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### The David Liberman algorithm (DLA) and the systematic research of discourse in psychoanalysis

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#### A. General presentation

Freud states that understanding each clinical case demands that the therapist and the researcher take into account the specific libidinal fixation and the defense. In each patient a combinatory between some sexual fixation and some defenses determines the singular clinical problem. A method that detects both (erogeneities and defenses) in the discourse of the patient becomes useful in the therapeutic process and outcomes researches.

David Liberman algorithm (DLA) was designed, precisely, for the research of the discourse from this Freudian perspective, that is, detecting the erogeneities and the defenses in the discourse of the patient. The method has a strong theoretical argumentation explaining why several erogeneities and defenses were considered the most important and what were the criteria for the operationalization of both variables (Maldavsky, D. 1968, 1976, 1980, 1986, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2002a, Maldavsky et al., 2000).

Synthetically, the discourse of each patient is viewed as an expression of his preconscious structure. This structure reflects the efficacy of erogeneities and defenses. The process itself of constitution of the preconscious is a consequence of the effort of the ego for elaborates the libidinal demands, and at the same time it receives the influence of the defensive mechanism aiming to deal with different conflict that the psychic structure suffers.

The DLA allows to investigate erogeneities and defenses in three levels: narration, phrase, words. The method is useful too for the analysis of the motricity (for example, in the session with children) and of the visual manifestation (for example, paintings).

#### Graphic I. Inventory of the main erogeneities and defenses, and of the levels of analysis

##### 1. EROGENICITY

IL Intrasomatic  
O1 Primary oral  
O2 Secondary oral sadistic  
A1 Primary anal sadistic  
A2 Secondary anal sadistic  
FU Urethral phallic  
FG Genital phallic

##### 2. DEFENSE

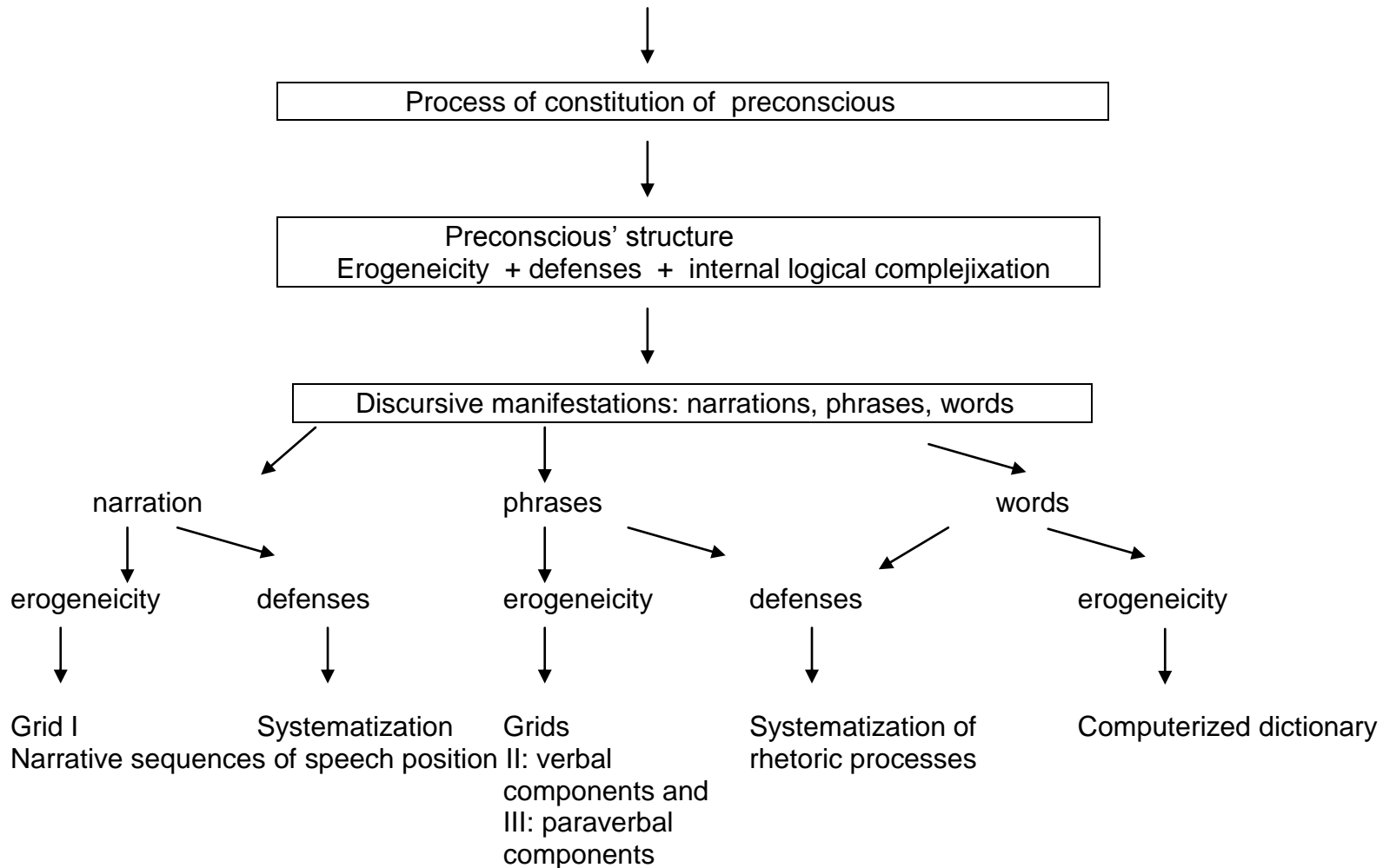
State	Successful	Failure
<b>Defense</b>		
Normal		
Repression		
Disavowal		
Forclusion of the reality and the ideal		
Forclusion of the affect		

