

An analogical rationality for poststructuralism*

[Traducciones]

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Abstract

The following writing intends to show the need for an analogical rationality in the so-called post-structuralist authors such as the French Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze together with the Algerian Jacques Derrida. The text will show why, beyond being neo-structuralists, these authors are poststructuralists, and in this sense, it will reflect on a possible way out for this philosophical current. One cannot lose sight of the influence of those considered to be structuralist authors, such as: Saussure, Chomsky, Piaget, Lévi-Strauss or Barthes, since in them is found the origin of the critical project that the post-structuralists continued.

Keywords: Analog rationality, structuralism, post-structuralism, univocity, equivocation.

Introduction

Some of the most outstanding theoreticians of structuralism, such as Saussure, Chomsky and Piaget, are usually mentioned, in addition to others, more notable, such as Lévi-Strauss and Barthes, but we must also pay attention to those who have been considered as their heirs and continuators, but who have done it in a very critical way, to the point that, even when they have been called neo-structuralists, they well deserve the name of post-structuralists. Faced with this

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fact, I realize that a different way of thinking is needed, an analogical rationality. That is what I will try to show.

The representatives of this new post-structuralist current are the French Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida. All three received the influence of structuralism, present in the sixties and seventies, when these authors had their best period. But the curious thing is that the three of them reached positions that surpassed or questioned that current. They even denied her very main theses, such as the rejection of the subject and that of metaphysics, ending up rethinking these two themes.

Let us see why they can be called post-structuralist, rather than neo-structuralist. And, in the end, let's make some reflections about what could be the way out for this current in philosophy

Neo-structuralism = post-structuralism

Classical structuralism has been followed by a neo-structuralism, which some have called post-structuralism, and perhaps it is actually the latter, since it includes some theses of the classic, but also criticizes it. A very clear thesis is anti-metaphysics (which they call post-metaphysics). Above all, it involves criticism of the subject. Indeed, modern metaphysics was based on the self, so this postmodern anti-metaphysics dissolves the concept of subjectivity as much as possible.

A champion on this point has been Michel Foucault (1926-1984). In fact, he does not accept being classified as a structuralist, because this current seems too formal and far from history, to which he attaches great importance (Blanchot, 1993, pp. 17-20). It is true that he learned structuralist methods, and used them in his own way, to study everything that is considered pathological (illness, madness, delinquency, criminality and social anomaly). It can be said that he uses the method of Lévi-Strauss, but he goes beyond it. He positions himself as an archaeologist, as an archive-based historian, but he also has quite a bit of Nietzsche's genealogy.

More than in his historical works, on sexuality and the clinic, his work *The Order of Things* (1966) stands out, where he criticizes structuralism. Already the title tells us that there is no appropriate linguistics, since the words do not fit with the things they intend to mean. He refutes the order, the classification, based on one of the animals included in a Chinese encyclopedia, according to Borges, in which the different classes do not correspond to any scientific criteria, and are almost

merely random (the animals are divided into those that belong to the emperor, those who shake like crazy, those who have just broken the vase, those who look like flies from a distance, those who can be painted with a very fine brush of camel hair, and others of the like) (Foucault, 1978, p. 19).

In this way, he criticizes the desire of the structuralists to obtain exact classifications and shows that there is no order in the discourse, that there are no fixed, clear and distinct structures. That is, there is no metaphysical order. In addition, he points out that the subject is off-center, as seen in the painting “Las meninas” by Velázquez. And he addresses the loss of the notion of analogy in modernity, with which the symbol is no longer studied in the philosophy of language, but the simple sign, and univocity is sought, although he indicates that more and more falls into equivocation (Foucault, 1978, p. 41). And he takes refuge in Don Quixote, who was, at the same time, a genius and a madman, that is, he combined what is anomalous in the human being, a summary of what Foucault himself has investigated about the asylum and the human sciences. These human sciences are history, anthropology, psychology and some others, which are related to them (Foucault, 1978, p. 254). In this way, our author opposes fundamental theses of structuralism.

He professes the archeology of knowledge, in a book of that title, because he claims to operate by file (arché). It even seems to him that not only the notion of the subject, but the very notion of man is recent, from the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, which makes it modern. Thus, language, without subject and without object, is reduced to a mere framework of signs, but it does not go anywhere in reality (Foucault, 1978, p. 138).

