"Rewriting psychoanalysis in the light of ethological principles"[1]: On the relevance of

Attachment Theory to the psychoanalytic field
"Reescrevendo a psicanálise à luz dos

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Attachment theory is extremely important today, not only within psychology, but also in several other fields, such as psychiatry. John Bowlby, its creator, stated several times that his main theoretical basis was the work of Freud. However, the conceptual relationship between psychoanalysis and attachment theory is not universally agreed upon among researchers. In this article, we try to contribute to this discussion by analyzing Bowlby's vocabulary, or rather, by analyzing the evolution of his vocabulary. If this author used a Freudian, psychoanalytic terminology

[1] The inspiration from the title is derived from a literal part of a phrase located in van der Horst (2011, p. 17).

[2] This study refers to a deepening of the present interest of both authors, but which do not directly relate to the main argument to be developed in their theses. An outline of the text developed here was presented at the 41st Conference of the European Society for the History of the Human Sciences, held at the Sigmund Freud Privat Universität Berlin, between August 30th and September 2nd, 2022.

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until the end of the 1950s, by the end of the 1960s (when he began to publish his famous trilogy) there was no longer any trace of Freudian vocabulary in his work. Is belonging to a discursive field sustainable under these conditions?

Keywords: Attachment theory, psychoanalysis, vocabulary, discursive field

Introduction

According to John Bowlby, the Attachment Theory's proposition (*Attachment and Loss*) began in 1956, with its content consisting of an expansion and elaboration of some articles produced between 1958 and 1963 (Bowlby, 1969/1982). In 1969 Bowlby published the first volume from the trilogy, where can be located the cornerstones of a model that wielded, since that, a colossal influence in the Developmental Psychology, childcare, and Psychiatry fields (Rosabal-Coto et al., 2017).

In the volume *Attachment*, one can find the pillars on which the Bowlbyan conception of the baby's first tie to their caregivers was grounded. Contact with studies of ethology and other disciplines provided a model for the theory that Bowlby had been trying to conceive.[3] Underpinned by observational third-party studies about four species of primates, Bowlby draws interspecific similarities in offspring's behavior and the maternal care between human species and these primates (Bowlby, 1969/1982, p. 181)[4]. According to Bowlby, this intraspecific regularity and the interspecific similarities would be the instinctive behavior of the offspring towards

[3] As we know, attachment theory was not developed solely by Bowlby. A network of researchers, mostly from outside psychoanalysis, contributed directly to the formulation of the theory, either with research in Bowlby's own group at Tavistock (such as Mary Ainsworth, James Robertson and Christoph Heinicke) or with work carried out in other laboratories (Harry Harlow, Nikolaas Tinbergen, Robert Hinde and Konrad Lorenz) (Van der Horst, 2011).

[4] All cited texts were read in the original: Bowlby in English, Freud in German and Foucault in French. When we quoted Foucault literally, we chose to translate the passage from French to English. In Freud's case, we used the *Standard Edition* and always refer to it together with the edition of the *Gesammelte Werke*, citing it in the format: edition, volume, pagination.

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the mother. Bowlby proposed that the tie of the child to his mother is not originated from his *dependence* on physiological gratification but would rather have an instinctive character and a biological function as well. So, for Bowlby, *attachment* should be a more profitable term to refer to this primeval tie instead of the consecrated term *dependence* (Bowlby, 1969/1982, p. 227). In this way, the child-mother tie results from *behavioral systems* whose predicted outcome, when active, is to approach or maintain proximity to attachment figure (mother) to provide security (Bowlby, 1969/1982, p. 178).

The criticism of what Bowlby called the "Secondary Impulse Theory" in Freud's theory and the proposition of the concept of attachment to the detriment of dependence is central both in Bowlby's conception and in terms of understanding Bowlby's relationship with psychoanalysis. This brings us to the next question. But where did this theory find its theoretical roots? According to Bowlby himself (1969/1982), his main theoretical reference was *Freudian theory*. In the preface to the first English edition of *Attachment* and in the first part of it (*The Task*), Bowlby elaborated an overview of Freudian theory, weaving his conceptions about it and proposing conceptual and methodological changes to psychoanalysis.

As is known, after becoming a psychiatrist, Bowlby began his psychoanalytical training in London, under the guidance of Melanie Klein, Joan Rivière, and other prominent members of the British Psychoanalytical Society (van Dijken et al., 1998). Soon, however, he came into conflict with the prevailing (Kleinian) point of view in society, which in his perspective reinforced (or even saw nothing but) the internal, mental, fantasy side of the child's psychic development. Bowlby then headed to Tavistock, an institute known for its unorthodoxy, where he began to develop a view quite different from the prevailing (Kleinian) view. Moreover, in his scientific meetings, Bowlby had a group composed not only of psychoanalysts but also of ethologists, experimental psychologists, biologists, and even behaviorists (van der Horst, 2011). This series of studies led to what we know as Attachment Theory, finally formalized in his famous trilogy.

