

The notion of applied psychoanalysis in the early years of the psychoanalytic movement

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Abstract: Taking into account the introduction of psychoanalysis in the scientific context of the second half of the 19th century, this article aims to discuss the notion of applied psychoanalysis that was supported by Freud and his peers in the first years of the psychoanalytic movement. To do so, some essays that are considered by the movement as applied will be referred to, and so will some contributions of methodological nature, all of them published in this early period of psychoanalysis history. It should be said that, in this article, the study of primary sources in connection with the related discussion will be given priority.

Keywords: applied psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic method, history of psychoanalysis.

Introduction

In the field of natural sciences, the distinction between knowledge that is said to be *pure*, which is sometimes also called basic or fundamental knowledge, and another kind of knowledge that is said to be *applied* cannot be considered as a detail, or a whim. Firstly because it is not a recent distinction in the history of those sciences. Secondly, due to the fact it is a distinction that seems to guide the whole modern ideal of science, according to which one first needs to know nature to then predict, control, and act on it.

In that sense, as argued by Koyré (1943/1986), the modern scientist represents a leap as compared to *homo faber* - who, despite being capable of exercising control on nature, had his action limited to his technique. In those terms, the modern scientist - a character that would then be identified with figures such as Galileo Galilei and René Descartes - arises as a theoretician, someone who is closer to philosophy than to the craft, an individual who is committed to building models that are up to a certain extent distant from the everyday experience:

The science of those men [Galileo Galilei and René Descartes] is not one of engineers or artisans, but rather the one of men whose work has rarely gone beyond theory . . . Galileo has not learned his craft with the ones who worked on Venice's arsenals and shipyards. Much on the contrary: he taught those people his own. (pp. 12-13)

What Koyré exposes on the first half of the 20th century could already be found in the work of science's greatest heralds, such as Francis Bacon, D'Alembert, and Auguste Comte. In their own way, each of those authors had already established a clear distinction between *theoretical* and *practical* fields, which is parallel to what we call here *pure* and *applied*. Comte, for example, based on his predecessors, says that all human achievements are "either speculative or active", which would support the more general scope of his classification of knowledge. Such classification included, on one hand, the theoretical knowledge that is considered the most fundamental one and, on the other hand, the practical knowledge, which is necessarily originated from the former (Comte, 1830/1936, p. 55).

In the particular case of scientific medicine, which includes the work of French physician Claude Bernard (1813-1878) as one of its main representatives, we can observe the same movement that sought different kinds of knowledge. As pointed out by Bernard in his most famous essay *Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine* (1865/1966), Eugène Chevreul is his author of reference regarding all things concerning the "philosophy of experimental science" (p. 12). Based on the work of Chevreul, who was an important figure in the scientific scenario of the 19th century and the one responsible for introducing the terms *pure* and *applied*, Bernard assumed the distinction between theoretical and applied knowledge. The first one would be reached through the experimental study of man, and the second one would be its practical outcome; in this case, the one that guides physicians in their daily clinical practice. Regarding this nomenclature, a quote by Chevreul (1866) is shown below:

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The medical sciences [understood as *applied natural sciences*] whose goal is to cure diseases, do not have . . . any essential characteristics, as they, to fulfill this objective, borrow all knowledge concerning the *pure natural sciences* and the *mathematical sciences*. . . . it is impossible not to admit that the knowledge on the structural flaws of human organs and diseases are part of anatomy and physiology; that is, of the domain of pure science. (p. 269, italics added)

Originated from the medical field, the psychoanalytic movement from the first decade of the 20th century adopted the same terminology - which, in turn, carried in itself the same semantic load that was established in different domains by the founders of modern science. It was not by accident that Freud and his contributors, who were certain the recent psychoanalytic science belonged to the field of natural sciences, would later include psychoanalysis research and practice in that field. In those terms, the two vicissitudes of that new science would be then defined in the founding chart of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA), the new science being understood as: (a) “pure psychology” and (b) “in its application to medicine and to humanities” (Ferenczi & Jung cited by McGuire, 1974/1976, p. 641).

This article aims to discuss, regarding the introduction of psychoanalysis in the field of science, the place which *applied* psychoanalysis should assume. Taking into account the particularities which follow such introduction, the question we will undertake will be the following: in which sense (a) psychoanalysis can be conceived as a discipline or as an applied practice? Or, simply, what does *application* possibly mean in psychoanalysis? We will restrict this discussion to examining the appropriation of *pure* and *applied* categories in the first few years of the psychoanalytic movement, giving priority to which is concerned to the notion of application and focusing on publications from the first two decades of the 20th century. Based on that, we will seek to contextualize the meaning the pure and the applied end up assuming in the analytical experience.

Finally, it is important to remember this article is a study on the history of psychoanalysis. In it, we will give priority to the presentation of a problem, the one with the application of psychoanalysis, thus restricting a possible critical approach towards it.