Each era has its episteme, its way of doing science, and he focuses the current one on the study of knowledge, power and the self, or subject. The latter is closely linked to ethics, but he links it to aesthetics, because it seems to him that the true moral philosophy consists in building a beautiful personality. This is how it leads to self-knowledge and self-care, and to forms of subjectivation. He is no longer interested in dissolving the subject, but rather in understanding how subjects become subjects (Foucault, 1999, p. 342).

And he never left the eternal problem of truth, but he joins epistemological truth with ethical truth, that is, truthfulness, daring to tell the truth, which the Greeks knew as parrhesia (Foucault, 2003, p. 317). He is opposing power, with a knowledge of himself that entails the greatest form of subjectivation.

Little by little, Foucault had to return to accept the category of the subject, as seen in his time of maturity, in which he focuses on the hermeneutics himself, and is interested in the ways in which he becomes a subject (Foucault, 1999, p. 275). He even analyzes the methods used to do it, such as confession, spiritual direction and others, which he sees as antecedents of psychoanalysis (Foucault, 1999, p. 443).

This recovery of the subject, even though it was not one that returned to Descartes's ideal of being a clear and distinct subject, fully self-possessed, but rather a weaker, narrative subject, makes Foucault have to return to metaphysics, to the least in its form of ontology of the present (so he calls it). In addition, at the end of his life, our author devoted himself a lot to the defense of migrants, and realized that he could not defend human rights if he did not have an ontology, precarious as it was, and consequently, with a notion of subject (Foucault, 1999, p. 347). Thus, he is no longer careful to avoid metaphysics or to destroy it, but prefers to weaken it, which is seen as common to all postmodern philosophers.

Such is Foucault's neo-structuralism or post-structuralism, which is why Manfred Frank criticizes him, pointing out that it contains ambiguities and even contradictions in his understanding of the subject and the human sciences (Frank, 2011, p. 155). One sees a strange thing: that, having started with the fundamental theses of structuralism, such as the rejection of the subject and, therefore, of metaphysics, it ended up accepting what structuralism rejected (the subject, with the hermeneutics of itself; metaphysics, with the ontology of today), and with this a divergent position is adopted, beyond that current or school.

Another exponent of neo-structuralism or poststructuralism is the famous postmodern theorist Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995). He supported what he called the will of the system, although he did not present a fully elaborated proposal, it is almost impossible today. This author is very close to Foucault, of whom he wishes to be a continuator, in his idea of a historical ontology and in the other of studying the forms or processes of subjectivity (Deleuze, 1987, p. 145).

But, in addition to his appreciation for Foucault, Deleuze has his own contributions. He sailed in structuralism, to the point that in the history of philosophy, directed by François Châtelet, in the volume corresponding to the 20th century, Deleuze has to expose this current (Deleuze, 1973, p. 295). For this he summarizes the notes that characterize someone as a structuralist, the main criteria to identify someone as belonging to that line of thought.

Deleuze is systematic in the sense that, even when he addresses issues of the history of philosophy, and that with great erudition, he does not want to remain an expositor of it. He makes contributions. If the structuralists ended up denying the meaning, our author recovers it, only in a paradoxical way. It is true that there is no meaning, but that nonsense is meaning (Deleuze, 1989, p. 86). That is why the nomadic distribution of the senses, that is, of the entities, is preferable. Such is the meaning of his nomadism: there is no definitive, transcendent meaning, rather it is immanent.

However, Deleuze does not make the mistake. He always aspires to univocalism, as seen in his appreciation of univocal authors, for example Duns Scotus, Spinoza and Bergson, among others. Not everything is reduced to the difference, but he finds the sameness, but through repetition, that is, the eternal return, indicated by Nietzsche. This is what he maintains in his great work *Difference and Repetition* (1969), in which the difference, when repeated in the eternal return, comes close to equality; from equivocation one passes to univocity.

Deleuze's nomadism is also manifested in his idea of the rhizome, which he shares with the psychoanalyst Félix Guattari, in the work *A Thousand Plateaus* and in *Rhizome: an introduction* (Deleuze & Guattari 1988, p. 29). Thought is rhizomatic, and the rhizome is a little root that grows as if it were a branch, it is adventitious, and it goes as if it climbs wherever it can. Between root and stem, but which is neither one thing nor the other, but something that creeps with folds and unfolds.