The subject of the pertinence of the theory created by Bowlby to the psychoanalytical field has generated discussions at least since 1960 when he presented the work "The child tie to his mother" (Bowlby, 1958) to the British Psychoanalytical Society, which reverberated in a negative reception from important members (A. Freud, 1960; Spitz, 1960). Anna Freud (1960) commenting on the use of the concept of narcissism, drew attention to the fact that Bowlby does not consider it from the metapsychological point of view:

"Metapsychologically speaking, the concept of infantile narcissism refers not to behavior but to an early phase of libido distribution and organization" (A. Freud, 1960, p. 56). According to her, it is metapsychology, the "consummation" of the entire psychoanalysis, that is here misinterpreted. Step in the same direction, although in the contemporary context is Zepf's (2006) reading: "Bowlby argues exclusively within a behavioural framework and reduces psychic processes and the representational world — the real object of psychoanalysis — either to passive epiphenomena of biological processes with no influence whatsoever, or he disregards them totally" (p. 1537).

However, most discussions in the History of Psychoanalysis field (or Clinical Psychoanalysis), like that of Fonagy (2001), Gullestad (2001) and Golse (2020), conceives psychoanalysis as a theory that has been developed continuously after Freud: as if there were only one psychoanalysis, with Freud constituting its starting point, but in which, regarding some concepts or techniques, he had already been surpassed or improved by other psychoanalysts. In this perspective, they advocate a conciliation between Attachment theory and Freudian theory, without previously questioning and studying the nature of Bowlby's appropriation of Freud. Despite considering the different theories allocated under the aegis of a psychoanalytic perspective, we seriously question this type of approach to the epistemological and conceptual study of the history of psychoanalysis: it unequivocally amalgamates quite different lines of psychoanalysis among themselves. Furthermore, it places Freud in a position of "archaism" and, consequently, her successors as having helped her to progress. Such a methodological and epistemological approach has been criticized for some decades both in the field of history and epistemology of science, insofar as history is narrated in a linear, continuous manner, as if the temporal succession of discourses in the field of science always happened towards the progress of the field, cumulatively (Foucault, 1968/1994a; Kuhn, 1962/2011)[5].

One can note, therefore, that there is no consensus among commentators and researchers in this regard. In this work, we will try to contribute to the discussion, but not through solely conceptual or theoretical reading. Instead,

[5] "Besides, as a historian, I am impressed with the implausibility of the view. I do not doubt, for example, that Newton's mechanics improves on Aristotle's and that Einstein's improves on Newton's as instruments for puzzle-solving. But I can see in their succession no coherent direction of ontological development" (Kuhn, 1962/2011, p. 206).

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our approach will focus also on Bowlby's *vocabulary* over time. To achieve this, we will start from the point of view that the psychoanalytic field is not constituted by a *single* theory, nor by a *single* point of view; we conceive psychoanalysis (and other disciplines), rather, as a *discursive field* [champ discursive], as defined by Foucault (1969/1994b). It is notable that, after the death of its founder (namely, Freud), there has been such a ramification of concepts, methods, and debates within this field. Thus, a discursive field is not defined by conceptual homogeneity or by consensus among its affiliates, but rather by *a set of methods, objects, and concepts* to be employed by them.

When discussing the "jeux de vérité", Foucault (1984/1994c) emphasizes what he calls *problematization*: every discursive field introduces *problems* to be faced, which perhaps are not even considered in other fields. The subject of knowledge and object of knowledge, in this perspective, are founded concomitantly: an *object* to be studied is born parallel to the subject whose task is to know it. Concomitantly, the *conceptual tool* is developed, which constitutes the *lexicon* used in that field, in addition to the *methodological* arsenal, that is, the set of practical tools that make possible the investigation of the objects erected as such.

If it is quite reasonable that the problem faced by Bowlby (that of the primordial bond between the mother and the baby) is psychoanalytic or even Freudian, the same cannot be said with so much certainty about his language. Firstly, studying the development of the vocabulary employed by Bowlby, one notices that his terminology has undergone important changes over the years. Van der Horst (2011) already highlighted this change in "From Psychoanalysis to Ethology: Unravelling the Roots of Attachment Theory". We intend to take this cue from the Dutch researcher and investigate further the fact he attested. To accomplish this, we will collate Bowlby's writings from distinct years regarding the *same object*. The modification, sometimes radical, of its vocabulary will then become evident. It will also be important to study, albeit briefly, the *methodological* transformation undertaken by Bowlby so that our terminological analysis can be refined. Finally, by way of conclusion, we will return to Foucauldian concepts, especially that of discipline (as a field of knowledge or discursive field); in doing so, our aim will be to delve deeper into the question of the pertinence of attachment theory formulations to the discipline of psychoanalysis.

It will not be a question, therefore, of uttering a high-sounding "Yes" or a resolute "No" to the question always raised ("Does attachment theory really belong to psychoanalysis?"), but of reassessing this field called

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psychoanalysis, which appears to us to be so little heterogeneous in its not only multiple but also sometimes contradictory ramifications.

Lexical transformations

Metapsychology, like any abstract and universal conceptual formalization, has its own lexicon. By using this lexicon, an author attests to his (at least partially) affiliation to this discursive field. It cannot be in vain, therefore, that Bowlby's vocabulary became less and less psychoanalytic over the years. In 1951, in his report to World Health Organization (WHO)[6], Bowlby used terms like "ego", "superego" and "object" (in a metapsychological sense); in 1958's paper he still draws on terms like "identification", "ego" and "superego", but very few times (Bowlby, 1958, p. 365, for example); in 1960, the term "repression" appears to expatiate on differences between normal and pathological (Bowlby, 1960, p. 109), but again it is a rare use. However, in *Attachment* (1969/1982), this vocabulary is totally absent: the psychoanalytic lexicon gives way to the vocabulary of ethology and behavioral sciences.

