

Psychoanalysis a proof

Text for Maiêutica Florianópolis by Maurício Eugênio Maliska

Regarding the theme of the *VI Congress of Convergencia*, the title of this text can provide some interesting homophones which I would like to stress from the outset. Some of these homophones are even presented to be refuted. Let us look at them:

1) Psychoanalysis approves: This seems rather academic in the sense that psychoanalysis is not a university chair that approves or fails students after applying some biannual tests (exams). In the text *"On the Teaching of Psycho-analysis in Universities"*, Freud (1919 [1918] 1996) makes it clear that the university, through its speech and device, is not the place for psychoanalysis, since the latter is done around an unknown (*Das Unbewusste*), a knowledge that one does not know to know it, that is, unconscious knowledge, and not that of rationality of scientific knowledge dealt with in the scope of the university.

2) Psychoanalysis at proof: Here one comes to think that psychoanalysis is put to the test in the sense that it must show proof for the operation or efficiency of its practice. When asked this way, usually by a scientific agent, the proof at stake is also said scientific evidence. In other words, in order to be recognized, psychoanalysis would have to give proof from another episteme that is not its own. That is already unreasonable because its recognition would be in what it is not, in the assumption that psychoanalysis could be recognized from another episteme. If its foundations are not recognized by science, whatever comes from the latter is certainly an annulment of psychoanalysis. When neurosciences say that we cannot prove the existence of the unconscious, or the relationship between dreams and the unconscious, they attack us by demanding something that is not part of psychoanalysis' theoretical and technical assets. That is, they require proof for the unconscious from a neurological perspective, not respecting that it is a structure

other than the anatomical or neuroanatomical, but a structure of language. Evidence of psychoanalysis will be other than that of science.

3) Psychoanalysis proves: It is then we ask ourselves: What is proven in an analysis? What can you experience and witness in an analysis? Here we start entering a more properly psychoanalytical land, because we are saying that this is not to about giving evidence, giving proof of existence of the unconscious, for example, but "receiving" in the sense of experiencing the incidence of the unconscious on the subject. Of course, this is an active "receiving", in the sphere of the subject that desires, and that ignores its desire, subjugated to the banners of the unconscious. Here is a good opportunity to quote Zuberman (2008, p.05, our translation) at the presentation of the book *La eficacia del psicoanálisis*:

The effectiveness of psychoanalysis is not the one in an argument, nor the one in the cunning of reason, much less the verification of objective results, the achievement of normality, or capitalistic productivity and profitability, [...] but the experience from the place of the analysand first, and from the psychoanalyst's [...].¹

Thus, it is then to prove (experience) something in analysis. And what can be experienced/proven in an analysis? Several things, but we can sum them up in a word of effectiveness on the subject. As Lacan (1998 [1953], p.245.) points out in *The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis*: "[...] in which the analyst should become master/lord of the functions of speech." In fact, in this text Lacan makes clear that psychoanalysis is about the effectiveness of the word rather than explanations, arguments, as psychoanalysts from IPA were doing. For Lacan (1988 [1964], p. 18), at the introduction of *Seminar 11*, this is not about explaining why the girl is mute, but to make her talk. Then we reject the famous Brazilian saying "*Freud explains it*", because in the explanation is the "[...] temptation that is presented to the analyst to leave the fundamentals of speech [...]"(Lacan (1998 [1953], p. 244). That is what science does in what Lacan

¹“La eficacia del psicoanálisis no es la del argumento ni la de la astucia de la razón, mucho menos la verificación de resultados objetivables, la de la normalidad alcanzada o la de la productividad y rentabilidad capitalista [...] pero la experiencia desde el lugar de psicoanalizante primero, y desde el de psicoanalista [...]”. (original text).

illustrates with the phrase "[...] *you would not seek me if you had not already found me.*" (Lacan, 1988 [1964], p. 15, italics added). What science looks for, it already knows; it is not about something new. We just need to observe scientific experiments, which are nothing more than attempts, sometimes obsessive, to reproduce the same. However, psychoanalysis highlights repetition, with differences, paths that in analytical experience might bring up a new significant, "...a signifier that would not have, just as with the real, any kind of meaning... this would be fruitful... a means of sideration, at any rate." (LACAN, 05/17/77).

Finally, a fourth homophone:

4) Psychoanalysis, the *proof*: This fourth listening comes in the same line as the third, but brings with it a differential, for that which is proven in analysis is in the order of experience (not of scientific experiment) but fundamentally, of experiencing the unconscious and its effects on the subject. Actually, it is the experience of lacking, *of this falling a*, forever lost without ever having existed. Proving what is not known, what was never possessed, and what is in the center of the constitution of the subject. This experience of analysis is therefore not observable, measurable applicable. It is firstly connected to an effect of discourse, which does not show itself every time that someone goes to an analyst, but as Diana Voronovsky (2008: p. 65, our translation) said about the effectiveness of the analytical act: "...in my understanding, they are a few brilliant moments of the entire analysis, maybe not the most frequent, but those that give the analysis experience its uniqueness."² This singularity shown in the *a*, of *the object a*, which constitutes the subject in a brilliant way, and which has nothing to do with frequency, with measurements, occurrences of rational positivism. It is then about an effectiveness of the analytical act, a non-presumable effectiveness, non-observable, non-predictable, which comes despite any pretense of the analyst or analysand. Ultimately, it is a real that has an incidence without order or law, a real that makes of the psychoanalytical practice a meeting with the unknown.

² "[...] y a mi entender, son algunos momentos fulgurantes de todo análisis, quizás no los más frecuentes, sino los que hacen de la experiencia del análisis su singularidad." (original text).