The pure and its applications in psychoanalysis

In 1910, meanwhile the second Psychoanalytic Congress in Nuremberg, Sándor Ferenczi suggests the creation of an International Psychoanalytical Association, whose goal, according to its statute, includes the outline we indicate above:

The development and the promotion of the psychoanalytic science - as started by Freud, both in its format as *pure psychology* and in its *application to medicine and to the humanities*, a mutual assistance among members and their efforts to acquire and foster psychoanalytic knowledge. (Ferenczi & Jung cited by McGuire, 1974/1976, p. 641, italics added)

After a speech regarding the history of the psychoanalytic movement and the need for greater unity among psychoanalysis researchers (Ferenczi, 1910/2011d), the Congress accepts his proposal, thus giving rise to the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA). Another result from that congress was the Central Journal for Psychoanalysis [*Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse*], which was edited by the Viennese psychoanalyst Wilhelm Stekel and managed by Freud. At that time, two periodicals were already in circulation in the psychoanalytic circles, the Yearbook for Psychoanalytic and Psychopathologic Research [*Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen*], which was founded in 1909 on the occasion of the first Psychoanalytic Congress and the Writings in Applied Psychology [*Schriften zur angewandten Seelenkunde*], which had their first volume published in 1907¹. The first two ones gave priority to theoretical and technical research in psychoanalysis, whereas the second one, along with the *Imago* journal, which was founded in 1912 and published by Otto Rank and Hans Sachs, was destined to apply psychoanalysis to which was called the humanities [*Geisteswissenschaften*] by the IPA. It should be said that *Imago* journal had the following definition as its subtitle: *A magazine that is focused on the application of psychoanalysis to the humanities*.

The Yearbook featured important works such as: the Little Hans and the Rat Man case studies, published by Freud (1909/1996e, 1909/1996f); *Introjection and Transference*, by Ferenczi (1909/2011c); and the investigations by Alphonse Maeder (1910) on Dementia praecox, which would be resumed by Freud in his Schreber case (1911/1996g). Most of those are, therefore, articles that could be understood as contributions to psychoanalysis as *pure psychology*. It should be mentioned that the editorial note that accompanies the first issue of the journal, which was written by Jung under Freud’s guidance, already suggests a distinction between “the development a psychology” and “its application to nervous and mental diseases” (Jung, 1909/1970; Jung cited by McGuire, 1974/1976, pp. 253-2544n). In regards to the Central Journal, such periodical, as figured in its Introduction to the reader (Stekel, 1911/1964a), focused on the publication of shorter works, including technical contributions and more general comments of introductory nature. Freud (1910/1989c), for example, published *The Future Prospects of Psychoanalytic*

¹ Strictly speaking, that annual publication, which would be extended to 1925, could not be classified as a periodical, as was the case of the Yearbook. A translated synopsis of that collection is published in Freud’s complete works. Please refer to Freud (1907/1996b).

Therapy, Stekel (1911/1964b) wrote about *The Psychic Treatment of Epilepsy*, and Isidor Sadger (1911/1964), a Viennese psychoanalyst, published the article: *Is Bronchial Asthma a Sexual Neurosis?*.

Although the Journal was not only limited to that kind of contribution, all of those essays could be considered as applications of psychoanalysis to medicine, taking into account that the psychoanalytic practice had still not been defined to be in a territory outside medicine. On the other hand, the publications in the *Writings in Applied Psychology* and in *Imago* journal were focused on the application of psychoanalysis to the domains of literature, mythology, philology, etc., in articles that were not always written by psychoanalysts. Some texts were published in those periodicals. They included the following: *Delusion and Dream in Jensen's Gradiva* and *Totem and Taboo*, by Freud (1907/1996c, 1913/1996i), *Dreams and Myths*, by Karl Abraham (1909/2000a), and *The Problem of Hamlet and the Oedipus Complex*, by Ernest Jones (1911).

With that being said, let us focus on those papers the psychoanalytic movement started referring to as applied, whether to medicine or to the humanities, to better understand the distinctions and particularities therein involved.

Psychoanalysis applied to medicine

When we look at the texts of psychoanalysis applied to medicine, as outlined in the IPA's statute, we will come across, on one hand, issues regarding technique, and, on the other, the possible application of the psychoanalytic theory to medical practice. When Freud (1895/1996a) proposes free association to be a technique with a wider reach than the use of hypnosis, or when Ferenczi (1919/2011e) proposes his active technique side by side with the traditional psychoanalytic hearing, it is hard to know to which extent either there was or not the application of a theory that had been conceived prior to the experience. Taking those examples into account, we may say that a technical innovation does not necessarily depend on the existence of a previous well-defined theoretical model. Innovations such as those can be considered as clinical strategies that were created based on their very experiences, with no support from pre-established theoretical frameworks. Freud (1904/1989a), in those terms, *realizes* he might reach better results by leaving his patients freely associate, "similar to how it is done in a random conversation, in which people shift from topic to topic" (pp. 234-235). Considering that fact, "the extension of consciousness" (p. 234) hypnosis provides is then replaced by the "associations of patients" (p. 234) and by the analytical work towards them. From that time on, given its better efficiency, which was up until then a simple bet starts being regarded as a technique.

