, he maintains that there is between both "a relationship of reciprocal exclusion" (Laplanche, 1997/2001, p. 226).

5 In fact, Laplanche even goes so far as to say that "Freud's original discovery is the discovery of a method" (ibid. p. 206).

6 Ricoeur distinguishes three modes of understanding, theoretical, categorical and configuring, defined as follows: "according to the theorist, the objects are" understood "as cases or examples of a general theory . . . For the categorical . . . to understand an object is to determine what type of object it comes from, what system of concepts a priori gives form to a experience that, in its absence, would remain chaotic. . . . It is typical of the configuring mode to place elements in a unique and concrete complex of relationships. It is the kind of understanding that characterizes the narrative operation". (Ricoeur, 1985/2004, p. 265).

There is, however, a fundamental point outlined by Laplanche that makes the distance of both approaches insurmountable. For the French analyst, there is a “phenomenological temptation” which usually falls in to hermeneutical perspectives: “in all cases, it is a matter of restoring to the human being to his status as a subject ‘in first person’, author of his acts and of his significant intentions” (Laplanche, 1993/2001, p. 93). Temptation that becomes a program that presupposes intentionality as the ultimate foundation of all human acts:

the reduction of the unconscious to a hidden sense is in my opinion the constant temptation that leads to the Freudian discovery back, towards the millennial hermeneutics. . . . Hermeneutics in which the “sexual sense” would come to overlap the infinity of other possible senses, (1993/2001, pp. 64-65)

This program constitutes a rejection of the Freudian experience, understood as the “discovery of another thing in us, which does not act as if governed by sense but according to modalities of causal order”. This “impregnable strange body” is what enables Laplanche to be based on a “realism of the unconscious” (1993/2001, p. 64-65).

In our view, this approach of Laplanche is well oriented but contains an unjustified equivalence: that assuming a realistic ontological position regarding the unconscious should lead us to consider causal factors that are exempt from intentionality. The *teleological* and *functional* explanatory models make use of intentional causal factors (for example in biology) without losing sight of the realism of the postulated entities or introducing something similar to human consciousness or meaning. We also see the use of such explanatory models in cognitive domains that, even by assuming *intentionality*, dispensing of verbal language (for example in ethology). In other words, intentionality does not necessarily equate to the *intentionality of a conscious self and transcends the limits of verbal language*. Did Freud not locate the *representations thing*, differentiating them from *word representations*, as a form of *non-verbal signification*? If we consider the following Freudian definition of meaning, we can notice that it is ambiguous enough to support these issues:

Let’s agree again about what we mean by the “sense” of a psychic process. It is nothing but the purpose it serves, and its location within a psychic series. For most of our investigations we can substitute “sense” also for “purpose”, “tendency”⁷. (Freud, 1917/2004, p. 36)

7 In footnote, Etchevery comments something fundamental: “‘Tendenz’, in german, like the Spanish word ‘tendencia’, embraces both senses: the subjective (orientation of the behavior) and the objective (orientation of a process), which in English would be, respectively, ‘purpose’ and ‘trend’”.

On the other hand, to admit that meaning is a proper dimension for psychoanalytic explanations does not imply that we should exclude the dimension of causality, as the supporters of hermeneutics have generally believed. It happens because of Freud’s treatment of the phenomena of meaning, by suspending the conscious will of the subject, one drives a teleology not comparable with the intentionality of the hermeneutics.

So, if by *antihermeneutics* we must understand the rejection of the tendency to interpret the singular unconscious from the narrative keys of universal reading, as a large part of the hermeneutic tradition proposes and as it emerges from the symbolic in Freud’s method, we agree with Laplanche. Also Ricoeur, despite the ambiguity of his approaches, refuses to reduce the Freudian method to a hermeneutic by the intervention of incomprehensible processes that must be explained. In other words, by different means, both authors end up resisting the possibility of identifying psychoanalysis with hermeneutics: for Laplanche it is in antipodes of all hermeneutics and, for Ricoeur, hermeneutics does not allow us to engage the complexity of Freudian discourse.