##### 3. LEVEL OF EXPRESSION

1. word networks
2. phrase-structures
3. narrative sequences

The panoramic view of the method, its theoretical foundations and its instruments can be seen in the Graphic II.

**Graphic II. General outline of preconscious  
DRIVE (erogeneity) AND ITS DESTINIES (defenses)**



## **B. Detection of the erogeneities**

**Narrative analysis.** DLA differentiates five scenes in the narrative. Two of them are states; the other three, transformations. The narration contains 1) an initial state of unstable equilibrium, broken by 2) a first transformation, corresponding the rise of the desire. This moment is followed by 3) a second transformation, the essay to consummate the desire, and finally 4) a third one, that includes the consequence of this essay. This is followed by 5) the final state. So, then, two states (one initial and another final) and three transformations form the matrix of narrative sequences. With that basis the DLA arrives to design a grid in order to make this proposal clear (Graphic III). In the real facts the researcher can find suppressions (narrative where we can see only the final state, or the scene in which the desire arises), redundancies, permutations, condensations. This formal structure acquires specific qualifications for each language of eroticism, which implies that the "actants" (types of characters), affects, actions, ideal, group representation, temporal and spatial conception, has a high grade of definition. Among the "actants" we can distinguish those who set themselves as a model, subject, double and assistant. Eventually, object of desire and rival also appear.

**Graphic III: Grid for the narration analysis**

Eroticism Scene	Genital phallic	Urethral phallic	Secondary anal sadistic	Primary anal sadistic	Secondary oral sadistic	Primary oral	Intrasomatic
Initial state	Aesthetic harmony	Routine	Hierarchic order	Natural legal balance	Paradise	Cognitive peace	Balance between tensions
First transformation: arousal of the wish	Wish for aesthetic completeness	Ambitious wish	Wish to dominate an object in the frame of a public oath	Wish for revenge	Temptation  Expiation	Abstract cognitive wish	Speculative wish
Second transformation: the attempt to realize the wish	Reception of a gift	Encounter with the mark of paternity in the depth of the object	Knowledge that the object remains attached to corrupt subjects	Revenge	Sin  Reparation	Access to the truth	Pleasure gained by an organic intrusion
Third transformation: consequence of the attempt to realize the wish	Pregnancy  Aesthetic disorganization	Adventure defiance	Moral acceptance because of its virtue  social condemnation and moral expulsion	Consagrator as a leader  Motility impotence, feeling of being in jail and humiliation	Expulsion from Paradise  Absolution and love acceptance	Consagrator because of his/her geniality  Loss of lucidity and functioning at the service of the other subject's cognitive pleasure	Organic euphoria  Asthenia
Final state	Shared harmony  Constant feelings of disgust	Adventure  Pessimistic routine	Moral peace  Moral torture	Evocation of a heroic past Return to natural peace Unending resentment	Vale of tears  Recovery of Paradise	Pleasure in revelation  Loss of essence	Balance between the tensions without loss of energy Constant tension or constant asthenia

**Words analysis.** The systematization of narrative brought a basic contribution to put the words into a sexual category. For example, in the narrative belonging to secondary anal sadistic eroticism, the scene of a solemn public oath in the context of an institutional form, allows to include in the archives of dictionary terms as "duty", "tradition", "moral", "study" and others which mention the essay to dominate and control by the means of a knowledge of concrete facts. It is possible to included also "clean", "library" and many other words.