However, what would define efficiency here? Concerning the introduction of free association as a fundamental rule, we may think about the number of patients who became accessible to psychoanalysis by virtue of the

use of this technique. Before that, these patients were not easily - or in no way whatsoever - hypnotized. When we focus our attention on the medical use of hypnotic-suggestive treatment methods over the last decades of the 19th century, it is possible to conclude that such procedure may not to be effective to all sorts of patients and that a technique such as free association arose as a true innovation. Pitres and Regis (1897), for example, in a review study which aimed to discuss and concentrate everything that had already been questioned regarding the clinical aspects of obsessions, concluded that the methods for hypnotic suggestion did not work on those patients, and that it was really necessary to combine them to others to achieve results (pp.101-102).

As Ferenczi (1919/2011e, pp. 2-3), proposes and also as Freud would say (1919/1996n, p.175), the introduction of the active technique could be likewise considered to be a technical innovation capable of offering better tools to analysts in their clinical practice. In this case, by shifting the abstinence from the analyst to the patient, the efficiency of this technique was demonstrated by the effects from the active position on transference, avoiding the repetition of a concealed satisfaction and favoring the recollection of unconscious material.

That kind of learning, through experience, seems to be the same that is exposed in the set of articles on that technique that were published by the Viennese psychoanalyst between 1911 and 1914, which in no way constitute a technical manual per se. Not everything that is recommended by Freud in those brief papers seems to have accurate meta-psychological or theoretical correlations. It is, so to speak, knowledge that is empirically apprehended; that is, from the everyday struggle with the treatment of neuroses and psychoses, which does not keep it from having an array of implied assumptions.

Perhaps paying attention to that, French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1952/2007, p.12) went as far as to compare the psychoanalytic practice to "the liberal arts in the Middle Ages" - disciplines that, in spite of lacking a yet-to-be-invented scientific strictness, were capable of being shown to have significant practical efficiency. From that point of view, psychoanalysis as technique could be compared - such as exposed by Koyré, to the craft of the "Venetian shipyards" that were mentioned in the beginning of the article, and, in that sense to a practice which is more appropriate to *homo faber*.

In turn, there are moments in which the application of theory to practice is done explicitly and directly. An interesting example of such application coincides with the very extension of psychoanalysis to beyond Austria, when Freud's theory and method started being applied by some Swiss physicians to the treatment of psychoses. It was because of Eulen Bleuler's initiative that psychoanalysis started being studied by Burghölzli's psychiatric clinic team as of 1903. That team comprised physicians who would later occupy distinguished positions in the psychoanalytic movement, such as Carl G. Jung,

Karl Abraham, Max Eitingon, Alphonse Maeder, Ludwig Binswanger, etc.

Firstly, we observe the clear influence - and even application - of Freud's theories in the experimental study of associations², which would give rise to the notion of *complex*, and those would soon be absorbed by psychoanalysis. That application attempt, now directed towards the context of psychoses, would also figure in one important publication by Jung dating back to 1907: *The Psychology of Dementia Praecox* (1907/1986). In this seminal essay, which was completed by the Swiss psychiatrist, the generalizations reached by Freud based on the clinical aspects of hysteria and obsessional neurosis - such as the psychogenic hypotheses that are associated with the notion of defense - were to a great extent applied to cases of Dementia praecox that were studied at Burghölzli. Such paper gave rise to intense reflection on psychosis from a psychoanalytic perspective, which would result in 1914's essay, which was responsible for the introduction of narcissism as a theoretical concept (Freud, 1914/1996k).

Also regarding this same type of application, we may remember Freud's comments concerning the impact from psychoanalysis on a discipline such as biology, a field that, according to him, would certainly benefit from the knowledge that was extracted from the analysis of neurotic patients (Freud, 1913/1996j, pp. 183-184). According to the psychoanalyst, the finding of sexual drives that are capable of subverting self-preservation imperatives could not go unnoticed by biologists. In that sense, the theory of sexuality, which revolved around the concept of libido, could be applied to biology and, therefore, to medicine. In a similar way, by reacting to the problem of teaching psychoanalysis in universities, Freud argues that the psychoanalytic knowledge could contribute to the formation of physicians, in that it would be capable of making them aware of the "mental factors" on the "different vital functions, as well as on diseases and their treatment (Freud, 1919/1996o, p. 187).

Practical examples from those contributions could be seen in already-mentioned papers, such as the one by Maeder on epilepsy and Sadger's one on asthma. We could also mention Ferenczi here (1908/2011a, 1908/2011b), who applies the Freudian hypotheses concerning premature ejaculation and sexual impotence, seeking a psychological explanation for those symptoms, as well as Abraham (1909/2000b), who studies the phenomenon of consanguineous marriages from the psychology of neuroses.

