

Convergence Congress in Catalonia in 2023

**Individual face-to-face presentation by Juan Bauzá,
member of the European Foundation for psychoanalysis**

The restitution of the subject. Ethical and epistemological subversion of psychoanalysis.

I am going to raise what has been a fundamental issue for science, for psychoanalysis and, at present, a matter -beyond what is believed-, very unclear in general and with decisive individual and social consequences that would rather contribute to a subtle globalized alienation.

When we speak of "science", what are we talking about? Well, in respect to science there is no unitary conception of what would define it as such. That requires a *theory* of science, that would be based on an epistemology of science that justifies it as reasonable knowledge, in terms of its explanatory efficiency and its pragmatic consistency, and that also entails a plurality of conceptions. All this goes beyond the fact that there is an ethically questionable use of science, as a sort of new religion, and a commercial use of it at various levels: institutional, pharmacological, warlike, etc. The knowledge qualified as scientific can, in no way, be confused with a dogma or with the truth, quite the opposite, since it is an open, questionable and perfectible knowledge as such.

And so, if "psychoanalysis" —which psychoanalysis?, for we are not dealing with something unified either— is it a science, it entails, as a necessary condition, a theory that would define a knowledge that could be qualified as scientific. What theory or epistemology of science would then allow psychoanalysis to be qualified as such? In this respect, psychoanalysis itself constitutes a step of science, quite ignored for the most part, linked to a modified and expanded rationality as a result of the discovery of the ex-sistence of the unconscious and of the divided subject, which is a fundamental

epistemological cut in the advance of civilization; and this step of science will derive from several elements to be taken into account and formulated by Lacan, as follows:

1) the restitution of the *subject of that science*, elided, and as Lacan will say, forcluded as such, with the pretense of "scientific objectivity", in the sense of both the subjective genitive, of the person or persons who produce that science, and the objective genitive, of the person or persons on whom it is practically applied. That subject that in our societies is increasingly excluded, forcluded, denied in its singularity, for example under those diagnostic and protocol universals in its treatment, in that genetic and neurobiological reductionism, or at the behaviorist-cognitive psychic level, increasingly dominant and institutionalized, and at the service of the capitalism of the consumer society, as well as in other camouflaged domains of the exercise of power.

2) In relation to his three registers: real, symbolic and imaginary, not to be confused, that he qualifies as his fundamental coordinates. And this goes through the question of being, already.

3) The importance of language in its symbolic determination of the objects that constitute the subject itself and its phenomenal world —not to be confused neither with the naive empiricism, nor with the positivism of the first theories of modern science— would determine semantically a more or less consistent imaginary that would justify that knowledge to be qualified as scientific, inasmuch as it is verifiable, corroborable and falsifiable at a theoretical and pragmatic level.

4) All this entails in turn an extension and a fundamental modification based on the structures of modern mathematics from the theory of sets, from the extended and modified logic with respect to classical canonical logic and its fundamental principles (of the signifier, of the phantasm, of sexuation, of discourses) and from spherical to aspherical topology (of graphs, surfaces, knots, links, braids, and chains).

We could then ask ourselves:

What can contemporary psychoanalysis contribute, and if you want more specifically, Lacanian psychoanalysis, to the theory of science that includes, on the one hand, all

that which science has excluded until now and which in turn prevents psychoanalysis from being included in its field, and that allows, on the other hand, science itself to take a leap or a fundamental epistemological step forward towards truth as a material cause and a better bordering of the real? And what can the theorists of science contribute in their historical progress that we can say that in some way can be found in convergence with that contribution of psychoanalysis?

Lacan in the lesson of December 20, 1977 of his Seminar 25: *The Moment of Concluding*, said that:

"The supposed objective reality promoted by science is a phantasm, possessing a phantasmatic core." It could be said that Lacan chooses a critical realism or what has been called among current theorists of science an anti-realism, for reality would be a phantasmatic *construct* that can function —let us say, be relatively consistent—, though that should be nuanced. And especially in relation to psychoanalysis, the theory of science that constitutes an important contribution is an alternative to all these theoretical conceptions. I am referring to the so-called *structural semantic conception*, whose most prominent representatives are P. Suppes, B. van Fraassen, R. Giere, F. Suppe, J. Sneed, W. Stegmüller, W. Balzer and C. U. Moulines among some others, the last four being those who make up the so-called *structuralist school*. In this respect, a fundamental inaugural book by Balzer, Moulines and Sneed, published in 1987, is *Architecture for Science: The Structuralist Program*.

In the first place, I say this because, as can be seen, as far as contemporary epistemology is concerned, which is already about a century old, and Lacan only knew partially, we cannot speak at all about a unified field. And within this field, what is interesting in the current situation that Hilary Putnam somehow inaugurates at the beginning of the 80's is the dispute between the so-called *realism* and *anti-realism*. By this author you will surely be interested in his book *The Threefold cord. Mind, body and world* (in other words: *the clover knot*), or by Van Fraassen, *The scientific image*, or by Ian Hacking, *Representing and intervening*, among others, who are the structuralist

theorists of science. In my view, in all of them and in their conception of realism, returns —and that is the interesting thing— the epistemological problem posed by Lacan, where he gives fundamental clues for what would be its dialectical solution. That is why the reading and knowledge of all these authors seems to me today psychoanalytically fundamental.

Thus, if following Lacan we speak of "*un pas de science*", this is not a "no" to science, perhaps in a way it is a "yes" to a certain science; we are rather speaking of a "step" of science that overcomes the scientific ideology that Lacan denounces as an ideology of suppression, and even of foreclosure, of the truth of the subject, something which does not take place at the level of scientific praxis (and beyond its positive technical contributions) without deadly consequences for the subject.

Naturally, what has been said it is no more than an opening on a subject that it is fundamental in my opinion, to be deepened and developed in order not to fall into a distortion of psychoanalysis at the service of authoritarian discourses or of the search for institutional recognition.