With these gathered words, a dictionary, a computational program that allows to investigate word nets: is available in the DLA with only one word it is not possible to decide about the specific language of eroticism; it is necessary a net of them. The dictionary is formed by seven archives, one for each language of eroticism.

In each archive there are units composed by: 1) fragments of words, 2) words, 3) groups of words. The totality of archives includes more or less 620.000 words, belonging to 5.000 radicals approximately. The criteria established to form each net of words is related to the semantic value, its sense from the point of view of eroticism. Many words have a multiple erogenous sense. Therefore, it could happen that the meaning corresponds to more than one language of eroticism. The program can do two types of study. One of them has an automatic character; the other one is more handcrafted and interactive.

**Phrases analysis.** This third perspective of the research is specially useful for the analysis of the relationship between patient and analyst inside the session. When studying the level of the phrases DLA considers the acts of enunciation of the speaker and by that means it can detect the state of the analytical link. Also, DLA deals with new methodological problems, since in the level of the phrase it is important, from the point of view of the sense of the discourse, to notice the melodic line, the form in which the speaker uses the sounds of the language. Consequently, DLA had to consider two aspects: not only the verbal components but also the paraverbal ones. Therefore, DLA contains two grids (Graphic IV and Graphic V).

**Graphic IV. Grid for the phrases' analysis**

LI	O1	O2	A1	A2	UPH	GPH
banality and inconsistency	abstract deduction	moan: "I could have been, but..." "I should have been... but"	offense, blasphemy and imprecation	maxims	popular proverbs	praise: "how nice"
flattering	metaphysical and mystic thinking	complain and reproach	curse: "I wish you died", etc.	religious and ritualized invocations	premonition and omens	promise
references to state of things (weigh/volume/quantity/grossness/deteriora-	denial that creates a logical contradiction in front of	request and begging	slander, detracting and defamation	quotations	give or ask for advice	invitation

tion)	alien statement					
hiperrealism	logical paradoxes	asking for forgiveness and excuses	accusation and denunciation	references to a consensual concrete known	warning "be careful because..."	dedicatory
accounts	metalanguage (talking about language) or equivalent (talking about films, books, etc.)	references on affective states	incitement	information of facts	questions and statements about spatial or temporal localization	appeal to the listener
catharsis	clue phrase	references on things states (climatic, objects aging)	distortion	description of concrete situations	interruptions in other person or in self discourse	showing a desire: "I want to talk about this"
interruptions because of sound languishing	ambiguity and indefinicion	references to be doing an action	threats	conditional imperative "if...then", "no... because"	phrases in suspense	private oath: "I swear you"
abusive orders to do something opposed to the general law	interruptions because of sound languishing	interruptions (to swallow a word or syllable) or interrupting other person because of impatient feelings	power show off	public oath and imposing obligations	pretext	dramatization
confessions of doing something opposed to law or moral	references on disturbed states of the own body	condolence or commiseration	intrusive interruption	contract	gossiping	exemplification
		demanding of love, recognition and affective approbation	rendering or admission of defeat	orders, indications according with general law	greetings and other forms to make contact	
		exigence	triumphal mockery	valuation judgements and critical, linked with moral, cleanness, culture and order	accompanying other person discourse (m-hm, aha)	emphasis and exaggeration
		affective manipulation	boasting	justifications of statements, words and acts	pet words (eeh, you know) as a sign that the channel is occupied by the	nonsense, embellishing, fantasy lightness