That being said, we noticed that, under the title *application of psychoanalysis to medicine*, it is possible to think of at least two application dimensions, the one regarding the technique as an application of psychoanalysis and another one, regarding the application of theory to

practice per se. This is an important distinction, as it warns us about the existence of two different movements, which, by chance, are gathered under the same designation of *application*. The first of them regards the very exercise of psychoanalysis, which is marked by the use of a technique. The second one concerns the application of knowledge extracted from that exercise to situations which at first could be seen as foreign to psychoanalysis, as was the case of the clinical aspects of psychoses in the first decade of the 20th century.

Psychoanalysis applied to the humanities

Humanities is the expression we chose to translate German term *Geisteswissenschaften*. Such expression was coined by Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) and it has a long history inside the philosophy of German science. The same term can be equally translated by *ciências humanas* (human sciences) or *ciências do espírito* (mental or moral sciences), as they were translated in the philosophical and scientific literature of Portuguese language. Taking into account the purposes of this article, that is not going to be included in this discussion, and it is enough for us to define the "*field of the humanities*" [*Geistesgebiete*] as the one that, according to *Imago* journal *Prospekt*, comprises: "aesthetics, literature and history of art, mythology, philology, pedagogy, folklore, criminalistics, moral theories, and science of religion" (Rank & Sachs, 1912a, irregular pagination, our translation).

As shown by Freud in *The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement* (1914/1996l, pp. 44-45), the "analytical exam of neurotic people and the neurotic symptoms of normal people" soon led to the assumption of the existence of "psychological conditions that would eventually go beyond the knowledge field they had been found in"; that is, transcend their medical applications. Freud ascribes that impulse to the extension of psychoanalysis frontiers to his own initial works. In those terms, he quotes the *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, published in 1905, as the first example of an "application of the analytical mode of thinking to aesthetic problems" (Freud, 1914/1996l, p. 46). Two years later, in a comment made regarding a literary book, Jensen's *Gradiva*, Freud would state that the "laws" that were found from the study of dreams could also be used to understand the "nature of literary creation" (Freud, 1907/1996c, pp. 20-21). The same reference to "laws" [*Gesetzen*], which are responsible for "governing normal and pathologic activities" of man's mental life, is in the paper from 1910 on Leonardo da Vinci (Freud, 1910/1989b, p. 59). In both cases, as it seems evident to use, what is at stake is exactly the classic conception of application, in which "pure" knowledge is "applied" to a context which is different from the one in which it was developed.

Something of this magnitude, however, could not be done anyway, which Freud would defend throughout his word: "But we would have to be very careful and not forget

2 School of Zurich published a series of articles on association phenomena, which were compiled in the two volumes of the *Diagnostic Association Studies* that were published in 1906 and 1907. Among those studies, it is worth pointing out: Jung, C.G. *Psychoanalysis and Association Experiments* (1906), which is enthusiastically received by Freud. Letter from Freud to Jung on April 11, 1906 (cited by McGuire, 1974/1976, p. 43).

that, in a nutshell, we are only dealing with analogies, and that it is dangerous, not only for men but also for concepts, to yank them out of the scope they originated from and developed in” (Freud, 1930/1996p, p. 146). Regarding that, a great discussion about the criteria involved in the application of psychoanalysis already had a place in the Psychological Wednesday Society, a group that was composed of Freud and his first Viennese contributors in 1902.

In 1906, in the sessions on October 10, 17, and 24 that were dedicated to applied psychoanalysis, Otto Rank proposed a psychoanalytic interpretation for a series of cases of incest from the literature (Rank cited by Nuremberg & Federn, 1962/1976, pp. 31-56). Such manuscript, whose name was *The Drama of Incest And Its Complications*, received strong criticism due to the exaggerated and often-times inaccurate nature of proposed interpretations, thus opening a discussion of the problem of applying psychoanalysis to the humanities. Adolf Häutler, for example, criticized the relevance of indiscriminately transposing concepts from the individual field to the collective one. Häutler also criticized the thesis according to which the work of an author would necessarily be related to his personal life. Alfred Adler, in turn, praised Rank’s initiative, although he stated that those interpretations might have gone too far at some points. Alfred Meisl goes as far as to consider those exaggerated assumptions put the reputation of psychoanalysis in jeopardy. Freud himself would deem some of Rank’s interpretations as good, also adding that, despite Häutler’s opinion, researchers are responsible for exploring the relationships between the choice of theme and a writer’s personal life, in the case of applying psychoanalysis to literary works.

As we can notice from that episode, the problem of applying psychoanalysis to the humanities was delicate, and doing it required certain discretion. Which would the most appropriate way of applying concepts in an extra-clinical context be? How to evaluate the limits of an interpretation outside the transference relationship? Could the artistic achievements also be interpreted in terms of their unconscious determination? Such questions did not seem to find easy answers at the time.