Analogical hermeneutics, as a special form of hermeneutics offered to contemporary psychoanalysis as a form of epistemological foundation, carries this aspect that we are criticizing based on the argument of Laplanche. Therefore, although important coincidences could be reached on the subject of analogy and iconicity, the point that Laplanche has noted constitutes an irremediable limit for the intended identification of psychoanalysis with any form of hermeneutics. There remains, then, one last question: does psychoanalysis have any use at all in the hermeneutic tradition?

The hermeneutization of the sciences and of the philosophy of science

From our perspective, there are a number of general aspects that most of the scientific disciplines and the philosophy of contemporary sciences have assumed from the hermeneutical tradition. Ulises Moulines, representative of the structuralist conception of the theories, has proposed that “the philosophy of science is essentially a part of the sciences of culture . . . an interpretation of interpretations of reality” (Moulines, 1995, p. 110); that is to say which gives it a hermeneutic nature in a wide sense. Moulines refers to epistemology or *metaciency* (as he calls it), but does not openly manifest something that seems to be involved: that *sciences* are *essentially hermeneutical*. This proposal is found in the developments of Ambrosio Velasco Gómez, who recognizes how the successive failures of the analytical-naturalist tradition in establishing objective criteria to distinguish truth and falsity, science and metaphysics, etc. That led to historical debates, show a significant convergence: “In these new attempts to explain scientific rationality, the most highlighted representatives of the philosophy of

Anglo-Saxon science have turned towards an approach or convergence with central theses of an alternative tradition: the hermeneutics” (Velasco Gómez, 1995, p. 55). This convergence, which seems appropriate to recover, seems to exist in at least four theses:

1. All scientific research starts from conceptual quotes of various kinds (theoretical, methodological, axiological, etc) that are not always explicitly formulated but that guide in a decisive way the observation, formulation and testing of hypothesis; as well as decisions regarding the acceptance, rejection or modification of theories.
2. The validity of a theory, its acceptance or rejection, cannot be established based on the degree of corroboration of its hypotheses about a strong and secure empirical basis. Such evaluation involves weighing the fertility of a proposal based on a broader framework (paradigm, research program, etc) and over time.
3. Scientific rationality is determined by the way of resolving the general tensions between quotes and conventions of a tradition and the innovative proposals that emerge within it as a result of research. As long as the way to resolution contributes to progressive changes of tradition, in terms of empirical adequacy and heuristic capacity, scientific activity will be a rational enterprise.
4. The essential tensions in a tradition, for example, between the previously accepted and innovation, or between the explanatory hypotheses and the interpretation of what is observed etc, cannot be solved by some methodological, precise and invariant procedure. The successful resolution of such controversies depends on a prudent judgment of the competent scientific community, through its communicative, argumentative, persuasive and consensual processes, which transcend any strictly methodological criterion. (Velasco Gómez, 1995)

According to Velasco Gómez, these points of convergence between the hermeneutic (post-heideggerian) and naturalists (post-positivist) traditions of the philosophy of science are a good indication to explore a new general notion of scientific rationality, in the field of natural sciences and in socio-historical sciences in different way. His proposal is to take not the methodological and demonstrative argumentation as a foundation, but “the argumentation communicative, public, deliberative, not

demonstrative, but convincing, that traditionally has been associated to the practical knowledge and not to scientific theories” (Velasco Gómez, 1995, p. 64). Beyond this proposition, with which we adhere to its spirit but we do not aim to develop in the terms of the author, we believe that the *hermeneutization* of the philosophy of science must also reach the epistemology of psychoanalysis, showing a way to transcend the efforts to reduce the disciplinary identity to the extremes in tension. However, it must be said that this programmatic belt is far from having been settled, since specific problems remain to be solved.

Gabriel Zanotti also referred to a similar movement of hermeneutization, emphasizing that the rediscovery of non-algorithmic rationality occurred within the very heart of the analytical philosophy of science:

what is interesting about the contemporary epistemological debate is that the discovery of a more elastic, broader notion of science was not from “outside” science. It was not the insightful words of Gadamer, in 1960, which awakened the science of its dogmatic dream. The debate Popper-Kuhn-Lakatos-Feyerabend that, precisely from the 60’s, takes a great momentum, was the product of the seeds planted by Popper himself in his debate with neo-positivism. (Zanotti, 2003, p. 65)

All this must lead, according to Zanotti, to explore the role of *prudential rationality* in scientific activity.

