

Methodology in Psychoanalytic Research: From Transference Flows to Lineages of Affiliation

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Abstract: The presence of psychoanalytic theory in Brazilian Universities is no surprise; however, the creation of Graduate Programs in psychoanalysis has highlighted the issue of research. This paper comes to join the debate on the legitimacy of academic research in psychoanalysis in Brazil, especially regarding its methodological specificity. In highlighting four historical moments, we sought to identify transference flows, which cross the analyzed texts, and to outline lineages of affiliation related to academic research in this discipline. Although the psychoanalytic method escapes the demands of university, psychoanalysts engage in efforts to propose methodologies with their own theoretical and clinical assumptions. The presence of psychoanalysis in Brazilian academy has allowed advances that would otherwise have been impossible given the differences between the demands of university and psychoanalytic institutions.

Keywords: psychoanalysis, method, universities, research

A Metodologia na Pesquisa Psicanalítica: Dos Fluxos Transferenciais às Linhagens de Filiação

Resumo: Que a teoria psicanalítica está presente, há algum tempo, nas Universidades brasileiras, não surpreende ninguém. Todavia, o surgimento de Programas de Pós-Graduação específicos em Psicanálise evidenciou a problemática da pesquisa. O presente trabalho se junta à discussão sobre a legitimidade da pesquisa acadêmica em psicanálise no Brasil, em especial naquilo que concerne à especificidade metodológica do campo psicanalítico. Sublinhando quatro momentos históricos, este estudo teve como objetivos identificar o que os autores chamaram de fluxos transferenciais, que atravessam os textos analisados, e delinear linhagens de filiação do modo de investigar academicamente em tal disciplina. Apesar do método psicanalítico escapar à demanda da Universidade, há um esforço por parte dos psicanalistas em apresentar metodologias com seus pressupostos teórico-clínicos próprios. Observou-se que o fato da psicanálise estar presente na academia brasileira, permitiu avanços que de outro modo não seriam possíveis, dada a diferença de registros entre as exigências da Universidade e das instituições psicanalíticas.

Palavras-chave: psicanálise, método, universidades, pesquisa

La Metodología en la Investigación Psicoanalítica: De los Flujos Transferenciales a los Linajes de Filiación

Resumen: Que la teoría psicoanalítica esté presente, desde hace tiempo, en las universidades brasileñas, no sorprende. Pero, la aparición de Programas de Postgrado específicos de psicoanálisis ha puesto el problema de la investigación. El presente trabajo suma a la discusión sobre la legitimidad de la investigación académica en psicoanálisis en Brasil, especialmente lo que se refiere a la especificidad metodológica del campo psicoanalítico. Subrayando cuatro momentos históricos, sus objetivos fueron identificar lo que los autores denominaron flujos transferenciales, que atraviesan los textos analizados, y delinear líneas de filiación del modo de hacer investigación académica en dicha disciplina. Aunque el método psicoanalítico escapa a la demanda de la Universidad, existe un esfuerzo de los psicoanalistas para presentar metodologías con sus propios supuestos teórico-clínicos. Observó que estar presente en la academia brasileña, permitió avances que de otra manera serían imposibles, dada la diferencia de registros entre las demandas de la Universidad y las instituciones psicoanalíticas.

Palabras clave: psicoanálisis, método, universidades, investigación

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By means of a reading operation, this paper resumes the academic literature on psychoanalytic research in Brazil within specific historical periods to explain its intrinsic relations, or its “transference flows.” Consequently, this

movement delineates “lineages of affiliation” regarding the contrasting ways of conducting research in this field.

Our guiding time frame enables a second look at what was already written on the topic, allowing us to simultaneously close gaps and give the topic a different contour. In other words, it is necessary to shift the discussion on ‘psychoanalysis and the university’ towards a setting in which we can operate with the existing products of this relationship.

Forerunners

Little more than thirty years separate us from the Graduate Program in Psychoanalytic Theory of the Institute of Psychology, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), the first Brazilian graduate program (PPG) that outlines a specific space for this theory within academia. Despite its attested presence within Brazilian universities, the importance of its implications allows us to consider this episode as an organizing milestone for the disputes concerning the legitimacy of academic research in psychoanalysis in Brazil.