Amidst the feeling of doubts, we observe the release of Freud’s essay on *Gradiva: A Pompeian Fantasy*, which was written by Wilhelm Jensen (1904/1987). It is an extremely clear, thoughtful, and moderate essay regarding that which concerns the application of concepts. Firstly, unlike Rank, its author chooses to study only one paper, merely limiting his analysis to the information in the text, and that is the reason why he does not go as far as to create hypotheses on the possible unconscious motivations of that author. Freud does not assure the legitimacy of his statements, restricting his analysis to a parallel between the unconscious manifestations of a character and the same formations that can be observed in neurotic, flesh-and-bone subjects. In a letter to Jung from May 26 1907, he would then go as far as to comment: “nothing from what he says is true, but I believe it enables us to enjoy our wealth” (Freud cited by McGuire, 1974/1976, p.

92). Thus, as we may conclude, Freud’s *Gradiva* does not do anything else other than illustrating all that had already been discovered in the psychoanalytic practice, thus composing a paper for theoretical dissemination.

In that same year of 1907, Max Graf - A PhD in Arts, a member of the Wednesday Society, and little Hans’s father - takes up the problem of applied psychoanalysis on the session from December 11, proposing a methodology for the study of writers’ psychology. Such intervention appears in response to the work of Isidor Sadger about Swiss poet and novelist Konrad Meyer, who had been very criticized within the Society. Graf states the writer’s psychoanalytic approach cannot be mistaken for a “pathography” that is similar to those Cesare Lombroso carried out, a bias that, according to the author, guided Sadger’s work (Graf cited by Nuremberg & Federn, 1962/1976, p. 276). Then, supporting a different point of view, a man of letters will say that, in the first place, an artist’s psychological analysis could not be committed to a mental health ideal, and it should also be undertaken by someone who is very sensitive to the arts. Secondly, the analyst should give priority to the author’s work, without trusting too much in accounts from third parties or even in autobiographies, as those could be marked by the biased nature and by the inevitable effects of resistance. When mentioning the works, Graf also states an analyst should start from the topics which are repeated in the work of a certain author, as these repetitions are the ones which will lead him to the heart of the unconscious mind.

Showing himself as favorable to Graf’s ideas, Freud also states in that session that the psychoanalytic study of creative writers should in fact go beyond their “pathographies”, once they prioritize the process of creation, thus being able to apprehend something new. From the study of this creative production, it would then be possible to reach a somewhat accurate profile of that author and of art in general. Advancing regarding his work on *Gradiva*, Freud (cited by Nuremberg & Federn, 1962/1976, p. 282) provides an example of that method by comparing the related novel with two others that had been written by Jensen: *The red umbrella* (1892/2011) and *In the gothic house* (1892/1999)³. It is important to remember that Freud went as far as to exchange letters with the author, questioning him in regards to some personal events, thus trying to support his interpretations⁴. A brief book published by Otto Rank in 1907, named *The Artist* (1907), would call attention to the same problems⁵.

Probably influenced by that debate, Freud would later state in a postscript (dated 1912) to Jensen’s work analysis, that the psychoanalytic investigation should not only

3 Both are also mentioned by Freud in the second edition of his reading of *Gradiva* (1912/1996h, p. 87). Those two tales, *Der rote Schirm* and *Im gotische Hause* were published in 1892 and compose *Übermächte. Zwei Novellen*.

4 Such letters were published in *Drei unveröffentlichte Briefe* (1929, p. 207), in *Psychoanalytische Bewegung*, but they do not completely confirm Freud’s assumptions.

5 Regarding that, please refer to Hirschmann (1911/1913, p. 145) and Freud (1914/1996l, p. 45n).

look, in the work of creative writers, “for a confirmation of findings that were done in trivial neurotic human beings”, but also “know the material of memories and impressions in which a certain author based his work, and the methods and processes through which they converted that material into a work of art” (Freud, 1912/1996h, p. 87). In the meantime, a series of other works was published according to that methodological proposal (Hitschmann, 1911/1913, p. 142s).

From that moment on, going through the explicit statement in the postscript of *Gradiva*, dated 1912, Freud seems to suggest that studying artistic works along with investigating the memories and perceptions on which the author was based could lead to results that are similar to those obtained by research conducted during clinical practice. Such as oneiric phenomena and daydreams, works of arts could then be studied as an expression of the unconscious mind, as both were based on the common ground of fantasy. An argument such as this one had already been offered few days before the meeting in which Graf would give his statement to the Society, on December 6, at a conference called *Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming* (Freud, 1908/1996d), which was held in publisher and bookseller Hugo Heller’s house. He also attended the meeting on Wednesdays.

Undoubtedly, Leonardo’s text, which has the study of biographies of some of his works and also some personal memories, was engaged in that project to produce knowledge from an extra-clinical context. In that sense, the classic notion of application, which was held before, would give room to a different way of application. It was not the case anymore of directly applying the theory to the object of study, but rather of applying the psychoanalytic investigation method to this same object. That is, the hypothesis of the unconscious mind would stop being only considered in terms of a theory to be applied to the field of the humanities, and it would then define the very method which would support such application of psychoanalysis. The extension of the method to extra-clinical goals, rather to only theoretical ones, was then supported by Freud.