The healthy convergence analyzed by authors such as Velasco Gómez and Zanotti should lead us to clear up at least two common ways of misunderstanding: first, those chimerical ideas that some analysts have made about the philosophy of natural sciences, either to imitate them, or to oppose them in the epistemological discussions about psychoanalysis. Second, the unnecessary radicalization of the hermeneutic perspective as a basis for psychoanalysis, whose apex of rationality culminates in a rejection of any pretense of objectivity that is not consistent with clinical experience or cannot serve as a basic assumption for psychoanalytic research.

It must be said, moreover, that philosophical hermeneutics has not allowed for psychoanalysis to give an accurate and non-evasive response to the epistemological critiques of the representatives of the traditional conception of science (such as Popper and Grünbaum, for example), nor to be lined up with the inescapable naturalistic elements that are present since the Freudian theorization. Under all of this, the conjecture that I intend to sustain here, with regards to the relationship of psychoanalysis with hermeneutics, is the following: if psychoanalysis has to have a hermeneutical foundation, this is because it tends to share the aforementioned theses about the rationality of knowledge and its evolution, inherent to the *hermeneutization* of the *philosophy of science*. However, it is not prevented from including anthropological, methodological and axiological

assumptions of the hermeneutic tradition before its own basic conjectures based on the immanent rationality of his field of clinical experience. In other words, psychoanalysis is hermeneutic in a broad sense and like any other scientific discipline; but it cannot be hermeneutic in the strict sense, since it cannot reconcile some of its central assumptions with the foundations of this tradition.

Given this hypothesis, we must recognize that the very development of the history of the philosophy of science shows that some of the central aspects that sustained the controversy between naturalism and hermeneutics are not completely excluded or can transcend it. In our opinion, considering that the Freudian proposal implies the presence of heterogeneous elements, we must draw on this situation by elucidating the forms of interweaving from its own epistemic rationality.

Some conclusions

We started by asking how, before the epistemological and methodological critiques of some significant representatives from the traditional conception of science, from the 1960s a sector of the psychoanalytic community proposed abandoning the Freudian pretensions that psychoanalysis was a scientific discipline to begin to consider it a hermeneutic discipline.

Then we show how, despite the serious difficulties of those attempts to redefine the hermeneutics of psychoanalysis, this proposal has been re-greening in recent years and from the developments of *analogical hermeneutics*. An examination of the main assertions that have been made on the foundations of psychoanalysis allows us to show that although some of the central notions of this proposal can be well attuned to the spirit of the Freudian proposal on interpretation (notions about *analogicity* and *inconicity*), there are a number of assumptions that are difficult to be compatible with psychoanalytic rationality: the *narrative synthesis* is not an active agent of the Freudian psychoanalytic method, nor is it possible to exclude the causal dimension from the domain of clinical explanations; aspects that represent a fundamental bifurcation point with respect to the Freudian proposal.

Recovering the debate between Laplanche and Ricoeur we were able to explain, in addition to the differences between both approaches, the way in which any hermeneutical redefinition of psychoanalysis seems to fall into a dangerous temptation: to try to standardize the teleology of the unconscious processes with the phenomenological intentionality of the conscious self. In turn, we have approached a conceptual elucidation of this debate: to assume that the meaning is a dimension proper to psychoanalytic explanations does not imply that we should exclude the dimension of causality, as the supporters of hermeneutics have generally believed. The teleology involved in psychoanalytic explanations is not comparable to the intentionality of narrative explanations; which seems to be a point that has not been considered since the dawn of the hermeneutical program in psychoanalysis and which reaches the pretensions of analogical hermeneutics today.