					emitting	
		aplacatory submission	confessions of doing something opposed to law or moral	clarifications: that is...	ambiguity and avoidance	comparison between qualities: beauty, sympathy
		condolences	abusive orders to do something opposed to the general law	what is it or what happens and why	cautious approach	metaphoric comparison
		empathic understanding		classification	excessive approach	question: how
		exaltation of the sacrifice		distributive arguments "each", "neither... nor"	minimizers: "a little scared"	causal relation in which determinant factor of an effect is the increasing of a quality (so beauty.. that)
		expression of the feeling of own or alien inutility		ordering: by one side, by the other side, in first place, in second place, in third place...		equation between quantities of qualities: the more.. the more, the more.. the less, etc.
				syntactic rectification		syntactic redundance
				confirmation (or rectification) of alien opinion or asking a confirmation or rectification of owns opinion (consulting)		joke with words
				completing (or correcting) the alien phrase		phrase on rareness (how strange) or unbelovelity (I don't believe it)
				control of memory, own or of another person: do you remember? do you understand me? I remember this		
				deduction,		



				conjecture and concrete inference		
				concrete generalization		
				synthesis		
				Introduction / closure of a subject (theme, person, including the speaker itself)		
				doubts		
				presentation of alternatives “or.. or”		
				comparing between objective and hierarchy traits		
				description of the position in the frame of an order or a social hierarchic		
				causal linking: “x because y”, “if... then”, or its questioning: “there are no relation between a and b” , “what does it matter?”		
				objections, adversative phrases and negation that confront affirmations, exaggeration (“not so much”) qualifications		
				notations and signaling		
				abbreviations		

**Graphic II. Grid of paraverbal components**

LI	O1	O2	A1	A2	UPH	GPH
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<u>Tone:</u> 1) apathetic	<u>Tone:</u> 1) metallic	<u>Tone:</u> 1) sardonic	<u>Tone:</u> 1) angry	<u>Tone:</u> 1) contemptuous or denigratory	<u>Tone:</u> 1) anxious	<u>Tone:</u> 1) flattering
2) monotonous	2) languishing	2) depressive	2) upset	2) ironic	2) untrustful	2) compliment
3) pleading	3) intellectual humor	3) excited	3) protest	3) rational	3) evasiveness	3) promising
4) flattering	<u>Rhythm, pitch and sounds:</u> 1) lack of resounding	4) desperate	4) suspicious	4) admonitory	4) whispering	4) inviting
5) sleepy	2) few difference of altitude	5) impatient	5) accusing	5) controlled	5) pessimistic	5) seductive
6) languishing	3) cracking sound of the tongue	6) sarcastic	6) mockery	6) imperative	6) with proverbs	6) declamatory
7) eschatological humor	4) "inside laugh" (with close lips)	7) reproaching	7) provocative	7) indicative	7) aplacatory	7) infantile
<u>Rhythm, pitch and sounds:</u> 1) nasal		8) begging	8) insulting	8) oppositionist	8) premonitory	8) disgusting
2) scream		9) compassionate	9) arrogant	9) solemn	9) corrosive and poignant humor	9) laughably
3) acceleration		10) letany	10) insidious	10) sententious	<u>Rhythm, pitch and sounds</u> 1) acute sounds	10) festive humour
4) agitation		11) pleasing	11) imperative	11) critical	2) hissing sounds	<u>Rhythm, pitch and sounds</u> 1) dysphony
5) cough		12) guilty	12) resentful	12) clarifying	3) whistling	2) exclamation of joy
6) sneeze		13) laughing	13) spiteful	13) explaining		3) exclamation of anger
7) hiccup		14) choleric	14) choleric	14) doubtful		4) exclamation of disgust
8) bowel sounds		15) black humor	15) threatening	15) black humor		5) exclamation of surprise
9) clear one's throat		<u>Rhythm, pitch and sounds</u> 1) whispering	16) defiant	<u>Rhythm, pitch and sounds:</u> sustained		6) exclamation of admiration
10) burp		2) sobbing	17) provocative and injurious humor			7) onomatopoeia
11) yawn		3) painful (because of psychic pain)	<u>Rhythm, pitch and sounds</u> 1) onomatopoeia			8) cough
12) crying		4) lament				9) clear one's throat
13) sobbing		5) laughing				
14) pant		6) aceleration				
15) slowness		7) slowness				
16) puffing		8) putting				
17) complaint (because of body pain)						
18) litany						
19) onomatopoeia						
20) to sip mucus						
21) silly laugh						
22) slurred voice						
23) drowsiness						