This turning-point towards the ethological lexicon over the years is well exemplified when we collate Bowlby's descriptions of *sensitive periods* over time. In the 1951's report, the *critical periods* are described in psychoanalytical terms:

> Ego and super-ego development are thus inextricably bound up with the child's primary human relationships; only when these are continuous and satisfactory can his ego and super-ego develop. In dealing here with the embriology of the human mind one is struck by a similarity with the embryological development of the human body, during the course of which undifferentiated tissues respond to the influence of chemical organizers. If growth is to proceed smothly, the tissues must be exposed to the influence of the appropriate organizer at certain critical periods. In the same way, if mental development is to proceed smoothly, it would appear to be necessary for the undifferentiated psyche to be

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[6] Due to the large number of orphaned and homeless children after the Second World War, in 1948 the World Health Organization decided to commission a report on the socio-emotional effects caused by the war on these children. To this end, John Bowlby was invited to carry out the research and report (Bowlby, 1952).

exposed during certain critical periods to the influence of the psychic organizer — the mother. (Bowlby, 1952, p. 53)

In *Attachment*, however, the definition of the sensitive period will be presented as a generalization from ethological studies; since attachment is a biological system, the structure of this system will be provided by a particular kind of environment in which it is adapted, called "system's environment of adaptedness" (Bowlby, 1969/1982, p. 46). Here, the psychoanalytic vocabulary is totally elided (Bowlby, 1969/1982), as we note in the following excerpt:

> That there are sensitive periods in human development seems more than likely. Until far more is known about them it is wise to be cautious and to assume that the more the social environment in which a human child is reared deviates from the environment of evolutionary adaptedness (which is probably father, mother, and siblings in a social environment comprising grandparents and a limited number of other known families) the greater will be the risk of his developing maladaptive patterns of social behaviour. (p. 165)

Note that the theme and general meaning remain the same. In both cases, the central thesis of Bowlby's persists, that the presence of the mother figure in the first years of life is crucial for the proper development of the child (van der Horst, 2011; van Dijken et al., 1998); what changes is the framework through which Bowlby conceptualizes this importance. From 1951, a year considered by van der Horst (2011) to be an "Archimedean Point" in the history of Attachment Theory[7], Bowlby completely reforms his "toolbox". In 1951, maternal deprivation was considered pernicious because it exposed the baby to the absence of an adequate "psychic organizer" for the "embryological development of the mind", that is the development of the *ego* and the *superego*, to be successful. Already in 1969, there is no reference to Freudian psychic instances: the theoretical framework has been transformed, and maternal deprivation is read as responsible for withdrawing the baby from a "medium of evolutionary adaptability" considered ideal for its species (the family, with emphasis on the maternal figure).

Other concepts or terms, when compared longitudinally in Bowlby's work, provide arguments for such a statement: the more his theory took on its

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[7] "If we consider the pre-1951 period as the psychoanalytic phase of John Bowlby's career, then the period between 1951 and 1969 can perhaps best be defined as the "ethological era of attachment theory" (van der Horst, 2011, p. 2).

own contours, the more Bowlby moved away from the psychoanalytic lexicon and got closer to the conceptual framework of other disciplines and theoretical fields, such as ethology and the theory of control systems. In 1951, in the WHO report, the developmental "failure" in a baby younger than three years old exposed to the loss or separation of the maternal figure takes the following form:

> The failure of ego development in deprived children is perhaps more easily understood when it is considered that is the mother who in the child's earliest years fulfils the functions of his ego and super-ego. (…) The case of the child who has a good relation with his mother for a year or two and then suffers deprivation may be rather different. He has passed through the first phase of social development, that of establishing a relationship, and the trauma affects the second phase in which, though ego and super-ego development is procee-ding apace, the child's awareness of his relative lack of skill in these matters is reflected in his limpet-like attachment to his mother, to whom he constantly look for help. (Bowlby, 1952, pp. 55-56)

In the second volume of the trilogy, Separation, Bowlby develops the question of the importance of maternal presence in other terms. It will be from these experiences of accessibility and inaccessibility of the attachment figure, and the consequent degree of susceptibility to fear caused by strange situations, that the child will build *working models of attachment figures and self* (Bowlby, 1973).

> The states of mind with which we are concerned can conveniently be described in terms of representational or working models. (...) each individual builds working models of the world and of himself in it, with the aid of which he perceives events, forecasts the future, and constructs his plans. In the working model of the world that anyone builds, a key feature is his notion of who his attachment figures are, where they may be found, and how they may be expected to respond. Similarly, in the working model of the self that anyone builds a key feature is his notion of how acceptable or unacceptable he himself is in the eyes of his attachment figures. On the structure of these complemen-tary models are based that person's forecasts of how accessible and respon-sive his attachment figures are likely to be should he turn to them for support. (Bowlby, 1973, p. 202)

In this passage all the Freudian vocabulary employed by Bowlby twenty years earlier is absent. Furthermore, if Bowlby speaks here of the construction of a "self-model", the Freudian concepts that could be related to this (fantasy, desire, impulse, Oedipus complex, etc.) are not present; we find, rather,

a kind of printing, in the mental field, of what happens to the baby in the sphere of bonding relationship with the mother (that is, the attachment pattern developed by the dyad would be transposed, would be traced in the model of self within the child's mind). It is a theory that abdicates Freudian concepts; when one reads such a passage, one can hardly notice that its author had psychoanalytic training.