The foundation of *Imago* journal, which would have its first issue in 1912, is the accomplishment of this project. The article that opens the journal is precisely a kind of manifesto that was written by Otto Rank and Hans Sachs (1912b) defending the relevance of the psychoanalytic study of the most varied human achievements. Based on the principle that those realizations, such as dreams and daydreams, were supported by fantasy, it would be fair to give those achievements the same systematic study that was before directed to dreams and daydreams by clinical psychoanalysts. A year later, Rank and Sachs would publish a longer paper about the same problem of applying the psychoanalytic research to the humanities. It was named: *The Significance of Psychoanalysis for the Humanities* (1913). At first, Freud was excited with the potential of the periodical. We know, through his correspondence with Jung, that the psychoanalyst had been yearning for new contributions to this area for some years then. In a letter dated December

19 1909, he states: “I long for mythologists, linguists, and historians of religion; in they do not come in our aid, we will have to work by ourselves (Freud cited by McGuire, 1974/1976, p. 330).

Later, however, Freud ends up concluding that not all papers published under the support of applied psychoanalysis were capable of following the expected methodological strictness. In correspondence with Karl Abraham on April 6, 1914, the psychoanalyst from Vienna would question the value of his *The Moses of Michaelangelo*, anonymously published in the third issue of *Imago* journal, and would criticize the dilettante nature of a great deal of the works published in that journal: “The Moses is anonymous partly as a pleasantry, and partly out of shame at the obvious amateurishness which it is hard to avoid in the *Imago* papers, and finally, because my doubts about the findings are stronger than usual” (Freud cited by Faltzeder, 2002, p. 228). We may consider Abraham here as a privileged correspondent concerning the debate on applied psychoanalysis, once his comparative study on dreams and myths (1909a/2000), as well as his essays on Giovanni Segantini (1911/2000c) and Amenhotep IV (1912/2000d), were very praised by Freud within the psychoanalytic movement.

It also seems that the lack of trust in the value of those findings in these applied studies had some relation with the arbitrariness involved in the choosing and in the interpreting of these same findings. Unlike a clinical psychoanalysis, a psychoanalysis applied to the arts and to artists, even one that had a large literature of reference, would always be limited to the observation of a mute work of art. In that sense, research that is said to be applied, even though strictly, could easily dive into an endless speculative chain, as an investigation of that type would not allow for the same interaction found in the clinical practice between an analyst and a patient, who are able to speak and listen.

The Moses of Michaelangelo, pointed out by Freud, is indeed a good example of that speculative dive we refer to. In that article, the author seeks to put down in words the Michaelangelo’s “artist’s intention” from one of his works, the sculpture of Moses (Freud, 1914/1996m, p. 217). The author begins with a review of the recent literature, which had already undertaken that same task. Following that, he proposed a very particular method of observation - although it had been born in the context of the arts with the goal of discovering forgeries, it seemed to somewhat resemble the psychoanalytic investigation. Such method exactly targeted those details that would go unnoticed by the great critics, as the outlines of nails, ears, etc., the reason why it would find a parallel in the psychoanalysis technique, which also privileged usually disregarded details. With that procedure in mind, psychoanalysts then focus their observations on two smaller details of the sculpture, “the posture of the right hand” of Moses and “the position on the two tables of the Law” (p. 228). Immediately afterwards, after making some comments, he questions himself: “do these particularities [details of the work] have any significance in reality, or are

we racking our brains with things that were not important to their “creator?” (Freud, 1914/1996m, p. 229, italics added). Finally, at the end of his analysis, and calling attention to the efforts of another interpreter, he would state:

But, what if both of us have strayed to a wrong path? What if we have considered a view of details that are nothing to artists too seriously and deeply, details he introduced in a completely random fashion or for merely formal reasons, with not concealed intention behind them? What if we have shared the destiny of so many interpreters who thought they had very clearly noticed things the artist himself did not, neither consciously or unconsciously? I cannot say. (p. 239)

Another very interesting example of this speculative danger may be found in the analysis Freud conducts of Leonardo da Vinci. In regards to that investigation, based on a childhood memory found in the artist’s notebook, Freud seeks to establish, as he would do for The Moses, a bridge between the exploration “methods” of pure psychoanalysis and the ones of applied psychoanalysis. Based on that principle, the psychoanalyst proposed: “As today we have excellent methods in the psychoanalysis techniques, which help us surface these hidden elements, we may attempt to fill the gap there is in the history of Leonardo’s life by analyzing his childhood fantasy” (Freud, 1910/1989b, p. 79). The analysis of that fantasy would therefore be performed in the same way through which a clinical psychoanalyst would analyze a dream or a slip, taking into account, according to Graf’s protocol, information obtained from the artist’s work and from various bibliographical sources.

In that case, however, unlike what happened with Michaelangelo, the certainty of such straying through a wrong path - it was mentioned in the analysis of his Florentine countryman - which would make a whole argumentative structure crumble, seemed to have been confirmed. Let us see how.