More than a time frame, the creation of a PPG ‘in psychoanalysis’ bears the effects of an effort to formalize and articulate theory that, by pointing to a particular elaboration, would otherwise be impossible. In other words, the decision to leave the tutelage of other disciplines as a line of research and set up a proper program invited, and continues to invite, analysts to the debate.

Against this background this article, by highlighting four historical moments, identifies transference flows, which cross the texts analyzed, and outline lineages of affiliation of the academic research methodologies in this discipline.

Its foundation in 1988 opened a first moment of discussions between the late 1980s and early 1990s (Campos, 2021), which attempted to establish some bases for ‘research in psychoanalysis,’ or ‘psychoanalytic research’ proper. Those involved concerned themselves with justifying the relevance of psychoanalysis within academia, as well as asserting its specificities before the university’s demands, differentiating its research methodology.

Two events help us to locate the contributions of this period, especially those of three major Brazilian researchers on the subject: Joel Birman and Luiz Alfredo Garcia-Roza, who attended ANPEPP’s II Brazilian Symposium on Research and Scientific Exchange (National Association of Research and Graduate Studies in Psychology) in 1989, and the XVIII Latin American Congress of Psychoanalysis in 1990, from which derived the book “Investigação e Psicanálise” [Investigation and Psychoanalysis], where we find Renato Mezan’s contributions.

At this inaugural moment, Birman (1993, 1994) argues for the need to conceive of the clinic as an epistemological locus of psychoanalytic research, without this preventing its translation to other spaces. His proposal locates the clinic as the experimental field of psychoanalysis, without dissociating it from theory. Taking both as correlates, that is, the clinic not as a mere place for theory application but as a

proper analytical space, Birman examines which edges are capable of producing such a space.

He therefore differentiates between the clinic and the psychoanalytic experience, which will allow him to generalize the psychoanalytic method (Birman, 1994). Experience, in this case, would function as a backdrop for the varied clinical practice possibilities, “as long as the epistemological and ethical conditions for constructing the psychoanalytic space are recognized in this diversity” (Birman, 1994, p. 27).

In his words, “if we consider certain *basic coordinates* for constituting the psychoanalytic space, we will be able to define the fundamental conditions of psychoanalytic research in a much broader scope than might appear at first glance” (Birman, 1993, p. 23). It would suffice that intersubjectivity, as transference, speech and the field of language were placed as the basic coordinates of the truly analytical experience, that is, the emergence of its specific object, for the investigation to be considered psychoanalytical.

Such perspective is based on Freud’s (1912/2010) assertion that in psychoanalysis treatment and research coincide, and points to the attempt to establish methodological criteria within the field capable of supporting the specificity of its object. Despite making a certain distinction between experience and the clinic, what Birman interchangeably calls “psychoanalytic research” and “research in psychoanalysis” is a concept of research centered on the analytic clinic that elects transference as its privileged tool.

Garcia-Roza (1991), in turn, emphasizes its theoretical aspect. His considerations, however, necessarily concern ‘academic research,’ and not the investigation proper to the clinic. According to Garcia-Roza, “academic research in psychoanalysis cannot consist of empirical research (this would be specific to clinical practice; [...]); rather, it would have to be theoretical research” (p. 14). This differentiation is not explicit in Birman’s contributions (1993, 1994).

For Garcia-Roza, psychoanalysis, as a scientific discourse, would have an internal logic that ensures its conceptual cohesion, a condition that would make it possible to conduct scientific research, understood as fundamentally theoretical, guided by rigor and in terms of a return to the concepts and laws intrinsic to discourse, aiming to produce knowledge and/or transform it.

Garcia-Roza even proposes a term, or rather invents another meaning for an existing word, to outline a methodology consistent with the theory: rereading, an operation capable of constructing a different discourse from a text. Despite what the prefix ‘re-’ might imply, “rereading, unlike commentary, is not intended to *reveal*, but to *transform*” (Garcia-Roza, 1991, p. 16).