Now, it is well known that Jacques Lacan incorporated structuralism into psychoanalysis, or psychoanalysis into structuralism; but Deleuze and Guattari question psychoanalytic work and its results, since it imposes some of its ideas on the daily life of human beings (Deleuze & Guattari 1974, p. 90). For example, they see the story of Oedipus, so used by Freud, as a myth in the worst sense, a bad one. Because of this they speak of a schizophrenia that occurs in neoliberal society, which produces mechanical desires, like robots.

All in all, it seems to us that Deleuze's main work is *Difference and Repetition*, in which he rescues that ontology of the present, like the one adopted by Foucault at the end of his career. In that book, Deleuze argues that true philosophy is ontology, and that true ontology is univocal, like that of Duns Scotus and others who have followed him on the path of univocality. He asserts: "There has never been more than a single Ontological proposition: Being is univocal. There is only one ontology, that of Duns Scotus, which gives being a single unique voice. We

say Duns Scotus, because he knew how to take the univocal being to its highest point of subtlety, even if at the cost of abstraction. But, from Parmenides to Heidegger, it is always the same voice that results repeatedly, in an echo that alone forms the complete unfolding of univocality. A single voice forms the cry of being” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 89). That is to say, being is like a murmuring stream, and entities are the roar of being, like a waterfall to which it leads.

Thus, Deleuze opposes the theses of structuralism, rethinking the theme of the subject, against the splitting of the self-made by psychoanalysis, mainly that of Lacan. It is to open to the freedom of desire. That is why he speaks of the individual, of the singular, but as an event, as a haecceity, according to Duns Scotus’ term. It is a life, in the immanence of the singular (Deleuze, 2002, p. 235).

Furthermore, Deleuze overcomes univocality, in a plurivocality, but which is not that of equivocation, but would have to be, then, that of analogism. Because he tells us that concepts are multiple, not simplistic; then they are multivocal, none is simple or merely univocal, but they encompass several meanings in their folds, hence it is necessary to unfold them (Deleuze & Guattari, 1993, p. 21). As was done with the baroque fold.

Moreover, we can say that Deleuze, perhaps without fully realizing it, arrives at an analogical position, since he claims to be univocalist mistaken, in whose synthesis the analogy consists, that is: a univocal being in an equivocality of entities, or, of another way: being calm with a clamor of beings. He says: “The distinction of meanings [in the enunciation of Being] is a real distinction (*distinctio realis*), but it has nothing numerical about it, and even less ontological: it is a formal, qualitative or semiological distinction. The question of knowing whether the categories are directly assimilable to such meanings, or more likely, derive from them, must be left aside for the moment. The important thing is that several formally different meanings can be conceived but referred to as a single designated, ontologically one. It is true that such a point of view is still not enough to prevent us from considering these senses as analogous, and the unity of being as an analogy. It must be added that being, that common designated, while it is expressed, is said at the same time in one and the same sense of all numerically different designators or expressors” (Deleuze, 1988, pp. 88-89). That formal distinction is what Scotus advocated, and that is how Deleuze sees the difference. However, our French thinker accepts the analogy, since he sees it as a semiological element of being, and not an ontological one, but with that he is already accepting the analogy, after all.

Deleuze picks up, then, the subject. It is the criticism that Manfred Frank makes of him, since with it he recovers metaphysics (Frank, 2011, p. 376). In this way, rescuing the subject and ontology, Deleuze departs from the denial of subjectivity and the rejection of metaphysics that were typical of structuralism, and with this he places himself in neo-structuralism and even in post-structuralism.

Another of those who fall into this category of rebels who go beyond structuralism is Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). In *Writing and Difference* (1967), our author reproaches Saussure for disdainning the written word and favoring the spoken word, since our thinker finds writing extremely important (Derrida, 1989, p. 300). With this privilege of the voice, the metaphysics of presence is favored, since writing is the one that can point out what is not present, what is in absentia. She is the one that can keep a remainder, a leftover or residue, that it is possible to save from time, from what goes beyond the present. With this he opposes the metaphysics of the present, of presence.

