

GLOSARIO FERENCZIANO INGLÉS.

A

ACTIVE TECHNIQUE (*Aktiventechnik*)

The psychoanalytic method Ferenczi introduced in 1919 to prevent the ‘abuse of free association’. This initially consisted of setting a time limit to the psychoanalytic treatment and imposing certain agreed prohibitions on the patient, notably regarding sexual activity. The aim here was to ‘heighten the tension’ in the analytic session, and thus to precipitate the disclosure of unconscious material. In 1920, the method broadened its scope to include encouraging the patient to give voice, draw or dramatically represent material that caused anxiety.

AMPHIMIXIS (*Die Amphimixis*)

A medical term denoting the mingling of two different substances to create a third, whose main example is the fusion of sperm and ovum to create the foetus. Ferenczi uses this analogously to describe the combination of different eroticisms, relating to different psycho-sexual development stages that make up every sexual ‘act’. In this sense, there is no irreversible progression of sexual experience to ‘normal’ coitus, rather a ‘mix’ of infantile, adult, oral, anal and genital components. The balance of the ‘mix’ alters according to the specific confrontation between inner and outer world encountered in infancy and latency: rape or seduction during childhood, for example, lead to major imbalances, usually denying all else to preserve pre-oedipal psycho-sexual modes of gratification. Similarly, the ‘mix’ has no prescribed auto-, homo- or hetero-object choice; it tends, according to circumstance, to incorporate variously all three. The choice of analogy therefore draws attention to a basic flaw in the notion of natural unilinear sexual development. The infinite number of acts of coitus, and the consequent preservation of the species, cannot contain ‘regression’, that is, the appeal of earlier oral and anal modes of gratification. Amphimixis, then, negotiates an uneasy unity.

AUTOSYMBOLISM (*Autosymbolismus*)

This is a term that Ferenczi borrowed from Herbert Silberer to denote symbolism that reflects psychic processes themselves. There are three autosymbolic prototypes: the machine, the mirror and the bridge. These symbols negotiate tensions between the inner and outer world. Such negotiations are not simple, as they stem the primal defenses of introjection and projection. Hence they are constantly subverted by ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ vicissitudes; machines, for example, project our inner organic processes to the point where they assume some ‘outside’ dimension that we can control -we cannot readily switch off our bowels, for example, but we can switch off the washing-machine; likewise, mirrors reflect so much of the ‘outside’ world that they become paradigms of our ‘inner’ production of the ‘outside’ - Janet, Wallon and Lacan, for example, appeal numinously to this symbol to constitute primary consciousness; last, but not least, the bridge, whose ability to ‘transfer’ is taken for granted, but whose original construction plan and pre-ordained traffic flow seem irresolvably controversial - take language (or ‘word bridges’), for example: few are intrepid enough to decide conclusively whether anyone starts out with the primary irreducible ‘inner’ language and crosses over into ‘outer’, everyday, intersubjective language or whether it is the other way around (Steiner, 1978; Lacan, 1966).

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