Considered as an appropriate method for research in psychoanalysis, rereading is based on the text’s *textuality* and on the concept as singularity. Conceived as: (a) possessing a history and a place; (b) answering a particular question; (c) taking into account an opponent, an Other intrinsic to the text and, (d) not as a mere formal abstraction, the concept is able to function like a capitone stitching, producing a knot in the

cascade of possible meanings in the signifying chain, called *textuality*.

Moreover, the author is concerned with differentiating research *in* psychoanalysis from research *on* psychoanalysis (Garcia-Roza, 1991), a distinction determined by whether the psychoanalytic method is used or not. Research *on* psychoanalysis, even if its content is a psychoanalytic concept, situation or theoretician, is not research *in* psychoanalysis, since its condition is that both content and method be psychoanalytical. Research *in* psychoanalysis has as its central aspect the ability to bring out the new, as opposed to simply confirming a given hypothesis. It is precisely this movement that would bring it closer to the investigation that takes place in the clinic (Garcia-Roza, 1991). When it comes to academic research, rereading would serve as a methodology capable of supporting this openness to the unprecedented, but it would not be the only one, as Garcia-Roza warns.

Still in this first moment, we also have Mezan's perspective (1993). According to the author, "research in psychoanalysis unfolds [...] into two branches: that which investigates the history of psychoanalytic [sic] ideas and that which investigates the psychic processes themselves" (p. 63). The first is linked to the university, and the second to the clinic. Although he makes this division, both, as well as intersecting, would present cumulative and communicable knowledge.

Starting from Laplanche's elaborations at Paris VII, Mezan (1993) points to a certain "requirement of thought" that should be present in research,

studied, but above all capture the directions in which this thought is impelled by its basic statements, by its postulates, and ultimately by theory, not just the search for rigor in elaborating hypotheses, respecting the author's thought of the truth that animates him and that, explicitly or implicitly, he aims to demonstrate (pp. 55-56).

This would be a way of reading psychoanalytic texts from within psychoanalysis itself, something akin to Garcia-Roza's (1991) rereading. Research in psychoanalysis, according to Mezan (1993), starts from accumulated knowledge, which both serves as a basis for exploration and generates discomfort in analysts insofar as it is unable to answer all the questions that arise in the clinic. In short, moved by the discomfort of not knowing, proper to the psychoanalytic device, the analyst seeks, through research, to tackle this conflict and in doing so is able to transform theory.

Despite some similarities, this proposal is different from Birman's (1994) and Garcia-Roza's (1991) propositions. By emphasizing that it is theory that provides the conditions of possibility for the clinic and that the university could function as a place of invention for psychoanalysis, Mezan distances himself from Birman. Likewise, his consideration of US-based German psychoanalyst Kohut's empirical

investigation as a type of research in psychoanalysis marks his difference from Garcia-Roza's theoretical conception

We posit that, even if it was not his intention, Mezan situates research in psychoanalysis between the perspectives of both authors, extracting from each of them its foundational point. In doing so, he articulates psychoanalytic knowledge and the "university model," insofar as

The opposition between an already fixed knowledge, to be disseminated in university courses, and a personal and non-transferable truth, to be discovered by each person in their own analysis, reveals itself, under scrutiny, to be a false alternative; neither is psychoanalytic knowledge so fixed, nor does personal truth canton itself in the sphere of the ineffable, of the insight obtained on the psychoanalyst's couch or elevator (Mezan, 1993, p. 53).

In summary, we have a clinical perspective with Birman, a call for theory in Garcia-Roza, and a theoretical-clinical articulation with Mezan. This does not mean that the first two disregard the other pole in question, only that it is clear where each one, at this point in their propositions, relies to a greater degree. On the other hand, it would be incorrect to claim that they lack common ground. Located within psychoanalytic theory, all of them, in their own way, pay attention to the role played by transference and unconscious knowledge in research production.

