Interpretation is at the heart of psychoanalytical activity. This does not necessarily imply that any intervention within the framework of a psychoanalytically driven treatment would be of an interpretative nature, but an interpretative effort is seminal in this respect. The fact that the work which heralded psychoanalysis as a science was entitled *The Interpretation of Dreams* speaks for itself. It positions psychoanalysis in the field of hermeneutical science, like most human and cultural sciences are interpretative by nature. Even though all sciences share one common objective, viz., objectivity and verification, the objectives and specific methods of the natural sciences are so different from the methods employed within the interpretative and cultural sciences and—at a more general level—the hermeneutical sciences, that it would make sense to discriminate between the empiricist and the hermeneutical approaches.

This would make a strong case for situating psychoanalysis within the field of hermeneutics, even though such a choice is bound to give rise to controversy. According to one line of reasoning, psychoanalysis would lose its specificity in the process, because the sphere of hermeneutics does not afford any room for the concept of a drive, of the unconscious as an autonomous reality, or a psychoanalytical view on psychological functioning as such. Following another argumentation, the uniqueness of the psychoanalytical type of interpretation in psychotherapeutic practice would preclude it from sharing more than just its name with the general interpretative doctrine. Even if both critiques were to carry some element of truth, this would not alter the fact that psychoanalysis could find its natural place within the field of hermeneutics, indeed anchoring it firmly within the well-established tradition of modern thought.

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Although psychoanalytical interpretation does occur within psychodiagnosics, psychopathology, and the psychoanalytically oriented humanities, it find its most prominent and complex application within a psychoanalytical treatment setting. This explains why the possibility of interpretation within psychoanalysis will be the theme of this chapter. Particular attention will be paid to the possibility of truth-finding, as well as the role of its explicit or hidden values. First the three types of hermeneutics discussed earlier will be re-examined, with an emphasis on the issue at hand. Secondly, we shall outline the psychoanalytical situation and discuss the possible applications of the three models. As a final step, the reasons for seeking or offering psychoanalysis, and the conditions that may apply to a given objective of psychoanalysis, will be discussed.

Narrowing the issue down to a psychoanalytical setting leaves intact the hypothesis that the following considerations may be of value to the overall interpretative doctrine, as well as to the interpretation of other aspects of life.

**Hermeneutics of the signification, of the situation and of the signifier**

The first manifestation of hermeneutics is the hermeneutical phenomenology or the hermeneutics of the signification. Its phenomenological approach causes it to focus naturally on what shows itself primarily through experience: perception, memory, expectation, and imagination. In this respect, the principal question regarding the possibility of interpretation concerns the mode of expression. The question is always how the inner sphere finds its expression in something external or, conversely, how the external reflects the inner sphere. The inner sphere may relate to psychological conditions as well as cultural entities, like “Zeitgeist” or company culture. Phenomenology and hermeneutics meet in what may be referred to as hermeneutical phenomenology or phenomenological hermeneutics. What exactly is the meaning of a particular action, linguistic

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