To try to show what we are talking about with regards to efficacy and the way the analyst intervenes more clearly, I here bring a thought by Roberto Harari on the analytical doing in analogy with dream production.

Harari (2001) shows us a very interesting path in this regard. To do so, he retrieves the dream work in which Freud says that the key is not the manifest content, not even the latent thoughts, as one might suppose, but the dream work. What Harari proposes as a reading path is the fact that there is a puncture between the latent thought and the manifest content, which can be represented as follows:

latent thought \diamond manifest content

The puncture shows that there are, as in the formula of the *fantasme*, conjunctions, disjunctions, major/minor, continuity, discontinuity between terms, so that the puncture point is the dream work, i.e., the dream work is the puncture itself as a link between the latent thought and the manifest content. In this sense to Freud (1996 [1900], p 538.):

The dream work is not only more careless, more irrational, more forgetful, and more incomplete than waking thought; it is entirely different from the latter in terms of quality and, therefore, is not, in principle, comparable to it. It does not think, does not calculate, nor judges in any way; it restricts itself to giving things a new shape.

This "new shape" is the effect of the dream work, so the important thing is not even the latent thought, nor the manifest content, but the dream-work itself. If emphasis is given to one or the other material, there is the risk of falling in an *ontologization* of the unconscious, or even in a theoretical mistake of thinking that the essential is what is behind the manifest content, as if the latent thoughts were some kind code to be deciphered, or a submerged material that must come up based on what is on the surface. Freud stresses the importance of the dream work and fairness since it does not think, calculate or judge, only transforms.

Taking the dream, as is the tradition in psychoanalysis, as the "flagship" of unconscious formations, it could be considered, by analogy, that the relationship between

the subject and what he experiences in analysis can also follow the same movements, that is, should not lead to a logic in which starting from the unconscious, one arrives at some magically revealing phenomenon of the subject, as it would be in the dream, starting with the manifest content and arriving at latent thoughts. It is not about that. The emphasis of psychoanalysis must be to bet on words, not as units that make up to the lexicon of a language, but as signifiers representing the subject to other signifiers.(Lacan, 1988 [1964]). At stake is the signifying aspect of the word, what it can turn the subject into through its poietic power. The analyst, just as with the dream work, is the one that causes this transformation, because the analyst must also be the one that does not think, does not calculate, does not judge, just transforms. Thus, a puncturing analogy is created between dream work with the work of analysis, and as there is a transforming power of the word in both to the extent in which it may reveal itself as a signifier that represents the subject to another signifier or, as Lacan brought forth in *Seminar 24*, a new signifier. This characteristic of the dream work, "that does not think, calculate or judge" is a reference to the work of the analyst, responsible for the analytical work, which is limited to transforming neurotic misery, for example, in common unhappiness; which brings about a transformation in the subject by way of the discursive effectiveness.

Thus, neither the unconscious nor the subject, and much less the signifier is something essentialist or ontological, i.e., what rules these elements is not the concrete material state. The unconscious, for example, does not exist without the analysis; it is present in the analysis by way of the analyst's interventions, the analyst's work. That is why a symptom and a faulty action [parapraxis] only have a place in the analysis. The analyst allows for the conditions of unconscious production and their transformations. That is what makes Lacan (1960 [1998: 848.]) say that, "Psychoanalysts are part of the concept of unconscious, since they constitute the addressee"

Proving through Psychoanalysis then becomes an experiment with the unconscious, which in an analysis works in a very different way than in science. Therefore, its evidence, its effectiveness, cannot be translated into scientific language because this is part of the psychoanalytical framework. Perhaps they can't even be said in words, in everyday language, because if we talk about a real effect on or from the psychoanalytical practice, this is also part of an unspeakable. There is a transformation under analysis, a

transformation of *jouissance* [enjoyment], for example, that we do not know or have not much to say about. It is not a theorization about analysis itself, but of an effectiveness from a real impossible to be named. As with the dream work, the work of analysis does not think, does not calculate, does not judge, and fails to solidly prove how it caused one or the other effect. To prove and witness, here, is trying to say something of an impossible.

References

FREUD, S. **Sobre o ensino da psicanálise nas universidades** (1919[1918]). Edição Standard Brasileira das Obras Psicológicas Completas de Sigmund Freud. Vol. XVII. Rio de Janeiro: Imago, 1996.

_____. **A interpretação dos sonhos** (1900). Edição Standard Brasileira das Obras Psicológicas Completas de Sigmund Freud. Vol. VI e V. Rio de Janeiro: Imago, 1996.

HARARI, R. **Fantasma: fin de l'analyse?** Ramonville Saint-Agne: Érès, 2001a.

LACAN, J. Função e campo da fala e da linguagem em Psicanálise. (1953) In: _____. **Escritos**. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 1998.

_____. **O Seminário, Livro 11: Os quatro conceitos fundamentais da psicanálise** (1964). Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 1988.

_____. **Le Séminaire 24: L'insu que sait de l'une bevue s'aile a mourre**. Seminário inédito, 1977.

_____. Posição do inconsciente no Congresso de Bonneval (1960). In: _____. **Escritos**. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 1998.

VORONOVSKY, D. Del analista-síntoma al analista-sinthoma: una eficacia posible. In: ZUBERMAN, J. **La eficacia del psicoanálisis**. Buenos Aires: Letra viva, 2008.

ZUBERMAN, J. Presentación. In: _____. **La eficacia del psicoanálisis**. Buenos Aires: Letra viva, 2008.