Methodology

Our argument here, as the result of a reading effort, is that the aforementioned concepts engender three 'lineages of affiliation' in what is understood, in Brazil, as a research method in psychoanalysis. We have decided to call as such the tradition of thought that crosses the later texts, and under which they will be affiliated. This is a somewhat vulgar appropriation of Harold Bloom's poetic theory, better known as "The Anxiety of Influence" (1973/2002). Vulgar because it is not our intention to take this theory to its ultimate consequences; what interests us is its general idea that there are no texts, only relations between them, in which a text emerges as a realization of the anxiety generated by the appropriation of a previous text.

We have not considered Bloom's (2003) considerations regarding Shakespeare's importance for all those who came after him, nor the tropes as mechanisms of misreading, but we do posit that, given the selection made here, the subsequent texts, by means of a reading operation, are different appropriations of the three perspectives previously presented which, in this regard, guide and articulate the debate. In order not to confuse the reader, and with the psychoanalytic framework in our favor, we have chosen to call this influence "transference flow," the operation responsible for creating and maintaining these "lineages of affiliation."

What we are outlining, therefore, is a device analogous to Bloom's which, using the theoretical framework of psychoanalysis, allows us to operate within the established scope, to produce a distinct reading of psychoanalysis research in Brazil. We do not intend to point out what "psychoanalytic research" *is*, but to establish, through a unique history of the debate on what would be considered proper psychoanalytic research in the Brazilian academic context, a new way of conceiving this discussion based on the categories of transference flow and lineage of affiliation.

Intermission

A second period of discussions followed this first moment in the late 1990s, when a certain debate reanimate the scene followed by a few productions during the first decade of the 2000s. We are referring in particular to what became known as the controversy between Luciano Elia and Waldir Beividas, recorded in the special issue on research in psychoanalysis of the journal *Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica* [Psychology: Reflection and Criticism], in 1999. Under the title "O excesso de transferência na pesquisa em psicanálise" [The excess of transference in psychoanalytic research], psychoanalytic research once again became an object of dispute.

Elia and Beividas not only resume the issue of transference in research, but also make a qualitative leap in that they establish a two-way questioning, requiring each of them to support the perspective being defended. The initial question, raised by Beividas (1999), concerned the way in which psychoanalysts linked themselves to the ideas of canonical authors, Freud and Lacan in particular, via transference to merely repeat their postulates, getting trapped in the authority logic of the *dixit* (said), that is, things are what they are because that is what Freud or Lacan said.

According to the author, this position would result from an excess of transference to the figure of the oracular Other, and its consequences could be felt both in the process of training analysts, with their sayings transformed into dogmas to be followed, and in research itself, especially in the difficulty of developing heuristic procedures capable of new discoveries within the field.

Having made this diagnosis, Beividas (1999) proposes two steps to overcome such gap, affiliating himself with Garcia-Roza's lineage. Initially, we would have to denounce this scenario, which would put us before the sophistry of submission to the master. Such denunciation should be accompanied by the elaboration of a

"return" to the fundamental lines of *structural episteme*, especially in how it provides for the gradual construction of a coherent and rigorous (meta-)language and method in conceptualizing the unconscious and its vicissitudes, in our case, *with* Freud and Lacan, and not necessarily *under* Freud or Lacan.

Influenced by the structural approach, this procedure would consist of two aspects: a new conception of scientific explanation, which would imply a greater rigor in research procedures — that is, the elimination of forced approximations, of too much reliance on intuition, etc.—, as well as the introduction of a new criterion of interest, based not on positivist experimentation, but on the conceptual framework of a given theory (Beividas, 1999).

Psychoanalysis should therefore "construct itself as a coherent, simple and exhaustive method, and as a well-formed conceptual language" (Beividas, 1999); however, the author warns that "these requirements are not a starting acquisition. They are an achievement of arrival" (Beividas, 1999). Like Garcia-Roza, Beividas' proposal not only crosses theory, but has the 'concept' as its fundamental hinge.