This shift becomes more evident in the third volume of the trilogy. At the beginning of the Chapter 4 ("An Information Processing Approach to Defense"), Bowlby points out with whom and with which conceptual tools he is in dialogue to build his "theory of defence":

> Although here and there comparisons are made between the present theory and certain of Freud's concepts of defence and mental structure, for reasons of space no systematic attempt is made to relate the two models. *The conceptual tools on which I draw have been made available by students of human information processing. These tools enable us to examine defensive phenomena from a new point of view, to collect data more systematically and to formulate hypotheses in a language shared by other behavioural scientists.* (Bowlby, 1980, p. 43)

Indeed, Bowlby's proposition is completely grounded in the "human information processing" referential: he resorts to studies on episodic and semantic storage and exclusion of information to deepen his theory of how operates the deactivation of the attachment system.

> There are two situations of that kind that are especially germane to my thesis. The first is when a child's attachment behaviour is strongly aroused and when, for any reason, it is not responded to and terminated. In these circumstances the child protests more or less violently and is much distressed. Should the situation recur frequently and for long periods, not only is distress prolonged but it seems that the systems controlling the behaviour ultimately become deactivated. (…) The deactivation of systems mediating attachment behaviour, thought and feeling, appears to be achieved by the defensive exclusion, more or less complete, of sensory inflow of any and every kind that might activate attachment behaviour and feeling. The resulting state is one of emotional detachment which can be either partial or complete. (Bowlby, 1980, pp. 68-69)

Attachment system deactivation is directly related to representational models of the self. In the case of a representational model erected by a child with an insecure attachment, detachment has an adaptive function by protecting the child from the rejection suffered and the anxiety that this situation arises (cf. Bowlby, 1980, p. 73). Bowlby sees in this the

adaptive value that, in his conception, distances his theory from "traditional psychoanalysis":

> In considering whether defensive exclusion is biologically adaptive the relevant criterion is whether it contributes in any way to the individual's surviving and leaving viable offspring. 11. [11. This, of course, is a very different criterion to those traditionally adopted by psychoanalysts which are concerned either with the distribution of psychic energy or else with the degree of mental pain experienced]. (Bowlby, 1980, p. 71)

Despite that, and despite the declaration that his conceptual tools are provided by human information processing, Bowlby in the chapter is always comparing his proposition with "traditional psychoanalysis". He also adopts a conciliatory tone between his proposition [non-traditional psychoanalysis? scientifical psychoanalysis?] and the traditional one:

> Various views have been advanced to account for this state of affairs. One view, prominent in traditional psychoanalytic theorizing, postulates that a young child is unable to accommodate within a single image the parent's kindly treatment of him as well as any less favourable treatment he may receive or, much emphasized by some theorists, is disposed to imagine. A second view is that a young child, being totally dependent on his parents' care, is strongly biased to see them in a favourable light and so to exclude contrary information. (…) *Since these explanations are not mutually exclusive*, it is possible that each of the factors postulated makes some contribution. In evaluating the probable role of each, however, I believe such evidence as there is strongly favours the last, namely the role of parental pressure, and gives least support to the traditional view. (Bowlby, 1980, p. 70)

In his conception, the references are not mutually excluding, that is, the two theoretical and conceptual references are compatible. It is possible to argue that for Bowlby the transformation operated in his theory does not remove it from the psychoanalytic field, but it provides a preferable and more scientific alternative for this subject within the field. This hypothesis is strengthened when we note that Bowlby (1981) in "Psychoanalysis as a Natural Science" reiterates his intention to "promote" psychoanalysis to a scientific statute and reaffirms his belonging to this field, even if under the guise of non-traditional:

> Suffice it to say, therefore, that the procedures that I believe psychoanalysts will be wise to employ and the criteria to which *our science* should strive to conform are close to those adopted by our neighbours in the biological sciences. *The conceptual framework I have sketched serves, I believe, to*

accommodate a substantial proportion of the data psychoanalysis has selected as within its domain. The framework has the advantage of being compatible with evolutionary biology and neurophysiology and promises greater economy and internal consistency than do traditional ones. (p. 501).

By pushing psychoanalysis to the status that Freud wanted for it (the status of natural science), Bowlby patently distanced himself from Freud's vocabulary; by saying he wanted to make psychoanalysis more scientific, Bowlby was moving outside of psychoanalysis.

Question of method

After all, as we have seen when one comes across expressions like "environment of evolutionary adaptedness" and "maladaptive patterns of social behaviour", it seems very clear that Bowlby is situated in a field alien to the psychoanalytic one. It is not too bold to assert that the whole Attachment Theory, in its definitive form, *can be completely understood without any reference to Freud*, something that, according to van der Horst (2011), had been said to Bowlby by Hinde.[8] Despite his *question* having a Freudian origin or basis, all his theorization, which seeks support in the concepts of ethology and behavioral sciences, undeniably departs from Freudian horizons.