In *Of Grammatology* (also from 1967) he again complains about the contempt for the written word (gramma), typical of Saussure and others, who see writing as an inauthentic and alienating supplement to speech, to the voice. In particular, only phonetic writing is considered, since there are other types of writing. That is why he accuses culture of being phonocentric. He points out that there is an arch-writing, which differs, because it is embodied in a material other than the voice (as an inscription) (Derrida, 1978, p. 147). It is thought that the voice (foné) is the one that best represents the thought (logos); that is why it is a logo-phono-centrism. And it is the product of power, of an adoration of the masculine, a phallogocentrism, that is why he also speaks of a phallogocentrism.

Instead, he proposes to recover the writing, to do a grammatology. Through a dissemination of meaning, because in this way it does not return to patriarchalism or sexism, since the voice belongs to the father, it is the voice of command, violent. Instead, writing is the remedy (the pharmacon) against all that, it is what is going to free us from that oppression (Derrida, 1975, p. 140).

Derrida proposes a way to weaken metaphysics, namely deconstruction. Metaphysics is deconstructed, and access is given to difference, which is also deferral, which is never reached, which is not a sign, but a trace, a trace (Derrida, 1989a, pp. 47-48). Indeed, metaphysics is white mythology, that of the West. In addition, our author takes from Nietzsche the idea that language is, in its origin, metaphorical. But he considers that we do not have a metaphor to explain it. It is unattainable. There is no linguistics for that figure or trope. However, he clarifies

that deconstruction is not a negation or a criticism, it is a double operation: that of recognizing in the authors what is logocentric and what is undecidable (Derrida, 1989 b, p. 57). With that they are given a remedy, a drug, which is writing, as has already been said because it removes logocentrism.

Despite his initial rejection of metaphysics and the subject, since Derrida deconstructed them, at the end of his career he accepted them. (It is something that we have seen in the other neo-structuralists or post-structuralists.) Indeed, at the end of his life he declared that he was a realist, in epistemology and in ontology. The one who bears witness to this is Maurizio Ferraris, who worked with Derrida in his last years. There is a book, entitled *A Taste for the Secret*, made up of the interviews that Ferraris does with Derrida, and in it the latter declares that his opposition to 48

[...] was a protest against the Linguistic Turn, which under the name of 'structuralism' already was fully on track. The irony, so to speak — somewhat painful even — of this story is that often, especially in the United States, since I wrote 'il n'y a pas de hors-texte' and developed a thought of the trace, some people thought they could derive from it the conclusion that mine was a thought of language (it is exactly the opposite); deconstruction was inscribed in the Linguistic Turn, when instead it consisted of a protest against linguistics. (Derrida & Ferraris, 2009, p. 135)

It becomes a kind of retraction of his antimetaphysics of the beginning. He arrived at an ontology of the present or actuality, like Foucault's and Deleuze's.

It is true, the three notorious neo-structuralists coincide in recovering the subject and metaphysics. In a way not as strong as in modernity, but more weakened, postmodern. That is why they can be called post-structuralists. They have even been seen as the main representatives of this postmodern thought. That is why Manfred Frank criticizes Derrida's criticism of structural linguistics and indicates that he had to reach the consequences we have seen (Frank, 2011, p. 460).

Actually, we have been able to appreciate that what Frank does is to question the structuralist radicalism of these three thinkers, since they deviated from that path, and drifted in other directions.

The need for analogy

From the previous chapter, in which we make some critical reflections on structuralism, we saw the opportunity that the use of the concept of analogy would have in this current of thought. Its followers tried to achieve univocity,

complete scientific accuracy (Montes, 1971, pp. 11-12). But, not reaching it, they collapsed into equivocation, into the loss of the subject and of metaphysics. Such a senseless drift would have been avoided if they had had the concept of analogy, if they had incorporated it into an analogical rationality.

In any case, it is seen that the new structuralists approached this analogical attitude. Foucault does so when, at the end of his life, he becomes interested in self-care (*epiméleia seautou*). Rather than unseating the subject, he focuses on the study of forms of subjectivation; and, moreover, for the subject and his rights, he recovers an ontology of the present, which is a new metaphysics. What it does is weaken the pretensions of the previous metaphysics, with a desire for perpetuity, and gives it a more historical character, a kind of contingency injection, with which it is opposing the univocism of modern metaphysics, and proposes a new metaphysics (and not so much a post-metaphysics), which is more modest. But that does not mean making it equivocal, weakening it to the point of making it equivocal, but rather it is the search for a proper analogical metaphysics.