If for the former, the concept is that which is able to articulate the particularity of history with the universal of a theoretical system, the latter names it the structuring conceptualization. It

Introduces into the theory the need for a system of definitions based on a system of relations between concepts, or, in other words, it introduces into the theory the need for a relational language that enables a 'structural' arrangement between concepts (Beividas, 1999).

As a plausible alternative to submitting to the master's word, structuring conceptualization restores the structural value of theory and repositions truth in the investigative process. The authors' sayings no longer have the power of an oracle, any possibility of hiding behind these sayings is overturned, the truth becomes legitimized by the thing itself, since it "speaks of itself in its objectivity of structure" (Beividas, 1999).

We believe that this is a reading of Garcia-Roza's text. Beividas not only appeals to (meta)language as a device, but is taken by the former's desire for rigor, and in this established transference flow, his alternative follows the precursor's path, pointing to the 'concept' as solution.

In turn, Elia (1999) recalls the importance of transference in research, and does so based on what he also calls, following Birman, psychoanalytic experience. If transference is a condition for producing the subject of the unconscious in the clinic, so it would be in research. Disregarding it is to deal only with conscious knowledge, discarding what is most proper to the field, its unconscious part. Elia's argument is based on the same point used by his predecessor, namely the affluence established by Freud between treatment and research (Elia, 1999).

However, in defending the need for transference, Elia does so by questioning the idea of excess. According to him, such a concept lacks support, since there is no way of measuring or quantifying this type of bond. In response to Beividas' provocation, his solution consists of conceiving modalities of transference, with this "excess" being a category in which the subject is alienated in the figure of

the revealing Other. A transference that emerges as a way of accessing unconscious knowledge is one directed at the signifiers and not the authors (Elia, 1999). If, on the one hand, Beividas is part of the lineage started by Garcia-Roza, on the other, Elia adopts the same mechanisms used by Birman to defend his position.

Two other texts follow the debate. Lo Bianco's "Sobre as bases dos procedimentos investigativos em psicanálise" [On the bases of investigative procedures in psychoanalysis] (2003), starts with a brief overview of Anglo-American and Brazilian research to pinpoint what is proper to the research conducted in psychoanalysis. The path outlined by the author, which our work is close to, culminates in the realization, already pointed out by Freud, that research would consist of a two-way street between the clinic and theory.

Despite having the former as a specific feature and space for the emergence of its object, psychoanalysis does not dispense with theoretical elaboration (Lo Bianco, 2003). Lo Bianco supports a perspective that inscribes method and object in a space-time relationship typical of the field. In other words,

The unconscious is constituted, made present in the very act of listening to the analyst, in the very moment of the analyst's presence with his interlocutor. The specificity is given by the fact that, when the object is constituted, elaborated, given a certain consistency and mode of operation, it is in this same movement that its research method is conceived (Lo Bianco, 2003, p. 119-120).

Through Birman's perspective, she locates the clinic as the founding device of research, and clinical material as the privileged source for its realization. Both, like Elia, rely on Freudian metapsychology, understanding it as the result of a back and forth between the clinic and theory, insofar as practice allows for the emergence of what has not yet been elaborated by abstraction. Moreover, this is not just any clinic, but the psychoanalytic clinic, and thus the researcher is as involved in the production of his object as the analyst is in that of the subject of the unconscious, and any attempt to maintain a certain neutrality is merely an illusion.

Unlike Garcia-Roza, Lo Bianco (2003) points out that research in psychoanalysis cannot be confused only with theoretical work. Despite its importance, theory is not given a priori, and much less should it be taken as a closed field. Although she also comes close to that author since, as devolving from the Freudian device, the method should be thought of as an opening to the new, she soon distances herself by arguing that it would be something of a bet on intuition, beyond theoretical elaboration.

It is difficult to distinguish the lineages so separately, they often cross paths, or even come close together and then go in opposite directions. It is even more difficult to pinpoint which affiliation a given text is crossed by. What justifies our choice to locate Lo Bianco's text on the path opened by Birman is her proposal to think of the clinic not only as a

starting point for psychoanalytic research, but especially as a paradigm, which implies conceiving methodology as produced by the specific object of psychoanalysis, the clinic being the place par excellence where it appears.