Not seldom, however, Bowlby returns to Freud, to reconcile with his theory, more than that, with the open intention of making psychoanalysis more scientific. Therefore, there is not only a change in vocabulary, for Bowlby also proposes an extensive *methodological* change to psychoanalysis, aiming that it be more fully *scientific*. In the first chapter of his 1969 book (*Attachment*), called *Point of View*, Bowlby exposes his criticisms of the method employed by Freud. According to Bowlby (1969/1982), Freud starts from certain data (dreams, neurotic symptoms), to build thereafter hypotheses about their origins: "But, although in his search for explanation he was in

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[8] "Hinde later confessed that "that was almost a joke between John and me. When I was reading the manuscript of his books, I said, what do you want to say with all this stuff about psychoanalysis anyway?" Of course, at that point Bowlby was trying to sell his ethologically oriented version of psychoanalytic theory to the psychoanalytic world. (…) Bowlby "was not just defending his back against psychoanalytic criticism, he was producing a true amalgam" (Hinde, 2005, p. 9 as cited in Van der Horst, 2011, pp. 95-96).

each case led to events of early childhood, he himself only rarely drew for his basic data on direct observation of children" (pp. 1-2). That is, for Bowlby, the Freudian theory of infantile sexuality, although correct in many points, was nothing but a hypothetical reconstruction with no direct empirical basis: "the result is that most of the concepts that psychoanalysts have about early childhood have been arrived at by a process of historical reconstruction based on data derived from older subjects" (Bowlby, 1969/1982, pp. 1-2).

His methodological attitude is then markedly opposed to that of Freud:

> Using as primary data observations of how very young children behave in defined situations, an attempt is made to describe certain early phases of personality functioning and, from them, to extrapolate forwards. In particular, the aim is to describe certain patterns of response that occur regularly in early childhood and, thence, to trace out how similar patterns of response are to be discerned in the functioning of later personality. (Bowlby, 1969/1982, p. 3)

Bowbly's conclusion (1969/1982): "the change in perspective is radical. It entails taking as our starting point, not this or that symptom or syndrome that is giving trouble, but an event or experience deemed to be potentially pathogenic to the developing personality" (p. 3). Here another striking difference between Freudian and Bowlbyan methods comes into the scene: while Freud starts from psychopathological or "flawed" materials (symptoms, dreams, involuntary gestures and lapses of speech) and aims to deduce their origins, Bowlby starts from potentially pathogenic data, to then describe the psychological and psychopathological processes that commonly result therefrom. In his 1960 article, Bowlby argues that Freud, in his *medical* practice, had access primarily to the *results* of processes, as is customary, according to him, in the history of medicine: "always in the history of medicine it is the end result of a pathological sequence which is first to be noted" (Bowlby, 1960, p. 91). Thus, there would be an "inverse recognition" in time, in the sequence of processes. What Bowlby intends to do, therefore, is to "fix" this inversion: no longer to rely upon psychopathological data to, by a *retrospective* deduction, abstractly reconstruct their origins in time, but rather to collect immediate empirical data to, by a *prospective* deduction, predict and prevent possible future psychopathological results.

> Where the historical method is weak, however, that of the natural sciences is strong. As is well known, scientific method requires that, having examined our problem, we frame one or more hypotheses regarding the causes of the events in which we are interested, and do so in such a way that from them testable predictions can be deduced. (Bowlby, 1969/1982, p. 8)

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Thus, Bowlby (1969/1982) intends to "adequate" psychoanalysis to a "full status as one of the behavioural sciences" (p. 8). And that is, moreover, a very specific model of science: the Popperian model. It is 1969, and the debates of philosophers of science are fervent and frequent, but none other than Popper is cited by Bowlby: "as Popper (1934) has argued, what distinguishes a scientific theory from other sorts of theory is not how it originates but the fact that it can be and is tested, not only once but over and over again" (Bowlby, 1969/1982, p. 18). It is not difficult to notice the great rhetorical charge that permeates Bowlby's discourse: "as you know, the scientific method…"; "as Popper has argued…". Bowlby uses "as you know" as if we all knew something, as if that something was peacefully and solidly established for everyone. However, the fact is that the Popperian model, albeit it indeed is one of the most important ways of conceptualizing science that was developed in the 20th century, is not a unanimous model in the Philosophy of Science. It suffices to mention Kuhn (1962/2011) and Feyerabend (1975/2011), whose works — largely divergent from those of Popper — were then amply divulged and known, for us to remind the reader of the absence of unanimity within the area.In this methodological exposition, there are some other rhetorical blows to be mentioned. To intend to adapt psychoanalysis as a true "behavioural science" is not an attitude that would be accepted without discussion in the psychoanalytical field. After all, it is not unanimous that psychoanalysis belongs to the behavioral sciences, although it deals with varied "behaviors". In 1960, for instance, while citing two of the psychoanalytical hypotheses regarding the greater or lesser intensity of separation anxiety (from Freud and Klein), Bowlby (1960) asserts: "Since with our present research techniques there is no way of determining differences in constitutional endowment, the first pair [of hypotheses] unavoidably remain untested (though of course not disproved)" (p. 106). That is, for him, there must be *empirical tests* for the hypotheses — and here one notices this other scientific model that is imposed (or that he tries to impose) to psychoanalysis.