In his paper, due to a misunderstanding that was only disclosed decades later, Freud based a significant part of his argumentation on the contents of a memory which, in fact, never existed. Based on bibliographical data that were supplied by Leonardo himself, the psychoanalyst stated that, when he was a child, the artist had been hit at the level of his lips by a vulture, a bird that is connected to two meanings. On one hand, as an image, it represented the *mother* in the Egyptian mythology; on the other, as an animal, it populated the Renaissance imagination as a breeding female that was capable of producing offspring without the help of a male. That being said, and considering the fact that Leonardo had probably been only raised by his mother until the age of five, Freud infers the existence of strong identification of the artist with that mother, which would consequently lead him to choosing a homosexual object. Finally, such argument would be the intermediate one capable of confirming the hypothesis that was stated in the beginning of the article, according to which

the Florentine genius would have developed a “powerful research instinct” as a result from his sublimated homosexuality (Freud, 1910/1989b, p. 74).

According to research developed on the 1950s, however, the related bird, which was present in the bibliographical files of Leonardo Freud had access to, was concluded to be a kite rather than a vulture; thus revealing that the psychoanalyst and his whole fabulous construction about Leonardo had been the victims of a translation mistake. The German translation of Leonardo’s notebooks Freud had access to showed term *Geier* (vulture) as a translation for Italian word *Nibbio*, which designates another bird, the kite. (Freud, 1910/1989b, p. 76-77n)

It is, however, remarkable that, despite that *mistake*, its especially complex structure, and the logic reasoning of the article, which was published in 1910, remains solid. The relevance of the argument, however, is shown to be questionable, as a kite is not a vulture, and, even though it could represent the mother in the context of a childhood fantasy, it would not be capable of generating the whole symbolology a vulture evoked. In that sense, it would be possible to assume that if Freud had paid attention to the term in the original version of Leonardo’s text, we would have reached different conclusions. Those conclusions would, however, be equally valid, in case the text had the same coherence, which might lead us to think the real criterion involved in an interpretation conducted on applied research of that nature would depend more on the internal consistency of arguments than on the relationship between the interpretation and the concrete case.

If it were like that, such speculation, as long as it was well articulated, would not find any obstacles, and it would also allow for the introduction of new elements that supposedly would be capable of confirming old arguments. Taking that article as an example, we may pay attention to later contributions by Oskar Pfister who, in 1913, would publish a paper in which Leonardo’s work, next to other examples, was interpreted as an unconsciously determined “cryptography” (Pfister, 1913/1970, pp. 147-148). In this text, he would “confirm” the influence of the vulture by observing the outline of Maria’s clothes on painting The Virgin and Child with St. Anne that was left unfinished by the artist in 1519, the year of his death. Those contours were the ones of a vulture itself, with its tail facing the infant Jesus’ lips, a character that would represent Leonardo being whipped by the bird.

By working with a historical figure, as is the case of Leonardo da Vinci, this is an obvious limitation. Nonetheless, it still does not fail to point towards an obstacle which would permeate a great deal of psychoanalysis studies that are said to be applied. Freud was clearly aware of that and, as he did in his analysis of Michaelangelo, would recant at the final part of the text with the following words:

Even though the material we could resort to was very abundant and the psychic mechanisms could be used with maximum security, there are two

important points in which a psychoanalytic study cannot explain to use why it is so inevitable for a studied character to exactly follow this direction rather than any other We have to recognize here a margin of freedom that cannot be resolved by psychoanalysis any further. (Freud, 1910/1989b, p. 122)

There are no doubts this margin of error the psychoanalyst pointed out is also present in clinical psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, unlike what takes place in an applied psychoanalysis, the interpretation that is rendered in a clinic may be evaluated through other criteria, rather than just through the internal coherence of the argument following such intervention. An interpretation during analysis is not open to all senses, the reason why the results of an intervention do not necessarily meet the analyst's expectations, save the cases in which a suggestion is operated. Analysts cannot guide their interventions by following which is shown to be more convenient, as such convenience could inevitably guide the most competent of analysts in applied research.

In that sense, we may understand that the application of psychoanalysis as a means to produce knowledge cannot be seen as an unquestionable procedure, even though such thing can be done in a careful manner. Even though the details in marble of Michaelangelo's Moses can reveal something regarding its maker, are mute and cannot be compared with the vivacity of a slip a psychoanalyst has access to in his clinic. Conversely, the recognition of psychoanalytic concepts in an applied context, whether it is a work of art, a myth, or a biography, can be an instrument for the transmission of psychoanalysis, illustrating amidst a still-life picture what could be the case in speaking subjects.

Conclusion

Although Freud's summons for psychoanalysis applications to be expanded to beyond their fields of origin is unquestionable, the same author identifies the points through which the authentication of this procedure would go. In summary, we may say that the two problems that are fundamentally reaffirmed by him regard, on one side, to the matter of *strictness* and, on the other, to the matter of *value*.

Concerning the first, it is clear that, by thinking of the methodological strictness of those studies, Freud points towards something that goes beyond the mere identification of the theoretical consistency of them, something which cannot be accessible except from a very particular experience. In those terms, the application of the unconscious mind hypothesis - which is in the core of this extension of the domain of psychoanalysis to the field of the humanities - would find insurmountable limitations when performed in a context where speaking subjects are replaced by inanimate objects. In those cases, projection takes the place of transference and the unconscious mind replaces resistance, a situation that ends up leading analysts to the obscure field of the interpretation of meaning.