Iribarry (2003), in "O que é pesquisa psicanalítica?" (What is psychoanalytic research?), draws parallels between the positions occupied by the psychoanalytic researcher and the analysand. Both cases require the presence of an alterity, an Other to whom one must speak, or at least to whom one is supposed to bear witness, and a solipsistic movement is also present. In this regard, the author follows Caon (1994) in stating that the psychoanalytic research situation (SPP) should be thought of from the psychoanalytic treatment situation (SPT), with the notions of alterity and solipsism being the foundational bases for the methodological mechanism of psychoanalytic research.

Less than a philosophical concept, this solipsism is conceived as a conceptual production procedure, or what has come to be called methodological solipsism (Caon, 1994). Alterity is divided between a benevolent other who is invited to present the SPP results, and the anonymous public, an Other of whom nothing is known, only that they exist. It is by instrumentalizing the transference engendered with the former that the possibility of producing metapsychological work emerges (Iribarry, 2003).

On the relation between SPP and SPT, Iribarry (2003) also points out that,

The analysis, especially when it pertains to training an analyst, prioritizes the style and singular mark of the one who sets himself up as an analyst for another. So it is with psychoanalytic research. It is always an appropriation by the author who, after researching the Freudian method, discovers a method of his own, affiliated to this branch, and singularizes it when doing research (p. 117).

It locates in the Freudian term *Psychoanalytische forschung* [psychoanalytic research] the outline of the method proper to the field, which will be appropriated by each researcher in the act of researching. Based on two specific characteristics, psychoanalytic research differs from other research methodologies by not following the requirement to universalize results and it does not work with the sign, but with the signifier (Iribarry, 2003).

Iribarry and Caon, despite also starting from the clinic as a reference, take a different path from Birman's, offering a more pragmatic proposal, along the lines of what one would expect from so-called academic research, that is, with the formalities of an academic structure. However, this is not enough to position them as direct descendants of Garcia-Roza, given the absence of the condition that academic research is necessarily theoretical. Perhaps it would be possible to agree with the authors themselves when they claim a lineage of their own, heirs to Freud and Lacan, but it seems difficult to dissociate them from Birman's discussions, even if they present a different solution.

Other texts are also part of and play an important role in this second moment, but for the sake of time and space we will limit ourselves to just mentioning a few. Such is the case of the book “Clínica e Pesquisa em Psicanálise” [Clinic and Research in Psychoanalysis] organized by Alberti and Elia (2000); the articles “Pesquisa em psicanálise: algumas idéias [sic] e um exemplo” [Research in Psychoanalysis: a few ideas [sic] and an example] by Figueiredo and Minerbo (2006), and “Pesquisa em Psicanálise: algumas reflexões” [Research in Psychoanalysis: some reflections] by Mezan (2006); as well as the works gathered in the book “Pesquisa em Psicanálise: transmissão na Universidade” [Research in Psychoanalysis: transmission at University], organized by Kyrillos and Moreira (2010).

This period culminates in what we consider to be a turning point, as it returns to the works produced until then and points to an aspect yet to be considered, or rather, using the guiding time frame, it produces a debate that did not exist until then. We are speaking of Fonteles’ (2015) analysis of academic production in psychoanalysis in Brazil.

The Implicit Method

Fonteles (2015) analyzed the abstracts of 1075 theses, published between 1987 and 2012, which bore the insignia of being psychoanalytic or in psychoanalysis. Of the results obtained, one in particular interests us, namely the lack of further consideration of the method used in these studies. According to the author,

A very important fact is that 560 theses, more than half, do not explain the research method in their abstracts. The research method has sometimes been neglected by psychoanalysis and reading these abstracts gave us the impression that the authors write as if the method were implicit (Fonteles, 2015, p. 131).

The scenario is similar in the PPGs specific to psychoanalysis: only 13 out of 125 theses present considerations about methodology in the abstract. At first, there seems to be a contradiction between what we have said so far and Fonteles’ findings (2015). However, in considering the reasons for this scenario, the author draws attention to the “lack of understanding among many psychoanalytic researchers of what psychoanalytic research actually is, of what can and cannot be used as an instrument” (p. 131).

