



A Confusion of Tongues: The Primacy of Sexuality in Freud, Ferenczi And Laplanche.



**Van Haute, Phillippe and Tomas Geyskens
Other Press. 192 pages.**

Confusion of Tongues describes the genesis of Freud's clinical anthropology. A careful reading of Freud's early texts and letters to Fliess illustrates how Freud abandons his seduction theory of the neuroses in favor of a sexual biology. This "biological turn" leads to three mutually dependent claims that are fundamental to Freud's project of a clinical anthropology: the primacy of (infantile) sexuality, the discontinuity between the world of the adult and the world of the child, and the continuity between "normality" (psychic health) and pathology. In the later editions of Three Essays, Freud increasingly stresses the continuity between infantile and adult sexuality, thus undermining his previous claims. This book shows that the introduction of the Oedipus complex plays a crucial role in this evolution and also attempts to resolve the resulting impasse through a confrontation of Freud's work with the work of Ferenczi and Laplanche. --- from the publisher.

Reviews:

"This book reads like a detective story. The question is about the central role of sexuality in Freudian psychopathology, developmental psychology, and clinical anthropology. In a clear and structured way, the book enthrallingly examines this crucial theme in psychoanalysis and comes up with a rather unexpected and refreshing answer." -Rudi Vermote, M.D.

"Arguing that Freud retreated from his own earliest insights in the seduction hypothesis, the authors show how Ferenczi sought to recover Freud's discovery and restore the enigmatic asymmetry in the relation between the infant and the adult...The work of Laplanche can be understood as a response to these debates, focusing especially on seduction and the theory of trauma. Van Haute and Geyskens show how Laplanche safeguards the primacy of sexuality, while at the same time maintaining the earliest discoveries of psychoanalysis...This closely argued book maintains a sophisticated balance between the clinical orientation of psychoanalysis and its broader philosophical importance..."

-Charles Shepherdson, Ph.D.

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Contacto: alsfchile@alsf-chile.org.