That is why a procedure such as this one would always involve the risks of arbitrariness, speculation, and dilettantism; that is, as it fails to truly shed light on the unconscious mind.

According to the procedure proposed by Max Graf for the application of psychoanalysis to literary works, analysts must start with what is repeated in a certain author's work, as the interpreter will be able to reach the unconscious mind through that analysis. In fact, as Lacan would later point out, it is within that repetition that Freud based his certainty regarding the unconscious mind: "the function of the return, *Wiederkehr*, is essential. . . . the same constitution of the unconscious mind field is ensured through *Wiederkehr*" (Lacan, 1964/1988, p. 50). He adds, however, that Freud "would not have been able to go ahead with that certainty bet if he had not been guided, as attested by the texts, by his self-analysis. The same could be said regarding Freud's experience with the clinical aspects of hysteria, an experience which would lead the Viennese neuropathologist to find out the transference and the repetition that mark the unconscious mind formations. It was, therefore, by taking the unconscious mind as an act, rather than as a theoretical abstraction to be applied, that the psychoanalytic experience could organize itself. Such note corroborates the idea that strictness, in regards to the unconscious mind, is more connected to the relationship between a researcher and the analytic experience than to the technical dimension of the research conducted.

Having that in mind, now shifting to the second matter announced, what guarantees the applied psychoanalysis works - as verified, for example, in the study on Gradiva - is its transmission value. From those, not only can a psychoanalyst expose the psychoanalytic theory in a fictional context, but they can also illustrate the dynamics of the psychoanalytic work from a simplified reality. We will never know whether the interpretation of Norbert Hanold's dreams and delusions is correct. Still, the exposure of those dreams and delusions, as well as the analysis work that is conducted regarding them, can be shown to be instructive, revealing itself to be a kind of allegory of the analytical work.

The transmission value of those works is therefore linked to their emitter; that is, to the analytical experience supporting them, but also to the receiver: the community which will either validate or not the transmission value of such work. In that sense, if we go back to the last reference made to the text on Leonardo, we may understand that coming across such translation mistake would not be capable, by itself, of disqualifying Freud's biographical analysis, as its transmission value would remain unchanged, even though its value in biographical terms is indeed damaged. Besides that, meeting with a *margin unresolved by psychoanalysis*, instead of disqualifying its application, authenticates it. That is so because the exploration of the unconscious mind hypothesis, in the narrow or broad sense of the psychoanalytic investigation, leads exactly to a limit that concerns the real aspect which distinguishes it from a speculative deviation.

A noção de psicanálise aplicada nos primeiros anos do movimento psicanalítico

Resumo: Levando em conta a inserção da psicanálise no contexto científico da segunda metade do século XIX, o objetivo deste artigo será discutir a noção de psicanálise aplicada sustentada por Freud e seus pares nos primeiros anos do movimento psicanalítico. Para tal serão consultados trabalhos considerados pelo movimento como *aplicados*, assim como algumas contribuições de caráter metodológico, todos publicados durante este período inicial da história da psicanálise. Cabe ressaltar que, neste artigo, será priorizado o estudo das fontes primárias ligadas ao debate em questão.

Palavras-chave: psicanálise aplicada, método psicanalítico, história da psicanálise.

La notion de psychanalyse appliquée dans les premières années du mouvement psychanalytique

Résumé: En tenant compte de l'inclusion de la psychanalyse dans le contexte scientifique de la seconde moitié du XIX^{ème} siècle, l'objectif de cet article est de discuter la notion de psychanalyse appliquée soutenue par Freud et ses pairs dans les premières années du mouvement psychanalytique. À cette fin, ils seront consultés les travaux considérés par le mouvement psychanalytique comme *appliqués*, ainsi que des contributions de nature méthodologique, tous publiés au cours de cette période initiale de l'histoire de la psychanalyse. On remarque que cet article donnera la priorité à l'étude des sources primaires liées au débat en question.

Mots-clés: psychanalyse appliquée, méthode psychanalytique, histoire de la psychanalyse.

La noción de psicoanálisis aplicado en los primeros años del movimiento psicoanalítico

Resumen: Teniendo en cuenta la inserción del psicoanálisis en el contexto científico de la segunda mitad del siglo XIX, este artículo tiene el propósito de discutir la noción de psicoanálisis aplicado iniciada, desde principios del siglo XX, por Freud y sus colegas en los primeros años del movimiento psicoanalítico. Para ello se consultarán los trabajos considerados como *aplicados* por dicho movimiento y algunos aportes de carácter metodológico, todos publicados durante este período inicial de la historia del psicoanálisis. Este artículo dará prioridad al estudio de las fuentes primarias relacionadas con el debate en cuestión.

Palabras clave: psicoanálisis aplicado, método psicoanalítico, historia del psicoanálisis.

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