13

In doing so, Bowlby operates two crucial methodological changes. The first one is the *abdication of psychopathological data*, a fact that he himself openly attests. In this regard, it is always convenient to remember the centrality of *disease* (and errors, deviances, anomalies) within Freudian theorization. One can read, already in 1890, in the text "Psychical (or mental) treatment" [Psychische Behandlung (Seelenbehandlung)], a sort of motto that will permeate Freud's entire theoretical production: "It is not until we have

studied pathological phenomena that we can get an insight into normal ones" (G.W. 5, p. 293; S.E. 7, p. 286). By altering the methodological starting point, Bowlby surreptitiously operates a simplification of Freudian methodology, since he reduces or summarizes the psychoanalytical method to a mere "retrospective method". This, however, is only partially correct. As Freud attests in 1923, "psychoanalysis" is not a univocal word, for it has three main meanings: it is not only a theorization based upon clinical empirical data but also an investigative method and a therapeutic method. Freudian theorization is indeed in part retrospective: it starts from what adults report during their sessions to reach an abstract reconstruction of the underlying mental processes, whose historical radices, it is presumed, lie in the infantile sexual life. But the Freudian investigative method is above all *interpretative*: listening to the adult's free associations implies having to *interpret* them, by discerning logical and temporal connections that the patient's ego cannot collect, due to the very factors that compelled him to disease (in Freud, due ultimately to repressive processes). It is Freud who says it with all the letters. By substituting hypnosis and catharsis with free association, a new investigative and therapeutic method was being founded, which Freud proposes in "Psychoanalysis and libido theory" [„Psychoanalyse" und „Libidotheorie"] to denominate "psychoanalysis":

> In the first resort, this psychoanalysis was an art of interpretation [*Deutung*] and it set itself the task of carrying deeper the first of Breuer's great disco- veries – namely, that neurotic symptoms are significant substitutes [*sinvoller Ersatz*] for other mental acts which have been omitted. It was now a question of regarding the material produced by the patients' associations as though it hinted [*hindeutete*] at a hidden meaning [*Sinn*] and of discovering that meaning [*Sinn*] from it. (G.W. 13, p. 215; S.E. 18, p. 239)

One may notice, therefore, what remains outside the Bowlbyan description of the Freudian method: the apprehension of *meanings*, the centrality and indispensability of *interpretation* within psychoanalysis. In this excerpt just quoted, the importance, for Freud, of interpretation and the vocabulary linked to it (*Deutung, hindeuten*) is manifest. What Bowlby proposes is indeed a total metamorphosis of the psychoanalytical method: it would cease to be clinical (and hence *interpretive*) to become *observational*. With that, meaning is elided — it is, besides, not even mentioned by Bowlby, as if it did not exist.

Conclusions

It is not merely the inclusion of an approach to phenomena under the aegis of biological science that would distance Bowlby from psychoanalysis when formulating Attachment Theory. Biology (and the theory of recapitulation, moreover) was already present in Bowlby's writings in 1951, as shown above, in his analogies with human embryology and in his use of the animal model to explain human behaviour in reaction to the separation of the maternal figure.[9] Just as biology was present in Freud as well, who came from the medical field, conversed with, and abstracted models from biology and medicine until the end of his life. In this paragraph, we reiterate the effort of Simanke (2014), Pedro de Souza (2022), and Paulo César de Souza (2010) in what is called by Simanke (2014) the "naturalization"[10] of Freudian theory, by rescuing its affiliation to the natural sciences field, which was elided by an effort to "refound Freudian theory on other bases (anthropological or linguistic ones, as happened, for instance, with Lacanian psychoanalysis)" (p. 78). Therefore, the matter here is not only the resource to other theories of the natural and exact sciences (such as the Theory of Control Systems and Ethology) but also a terminological transformation, the abandonment of concepts that define psychoanalysis as a theoretical field. All this concerns, after all, the affiliation to a certain theoretical discipline.

This is how Foucault (1971/2013) defines discipline (in the sense of a theoretical field): "(…) in a discipline (…) what is assumed at the start is not a meaning to be discovered, nor an identity to be repeated; it is, rather, what is required for the construction of new statements. For there to be discipline, there must therefore be the possibility of formulating, and of formulating indefinitely, new propositions" (p. 32). The starting point of a discipline, its condition of existence, is the possibility, within it, of formulating new

15

[9] For example, Bowlby presents a case of "maternal deprivation" in goats as it is found in Lidell's studies in order to reiterate his concept of maternal deprivation (Bowlby, 1952, p. 21).

[10] "It should be clarified that 'denaturalization' here specifically designates the effort to distance Freudian psychoanalysis from a biological foundation. Consequently, whenever we speak, hereafter, of a 'naturalization' of psychoanalytic concepts, the term will refer to a criticism of the interpretations that produce denaturalization in this restricted sense and the defense of the feasibility – as well as the philosophical and scientific interest – of a rapprochement between psychoanalysis and the biological sciences" (Simanke, 2014, p. 78).

propositions, something that is developed with reference to the conception of the "founder of discursivities" (*instaurateur de discursivités*) by Foucault. The creator of a discipline, the founder of a discursive field (as was Freud for Foucault), finds himself in a "transdiscursive" position:

> They have produced something more: the possibility and the rule of formation of other texts. In this sense, they are very different, for example, from an author of novels, who is never anything but the author of his own text. Freud is not simply the author of the Traumdeutung or of the Joke and its Relations to the Unconscious. (…) They have established an indefinite possibility of discourse, (…) they have made possible (and just as much) a certain number of differences. They have opened the space for something other than themselves and which, nonetheless, belongs to what they have found. (Foucault, 1969/1994b, pp. 803-804)

In this sense, it could be argued that Bowlby's discourse belonged to the psychoanalytical field, insofar as he proposed throughout his life to dialogue with Freud and to reformulate his theory and, therefore, to produce "difference" in the theoretical space, opened by Freud himself, within the psychoanalytical discipline. On the other hand, there is another point in Foucault's definition of discipline: the affiliation to certain discipline demands that certain conditions are fulfilled by the discourse that aims to integrate it:

> But furthermore, for a proposition to belong to botany or pathology, it must respond to conditions, in a sense stricter and more complex than the pure and simple truth: in any case, to other conditions. It must address a determined plane of objects: from the end of the 17th century, for example, for a proposition to be "botanical" it was necessary that it concerned the visible structure of the plant, the system of its close and distant resemblances to its fluids (…) However, without belonging to a discipline, a proposition must employ instruments or techniques of a well defined type; from the 19th century, a proposition was no longer medical, it fell "outside medicine" and gained the value of individual fantasy or popular imagination if it brought into play notions that were metaphorical, qualitative and substantial (like those of swelling, heated liquids or dry solids). (Foucault, 1971/2013, pp. 33-34)

For a proposition or a set of propositions to belong to a discipline, there must be pertinence to the set of objects and methods of such a discipline, and to the corpus of positions considered true, there must be some agreement to its techniques and instruments. We have seen how Bowlby transgressed almost all of these conditions for his theory to be considered within the scope of psychoanalysis: the "conceptual instruments" came mostly from

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natural sciences (which were alien to psychoanalysis) and *substituted* the basal concepts of psychoanalysis; the method was sacrificed as well, whilst he proposed a prospective approach to the detriment of the retrospective one in the analysis of pathology, and, mainly, when basic principles of the psychoanalytical technique were abandoned, such as transference, resistance, the interpretation of dreams and fantasies.

Nor was there, moreover, recognition by peers, i.e. by psychoanalysts, that Bowlby's theory belonged to the psychoanalytical discipline, a recognition that Foucault called, with reference to Canguilhem, as being *dans le vrai*, and which is an important requisite for a certain group of propositions to belong to a discursive field.[11] The criticisms by A. Freud (1960), Renè Spitz (1960), and Donnald Winnicott (cf. the overview outlined by van der Horst and van de Veer, 2009) of his 1960 article on the process of child mourning ("*Grief and Mourning in Infancy and Early Childhood*") are examples of Bowlby's alienation from Society. If before, in 1960, the discussions between Spitz and Anna Freud referred to responses to content actually presented within the British Psychoanalytical Society by Bowlby, currently there does not seem to be any dissemination or great repercussion of Attachment Theory in British Society. In the topic "Authors and Theorists" on the Society's official website, which contains a selection of 58 "authors and theorists from our society who have contributed to the development of psychoanalysis over the last hundred years", John Bowlby's name is not even mentioned.

Furthermore, some more current articles, when dealing with the relationship between psychoanalysis and the methods and therapeutic approaches derived from Attachment Theory, also demonstrate this departure (Eagle, 2006; Fonagy, 2001; Gullestad, 2001). From the descriptions of these authors, and from the analysis undertaken by Black (2019), it is noticeable how psychotherapies and practices based on Attachment Theory have their own methods, very particular measurement instruments (such as the Adult Attachment Interview), and a conceptual

17

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[11] "In short, a proposal must fulfil complex and heavy requirements to be able to belong to the whole of a discipline; before it can be said to be true or false, it must be, as M. Canguilhem would say, "in the true" ["dans le vrai"]. We have often wondered how the botanists or biologists of the 19th century could have managed not to see that what Mendel said was true. But it is that Mendel spoke of objects, implemented methods, placed himself on a theoretical horizon, which were foreign to the biology of his time. (…) Mendel was telling the truth, but he was not "in the true" with the biological discourse of his time (…)" (Foucault, 1971/2013, pp. 35-37).

work belonging to a field of its own (Attachment Theory). This method is quite different, even from "modern" Psychoanalysis in working with groups, as exposed by Black (2019). In fact, the model created by Bowlby, relating theories of control systems, precepts of ethology, and cognitive models, has applicability and recognition in other models of psychotherapy, epistemologically and methodologically distant from psychoanalysis, such as the Schema Therapy (Young et al., 2003, p. IX).

If we analyze closely, what Bowlby still kept intact from his first writings and which would affiliate him to psychoanalysis was the object, in the sense of the theme addressed or the problem faced (namely, the nature of the mother-infant bond). This leads us to question the limits of a discursive field and what defines psychoanalysis as a discursive field. Is affiliation to a discipline sustained under these conditions?