Within psychoanalysis, there are really no well-defined coordinates as to what ‘psychoanalytic research’ or the ‘psychoanalytic research method’ would be. Garcia-Roza even outlines a certain separation between research *in* psychoanalysis and research *on* psychoanalysis, but ultimately fails to come up with a clear conception of what he calls the psychoanalytic method of research.

Our point is not to call for a consensus, much less to establish the ‘correct’ definition of psychoanalytic method, if we could say so in the singular, but rather to draw attention to the fact that the dispute over research methodology in

psychoanalysis escapes the molds of what one would expect from an academic field.

Interestingly, the author divides her analysis of methodological strategies, “in the abstracts, we find references to research instruments, the type of research or analysis procedures” (p. 130), showing that if more than half of the theses do not present such considerations, there is a certain difficulty on the part of psychoanalysis researchers in explaining the method in academic terms, or as is expected in the abstract of a scientific paper. This does not mean a lack of method in the research conducted.

Among those that indicate the methodology used, the mention of instruments from other disciplines leads Fonteles to question whether psychoanalysis is borrowing methods in order to remain within academia, or whether it is submitting to the desires of science. Without pretending to answer the question, we emphasize that this fact reaffirms the idea of a gap in what is conceived as psychoanalytic research methods, and points to a certain negligence on the part of analysts regarding the development of methods.

The data also points to a period of insufficient discussions on the topic. Except for the debate between Elia and Bevidas, little has been done since the elaborations of the initial period, despite the increased number of studies. In this regard, we agree with Fonteles that perhaps the absence of explanations concerning the research method is an implicit norm within the field, given its non-academic origins, the complex relations between method and object pointed out by Lo Bianco (2003), and the possibility that psychoanalytic researchers consider the debate resolved.

Fonteles’ work (2015) function as a knot that ties up the balance of the studies conducted so far, while reiterating the importance of supporting the methodological discussion in psychoanalysis within university.

We, the heirs

Since the publication of this thesis, we find a considerable amount of research on the question of method in psychoanalysis. Some examples, such as the book “*Metodologia de pesquisa em psicanálise*” [Research methodology in psychoanalysis] organized by Queiroz and Zanotti (2020), indicate a present effort to uphold the legitimacy of psychoanalytic research within academia.

Wieczorek et al. (2020) bring to the debate the clinical fact as a “clinical (f)act” and its implications as a methodological tool, articulating the ideas of clinical fact (Czermak, 2007), psychoanalytic act (Lacan, 1967-1968/2001) and theoretical act (Lacôte, 1998). According to the authors,

The clinical (f)act favors isolating and presenting elements that are more about structure than identity. It is a question of what can be extracted from repeating the symptom, the patient’s identification, in short, their clinical structure, putting these elements to the test of psychoanalysis’ conceptual references. It also calls for theoretical tools that can handle a reading of the

acts when conducting the analysis, in such a way that, at a later date, they can carry out a reading of the acts that have taken place. The clinical (f)act convokes the psychoanalyst to stake on and take responsibility for a theoretical act that attests to it (Wieczorek et al., 2020, p. 205).

They thus outline a methodological tool that is properly psychoanalytic, produced from their own theoretical and clinical bases. Such conception is influenced by the work of Birman and later Lo Bianco, and aims to strengthen the clinical perspective and the use of clinical material as a motto for conducting research.

Conversely, but maintaining the idea of a device specific to the field, Godoi (2020) makes use of the potency of the signifying logic by proposing it as a research method. According to the author, taking the signifier as a paradigm implies expropriating the text from its writer, revealing the autonomy of its textuality, that is, the text no longer has any previous meaning — the famous ‘what the author meant’— and opens up to the multiplicity of meaning produced by the signifying articulation operated by its reader. His proposal goes back to Garcia-Roza’s (1991) ideas of rereading and misreading (Bloom, 1975/2003).