### C. Detection of the defenses

**Narrative analysis.** DLA allows to detect the defenses as drives destinies expressed in the language. If certain scene in the narration is the expression of one eroticism, certain position of the speaker in the scene he/she describe is the sign of 1) a specific defense and 2) a specific state of it. For example, in the language of the primary anal sadistic language the speaker can appear as a hero, as a the subject of a secret just, but he can also set himself as a victim of alien

abuse, or as an instrument employed by a vindictive protagonist that will despise him afterwards. In the first situation, the dominant defense is the successful disavowal, as results in defiant characteropathy, and in the second one (the patient as a victim of abuses or as an instrument, afterwards rejected, that the main character employs in the frame of a vindictive desire of revenge) prevails disavowal too, but as a failed defense. The DLA has a sequence of instructions useful for the investigation of the type of the defense and its state in the level of narration.

**Phrases and words analysis.** If phrases and words allow detecting the erogeneity, rhetorical studies allow inferring the defense. DLA contains a) a systematization of the resources (rhetoric figures, argumentation) expressing some defense and its state, and b) a sequence of instructions allowing to detect how to decide what defense and which state of it appears.

#### D. Testing DLA

The operationalization of the main variables demanded an extended argumentation and included too several clinical analysis (Maldavsky, D. (1968, 1976, 1980, 1986, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2002a, Maldavsky et al., 2000). Validity tests of DLA can be differentiated: 1) contrasting its results with those obtained using other instruments 2) contrasting its results with the ones of clinical research, 3) taking into account the predictive value of some tools (Graphic VI).

#### Graphic VI. Validity test of DLA

Contrasting DLA with studies with other instrument	Contrasting DLA with clinical research	Predictive value of DLA
Maldavsky, 1998b, 2001a, 2001b, 2003a Maldavsky, Tebaldi, Cusien, Groisman, Pereyra, 2001 Maldavsky, Alvarez, Neves, Roitman, Tate de Stanley, 2003b Goldberg, 2002	Maldavsky, 1999, 2003b, 2003c Almasia, 2001 Maldavsky y Almasia, 2002 Maldavsky y Truscello de Manson, 2002 Kazez, 2002 Alvarez, 2001	Maldavsky et al. 2000

Reliability tests included three parts: 1) interjudges agreement, 2) application of DLA to different fragments of the same case, 3) contrasting the results of two or more tools of the method. In this three parts the variable tested can be the erogeneities or the defenses (Graphic VII).

#### Graphic VII. Reliability tests of DLA

	Interjudges agreement	Application of the same tools to different fragments of the same case	Contrasting the results of various tools applied to the same material
Erogenicities	Maldavsky, 1998b	Maldavsky et al., 2000	Maldavsky, 2002a,

	Maldavsky <u>et al.</u> , 2000 Maldavsky, Alvarez, Neves, Roitman, Tate de Stanley, 2003a, 2003b Maldavsky, Aguirre, lusim, Legaspi, Rodriguez, 2003	Kazez, 2002	2002b, 2002d, 2002e, 2003a Maldavsky y Almasia, 2002 Maldavsky, Alvarez, Neves, Roitman, Tate de Stanley, 2003a, 2003b Maldavsky, Aguirre, lusim, Legaspi, Rodriguez, 2003
Defenses	Maldavsky, 1998b, 1999	Maldavsky <u>et al.</u> , 2000	Maldavsky 2002c, 2002d Maldavsky, Alvarez, Neves, Roitman, Tate de Stanley, 2003a, 2003b Maldavsky y Almasia, 2002 Maldavsky, Cusien, Roitman, Tate de Stanley, 2003 Kazez, 2002

Those contrasts also has other values, not just the reliability. The application of the same tool to different fragments of the same case puts in evidence that some differences between the corresponding results reflected the change of the patient, and could be explained using the hypothesis of the partial modification of the defensive system. The difference between the results of various instruments applied to the same case could be explained taking into account 1) or the differences between scenes narrated and scenes displayed in the session (differences between the results of phrases and narration analysis), 2) or the differences between scenes figurated (in the narration or the phrase level) and scenes not figurables (expressed just in the level of the words). Interjudge agreement requires different specific tests: for the narration, for the phrases, etc., and different subtests: in the level of the phrases, the fragmentation and the interpretation of the texts, etc. Among this tests, the interjudge agreement in the study of phrases level, specially concerning defensive analysis, and in the study of paraverbal component are the sector that needs more clearly new efforts. This tests revealed that judges has to receive a high degree of previous formations.