Thus, Bowlby is an important example of what might be called the *hybridity* of Freudian discourse. If initially limited to the psychopathological field, it soon spread to the field of the human psyche in general (a movement made by Freud himself in 1900 and 1901, when he applied the method used with neurotic symptoms to "normal" psychic phenomena such as dreaming, forgetfulness and the parapraxes). By doing so, nevertheless, Freud always defended that psychoanalysis belonged to the *Naturwissenschaften*, the "natural sciences". It did not take long, however, for the Freudian set of concepts to be employed also in the analysis of cultural phenomena, belonging to the fields of literature, mythology, linguistics, and anthropology. This movement was perpetrated not only by Freud but also by his disciples, already during the 1910s: not by chance, it is in 1912 that Otto Rank and Hanns Sachs (1912) founded the magazine *Imago*, destined for the applications of psychoanalysis to the *Geisteswissenchaften*, the "sciences of the spirit". Thus, since its first steps as an autonomous discipline, psychoanalysis remains at the crossroads that is usually called, since Ricœur (1965/2006), "energetic vs hermeneutics", studied in depth by Monzani (1989/2015).

Faced with this hybridity, however, Freud maintained his initial point of view: psychoanalysis would be a natural science, whose main object would be the unconscious. The development of post-Freudian psychoanalysis as a discipline, as a discursive field (in the Foucauldian sense), reveals a fragmentation of interests and directions: different psychoanalytic "schools" emerged, each one with their own central names (Klein, Winnicott, Lacan...), which not only contradict each other but do not seem to communicate

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with each other. Interestingly, almost all these schools agree on one point: psychoanalysis would be a *human science,*[11] which would have little dialogue with biology, physiology, and so on, but would rather communicate with linguistics, mythology, and literary studies. In this regard, Freud is openly contradicted, although part of the scope of his theorizing is maintained.

Bowlby emerges here as a separate case. He comes from psychoanalysis, takes up a Freudian *problem* (that of the mother-baby bond), but seeks answers to this problem *outside of the psychoanalytical field*. Bowlby more than once argues that Freud would not have avoided, if he were alive, utilizing the more recent data from biological sciences, and that the father of psychoanalysis had always defended the "natural" character of his science. In this matter, Bowlby is absolutely right. Amongst the "big names" of the psychoanalytical field, he might have been the only one to pay due attention to these words, repeatedly uttered by Freud himself. But it is quite probable that, by being faithful to Freud, Bowlby ceased to be Freudian.

19

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Abstracts

("Reescrevendo a psicanálise à luz dos princípios etológicos": sobre a pertinência da Teoria do Apego ao Campo Psicanalítico)

A teoria do apego é hoje extremamente importante não só dentro da psicologia, mas também em diversas outras áreas, como a psiquiatria. John Bowlby, seu criador, afirmou diversas vezes que sua principal base teórica era Freud. A relação conceitual entre psicanálise e teoria do apego, no entanto, não é algo consensual entre os pesquisadores. Neste artigo, tentamos contribuir para essa discussão ao analisar o vocabulário de Bowlby, ou melhor, ao analisar a evolução do seu vocabulário. Se até o início da década de 1950 ele ainda utilizava uma terminologia freudiana,

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psicanalítica, no final da década de 1960 (quando iniciará a publicação da sua famosa trilogia) não há mais nenhum sinal do vocabulário freudiano em sua obra. O pertencimento a um campo discursivo se sustenta nessas condições?

Palavras-chave: Teoria do apego, psicanálise, vocabulário, campo discursivo

("Réécrire la psychanalyse à la lumière des principes éthologiques": la pertinence de la théorie de l'attachement pour le champ psychanalytique)

La théorie de l'attachement est extrêmement importante aujourd'hui, non seulement en psychologie, mais aussi dans plusieurs autres domaines tels que la psychiatrie. John Bowlby, son créateur, a déclaré à plusieurs reprises que sa principale base théorique était celle de Freud. La relation conceptuelle entre la psychanalyse et la théorie de l'attachement, n'est cependant pas consensuelle parmi les chercheurs. Dans cet article, nous tentons de contribuer à cette discussion en analysant le vocabulaire de Bowlby, ou plutôt en analysant l'évolution de son vocabulaire. Si jusqu'au début des années 1950 il utilisait encore une terminologie freudienne, à la fin des années 1960 (lorsqu'il a commencé à publier sa célèbre trilogie) il n'y a plus aucun signe de vocabulaire freudien dans son œuvre. L'appartenance à un champ discursif se maintient-elle dans ces conditions?

Mots-clés: Théorie de l'attachement, psychanalyse, vocabulaire, champ discursif

("Reescribiendo el psicoanálisis a la luz de los principios etológicos": Sobre la pertinencia de la Teoría del Apego en el campo psicoanalítico)

La teoría del apego es importante actualmente no solo en la psicología, sino también en varias otras áreas, como la psiquiatría. Su creador John Bowlby afirmó reiteradamente que su principal base teórica era Freud. Pero, la relación conceptual entre el psicoanálisis y la teoría del apego no es un consenso entre los investigadores. En este artículo, se pretende contribuir a esta discusión con un análisis del vocabulario de Bowlby o más bien de la evolución de su vocabulario. Si a principios de la década de 1950 Bowlby todavía utilizaba una terminología freudiana, a finales de la década de 1960 (cuando comenzó a publicar su famosa trilogía) ya no hay rastro del vocabulario freudiano en su obra. ¿Es posible sostener la pertenencia a un campo discursivo en estas condiciones?

Palabras clave: Teoría del apego, psicoanálisis, vocabulario, campo discursivo

ARTICLES

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