

ARGUMENT

The desymbolisation in the service of psychic evolution

In psychoanalysis, desymbolisation corresponds to a psychic state of inability to link and give meaning, to a lack of psychisation, but also to an active process of rejection or suppression of psychic meaning in traumatic conditions.

As an indication of classical psychoanalytic approaches to analogous but not similar situations, we can cite Green's work on the negative, which he attributes to the death drive, and Bion's work on attacks on links.

In all these elaborations, except for Green's reference to the situation where negatation (which is not identical to desymbolisation) can create space for representation, the effects of desymbolisation are reported as harmful, even destructive for the individual's somatopsychic state.

In this work, we will try to study the psychic mechanisms involved in desymbolisation, its active or passive character (invoking inertia) and its aspects that can make it valuable for psychic evolution.

In this sense, we can recognise developmental passages, with adolescence as an example, where the desymbolisation of the infantile, although potentially traumatic and destabilising, allows new "adult" symbolisations of the drive after regression to the somatic-narcissistic.

From another point of view, it can be recognised that a *minima* traumatic-desymbolising situations can be of great utility, since they leave room for restorative symbolisations, thus promoting evolutionary maturation.

Desymbolisation as a mechanism of psychosexual evolution

In Freud's well-known letter 52 to Fliess (Freud, 1887-1902), he speaks of different kinds of inscriptions of the memory traces left by the individual's experiences during his life, in a transformative succession equivalent to a "taming" and a psychisation of the drive (Roussillon, 2012). Freud also recognises a continuous process throughout life, of successive "translations" of

psychic contents, based on new symbolic codes each time. The corresponding psychic transformations essentially constitute desymbolisations and resymbolisations, which leave residues, non-translated, repressed elements, unable to integrate the new codifications.

The whole process is supported by phenomena of a quantitative nature (*Quantitativen*), that is, by disinvestments and new libidinal investments, which withdraw and displace energy from certain inscriptions to others.

The *a minima* trauma as a continuous maturational process

Does *a minima* traumatic desymbolisation constitute a "continuous" enriching process of symbolising reorganisation? Freud's recognition that the ego is created on the surface of the id, under the (traumatic?) impact of the outside, indicates a capacity for adaptation to the external (which becomes internal) traumatically disorganising, in the context of a creative "passivity" of the psychic apparatus (Zervis, 1999). In this line of thought, Freud seems to timidly recognise that seduction can have the positive effect of "awakening the sexual life of the child", even if he is then quick to deny it, for obvious reasons. (Freud, 1905, p. 96, 126).

Laplanche, in his own perspective, indirectly recognises a continuous sexual traumatic effect through the enigmatic signifiers of the adult. According to Phyllis Greenacre, by the second half of life, all erogenous zones are already more or less capable of responding to the corresponding stimuli. But in each phase of sexual development, an erogenous zone is at the peak of sexual activity. If the coordination between the phase, the type and the intensity of the excitement is satisfactory, then the psyche will be pushed towards sexual maturation. Otherwise, this would lead to "confusion" and trauma (Greenacre, 1954, pp. 20-22).

The desymbolising aspect of psychoanalytic treatment

Laplanche specifically mentions the symbolically disintegrating character of psychoanalysis, considering that it has "a destructuring aim... undermines coherent wholes on which a whole life has been able to organise itself (ideologies, vision of oneself and others, narrative schemata, personal novel, etc.). Also, "the psychoanalyst... is his work of unbinding not similar to that of the sexual death drive?" (Laplanche, 2008, p. 59, 61-2).

Here, beyond the character of discharge that liberation can have with regard to pathological symbolisations, such as symptoms, the reconstructive value of desymbolisation also emerges.

In a complementary manner, within the framework of this perspective, it would also be necessary to refer to the work that corresponds to today's psychoanalysis in the investigation of new codes of communication and thought through images and digital technology.

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