Godoi also resumes the difference between research *on* psychoanalysis and research *in* psychoanalysis/psychoanalytic research, discussed by Garcia-Roza 30 years earlier. In this direction, Campos’ (2021) proposal seems to advance in quantity and quality by suggesting subtypes within both categories, as well as including ‘research *with* psychoanalysis,’ understood as the association of the psychoanalytic method with methodologies from other fields. According to the author, “the question can no longer be summed up in a clear opposition between the use or non-use of the method, nor between theoretical research or empirical research, much less in a restricted characterization of the clinic” (Campos, 2021, p. 502).

França (2015), in turn, argues that Lacan proposes a “methodology of transformation,” which contrary to well-established a priori steps would seek changes of course. This work is noteworthy because instead of looking for a methodology in the traditional sense, França modifies the way in which we conceive of what a method, prioritizing the events along the way, the changes of route, the transformations that arise in research, rather than the concrete points on a list of stages to be followed. Something akin to Lacan’s use of topology, where “what matters are the arrows, or functions, and the deformations (especially the impossible ones, which were the ones that most interested Lacan) operationalized in them” (p. 209).

And Guerra’s work (2022), who despite taking the clinic as a paradigm for research, a common position within the field, seeks to justify this stance through the notion that truth is a supplement to the Real. In other words, just as Cantor invented the transfinite number in place of the unknowable infinite, and began to operate with it, “the clinic as a paradigm of psychoanalytic research reveals what is not written in

history as an unspeakable part of reality [...], producing knowledge as a supplement to what can still be said about this indiscernible part” (p. 7). Research would therefore be responsible not for providing an exhaustive explanation of a problem, but for “formulating the question about what cannot be written as knowledge — an interval that recovers the real at stake with Freudian truth — rather as a fixation than as meaning” (p. 8).

Considering the path outlined by this article, which at no time proposed to cover the entire field in question, we are now in a position to decant and support some statements. Quarrels over research methodology in psychoanalysis result from the fact that this discipline occupies a place within university, that is, even though Freud (1919/2010) emphatically affirmed that psychoanalysis did not require the academy to develop, this condition, at least in the Brazilian context, allowed for elaborations that would otherwise not have been possible.

University demands are not of the same register as those made by psychoanalytic institutions. While the latter speak to an internal audience, which is supposed to know what is being said, and therefore, as Lacan (1967-1968/2006) rightly pointed out, one could speak but chooses not to, the university demands an effort from analysts insofar as it prescribes the dialog between knowledge and diverse fields. Psychoanalysts, who are called upon to support their positions within academia, especially when they set out to do graduate research, need to present, in a minimally clear way, the steps that led them to certain conclusions.

Indeed, we could assert that there is method in psychoanalytic research. Despite having no consensus on what psychoanalysis or psychoanalytic research as such is, we have seen, especially in the last 10 years, a movement to develop methodologies that are consistent with the theoretical and clinical assumptions of the field. However, we emphasize that the psychoanalytic method escapes university molds, which we believe is responsible for its lack of explicitness in research.

In summary, our itinerary also allows us to outline four moments of discussion: (1) the beginning, in which analysts were concerned with legitimizing psychoanalysis as a field deserving of its own place within university, with its own particular way of doing research; (2) a second moment, marked by disputes and criticisms within the discipline itself, as well as a deepening of specific points; (3) Fonteles’ work (2015), as a second turn, functioning simultaneously as a closure and an opening; (4) finally, the period in which we find ourselves, called on by the previous moment, to account for our academic work as psychoanalysts present at university, resuming the steps taken by those who came before and moving towards properly psychoanalytic methods, as has been done by Godoi (2020), Wieczorek et al. (2020), and others.

We therefore consider it important, as psychoanalysts, to occupy this space within academia, and to pay attention to the issue of research methodology for producing, not a consensus, but particular and duly grounded ways of doing

research in psychoanalysis, which consider the specificities of the field, the idiosyncrasies of research itself, and the demands of university. It is not a question of meeting the demands of these various masters, but of remaining open to the new, which is so dear to the unconscious.

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