Finally, we have highlighted some points of convergence between the hermeneutic and naturalistic traditions of the contemporary philosophy of science, showing that they constitute a good indication to explore a new general notion of scientific rationality in different. Based on this, we have given some reasons to consider that this hermeneutization of the philosophy of science should also reach an epistemology of psychoanalysis, alerting us to the unnecessary, which seems to be an alleged radicalization of the hermeneutical perspective as a foundation. In that sense, we maintain that psychoanalysis can be considered hermeneutic in the broad sense, but could not be redefined hermeneutically in the strict sense. We consider that the hybrid character of the disciplinary identity of Freudian psychoanalysis, about which we have already said enough (Assoun, 1981/1982; Kolteniuk Krauze, 1976; Strenger, 1991), hinders any attempt at the reduction of any of the two great epistemological traditions that have strengthened the field of human sciences. In that sense, Freudian clinical rationality maintains a great potential to formulate conceptual frameworks that transcend the traditional binomials on the philosophy of causation in the disciplines that approach the human being.

É possível a hermenêutica analógica se constituir em um marco filosófico apropriado para a psicanálise?

Resumo: Este artigo analisa as pretensões dos adeptos da hermenêutica analógica por se constituírem em um fundamento epistemológico necessário para a psicanálise. Primeiramente, são expostas as razões para o desembarque da tradição hermenêutica no campo freudiano, vinculando as críticas filosóficas que, em meados do século XX, foram feitas à psicanálise e a saída que vários analistas encontraram nos precursores filosóficos da hermenêutica contemporânea. Conceitualiza-se a renovada tentativa para redefinir a identidade epistêmica da psicanálise atualmente a partir dos desenvolvimentos da hermenêutica analógica de Mauricio Beuchot. Em segundo lugar, apresentam-se algumas objeções críticas que impediriam essa reformulação e são defendidas por apoiarem as tensões metateóricas inerentes ao programa freudiano, potencializando sua fecundidade para avançar na busca por melhores fundamentos para a racionalidade da clínica psicoanalítica.

Palavras-chave: psicanálise, epistemologia, hermenêutica.

Est-il possible l'herméneutique analogique se constituer dans une marque philosophique appropriée à la psychanalyse ?

Résumé : Cet article analyse les prétentions des partisans de l'herméneutique analogique pour se constituer dans un base épistémologique nécessaire à la psychanalyse. D'abord, on expose les raisons pour l'apparition de la tradition herméneutique dans le champs freudien, en liant les critiques philosophiques qui, au milieu du XXe siècle, ont été proposées à la psychanalyse et la solution que plusieurs analystes ont rencontré dans les précurseurs philosophiques de l'herméneutique contemporaine. On conceptualise la tentative renouvelée pour redéfinir l'identité épistémique de la psychoanalyse actuellement à partir des développement de l'herméneutique analogique de Mauricio Beuchot. Après, on présente quelques objections critiques qui ont empêché cette reformulation et sont défendues pour supporter les tensions métathéorique inhérentes au programme freudien, en potentialisant sa fécondité afin d'avancer dans la quête pour des bases meilleurs à la rationalité de la clinique psychoanalytique.

Mots-clés : psychoanalyse, épistémologie, herméneutique.

¿Puede la hermenéutica analógica constituirse en un marco filosófico apropiado para el psicoanálisis?

Resumen: Este artículo analiza las pretensiones de los partidarios de la hermenéutica analógica por constituirse en un fundamento epistemológico necesario para el psicoanálisis. Primero se exponen las razones del desembarco de la tradición hermenéutica en el campo freudiano, vinculando las críticas filosóficas que a mediados del siglo veinte se hicieron al psicoanálisis y la salida que varios analistas encontraron en los precursores filosóficos de la hermenéutica contemporánea. Se conceptualiza el renovado intento por redefinir la identidad epistémica del psicoanálisis en la actualidad, a partir de los desarrollos de la hermenéutica analógica de Mauricio Beuchot. En segundo lugar, se presentan algunas objeciones críticas que impedirían efectuar esa reformulación y se aboga por sostener las tensiones metateóricas inherentes al programa freudiano, potenciando su fecundidad para avanzar en la búsqueda de mejores fundamentos para la racionalidad de la clínica psicoanalítica.

Palabras clave: psicoanálisis, epistemología, hermenéutica.

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