### **E. Analysis of the patient-therapist relationship**

**Stylistic complementarities.** This instrument also allows to study the relationship between patient and therapist's acts of enunciation. On the matter, we want to remember that Liberman (1970) proposed that each discursive style of the patient has an optimum complementary style of the therapist. Liberman named "style" to what we prefer to call language of the eroticism, or preconscious as expression of

an erogeneicity. Beyond these differences, we consider that Liberman's hypothesis concerning the optima complementarities between the patient and the analyst speeches allows researching events happened in session. Liberman support that, when an analyst turn in emphatically to the patient and have a comprehension of his psychic processes, this fact is evidenced in interpretations with a complementary style of the patient's one. Liberman proposed which were the optima complementarities styles of the therapist for each patient. His proposal was not a recommendation about how to intervene. It was more a method the for evaluation the interventions already done. Here is the list of therapist's optimum complementarities that Liberman postulated for each style (language of the eroticism) of the patient, with some aggregates that belong to us:

Patient	IL	O1	O2	A1	A2	UPH	GPH
Analyst	O2	GPH	A2	A2	A1	O1	O1

Liberman justified his proposal affirming that in the genital phallic language of the eroticism are frequent redundant dramatizations and syntactic and semantic proliferation without synthesis, while in the oral primary language of the eroticism the tendency to abstraction and the lack of commitment in a concrete scene prevails. In such way, this last language of the eroticism gives to the first one its optimal complement, while driving to detect the common in the redundancy, and substituting a pathogenic defense (repression) by another one, more benign. In the same way, the genital phallic language of the eroticism is the best complement to the oral primary one. Similar argumentation drives us to justify the other complementarities among the languages of the eroticism. For example, concerning the secondary oral sadistic language of the eroticism, the optimal complement is the secondary anal sadistic one, because the first one puts the emphasis in the feeling against the thought according to rules, that the second language put in relevance. The anal primary language of the eroticism also defies the thought, putting the accent in alloplastic action; so, its best complement is again the secondary anal sadistic language of the eroticism. About this last one, that gives importance to thought instead of decision and action, its optimal complement is the primary anal sadistic language of the eroticism. For the intrasomatic language of the eroticism, that gives attention to corporal processes with no affective qualification, its optimal complement is the secondary oral sadistic language of the eroticism. At last, the urethral phallic language of the eroticism has the same rank of escenical redundancy as the genital phallic, and its complement is the primary oral language of the eroticism.

**Researching patient and therapist styles.** The analysis of the patient's discourse informs about his concrete style, belonging from his libidinal fixation and defenses, specially those displayed during the session. From the therapist discourse analysis (phrases and words studies) the researcher infers which the clinical style is. Each therapist style contents some interventions with an introductory or complementary value and other ones with a main value. This ensemble constitutes a strategy. During the session different clinical strategies can be detected. The style of each analyst with his patient can be formalized as a specific combinatory of strategies.

In each strategy an specific ensemble among introductory, main and complementary interventions can be detected. Two kinds of questions are relevant: 1) concerning the combinatory between introductory, complementary and main interventions in each strategy, 2) concerning the continuity or the change in the main interventions during the session. Sometimes a contradiction between two introductory interventions, or two complementary ones, or between an introductory and a main or a complementary or between a main and a complementary intervention can be detected. Sometimes the orientation of the main interventions changes. Those modifications of the orientation can be a consequence of a rectification of a partially erroneous clinical way or can be an effect of the changes in the patient's discourse obtained by pertinent previous interventions. If the change implies a clinical reorientation, it is possible to study the tree of decision of the therapist in terms of differential strategies: the failed and the successful ones. This kind of description (including the research of the patient's discourse as an expression of his erogeneities and defenses and the research of the style of his therapist) allows investigating too the countertransference. Usually this type of study demands, as a complement, that the therapist gives some additional information about his perturbing feelings during the session. If not, countertransference feelings can be inferred mostly by a combination of the research on the inadequacy of therapist's interventions and on the features of the patient style.

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