Likewise, Deleuze, despite his insistence on sustaining univocity in his philosophizing, and in order to preserve the difference through equivocation, combines both extremes (univocism and equivocation), and proclaims univocism-equivocity; but with this what he is doing is accessing analogism. At certain moments he opposes the analogy, but he ends up accepting it, because he feels the breeze of being, uniform and serene, that is why for being he posits univocity; but he also hears the clamor of the entities, overwhelmed and stormy, so for the entities he raises the equivocity; In short, he maintains that being is multivocal, that is, analogical, in the way that difference is maintained in the repetition of the eternal return, and thus univocity is differential, multiple.

Likewise, Derrida, with his eagerness to defend difference and difference, deconstructs metaphysics, but what he actually does is not destroy it, but rather weaken it, and with this he opposes a univocal metaphysics and places himself on the line of analogy, that is, with an analogical metaphysics. He administers a salutary injection of absence to the metaphysics of presence, in the way that Lacan points out the sadness for the lost object (the mother, the strongest presence), and thereby subtracts monolithism from it, lowers its pretensions and places it in its fair limits.

That is why we have said that the notion of analogy would have been convenient for the structuralists, to clarify the univocalism sought, and avoid the equivocation that threatened them, and in which many fell; It would have served them to reach

a middle ground, which was what they really wanted. Actually, they were looking for that analogy, with good approximations to it. It shows that the neo-structuralists found it, and for this reason they can be called post-structuralists, because they left their univocalism, but without falling into equivocation.

In fact, an analog rationality is placed in the middle (Beuchot, 2019, p. 37). Facing the syntagmatic pole and the paradigmatic pole, it privileges the latter, something that classical structuralism did not do, which operated in reverse, relieving the syntagmatic pole. But the syntagmatic pole is flat, superficial and horizontal; on the other hand, the paradigmatic pole advances in depth, it is deep and vertical, it tends to the bottom. It proceeds by repetition, and it is something that is not liked at this time, stressed by the horizontal novelty; but repetition is the language of affect, even of the unconscious, and it is feared. Likewise, between the metonymic pole and the metaphorical pole, analogical rationality privileges the latter. In fact, Lacan argued that the metonymic chain drives you crazy, and that you have to scan it with a metaphor; and it is the metaphor that opens to freedom. Metonymy proceeds by contiguity, ties to reality, strains towards univocity; On the other hand, the metaphor proceeds by similarity, it opens to ideality, to utopia, it tends to equivocation, but it is balanced by the analogy, to which it belongs.

That is why the current, post-structuralist culture needs an analogical rationality, a new method discourse, but one that does not claim univocity, which turned out to be unattainable. Classic structuralism, with its truncated univocalism, and neo-structuralism, with its repentant equivocation, have given us good lessons; we need a post-structuralism that takes advantage of these lessons and, instead of enclosing itself in univocity, or fading into equivocation, seeks an analog output. That will be more promising.

Conclusion

We have been shown the situation in which neo-structuralism can be called post-structuralism. It rejected main theses of structuralism. In their most mature stage, the structuralists arrived at the negation of the subject or, at least, at putting it in parentheses; equally and for the same reason, they questioned metaphysics, which in modernity had been of the subject. But they ended up accepting the subject, reconsidered, but, after all, subjectivity; and with that they recovered metaphysics, modified as an ontology of the present, or of today. Thus, they passed beyond the limits of classical structuralism.

The reason for this is that they tried at all costs to achieve scientificity, that is, complete univocity. That scientism or univocism proved unattainable, and then they fell into the equivocity, in infinite drifts like those seen in the neo-structuralists or poststructuralists; and that would have been avoided with a sensibility that welcomed analogy, that was open to an analogical rationality.

This analogical rationality, this new discourse of the method, but a moderate and prudential one, is the true post-structuralism, since classical structuralism was enclosed in univocism, and neo-structuralism collapsed in equivocation, then called relativism, which is another name for the loss of the way.

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