

Ferenczi for Our Times

Part 1: Trauma and the Confusion of Tongues

The Freud Museum, June 2, 2017

Dr Raluca Soreanu

r.soreanu@bbk.ac.uk

**Círculo Psicanalítico do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Department of Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck College, London, UK**

Course Programme:

Part 1: Trauma and the Confusion of Tongues

Day 1: Sunday, June 2

10:00-11:20: [1] The Ferenczi Revival

**11:40-13:00: [2] Introjections and Their Vicissitudes. The Memory of the Id.
Traumatic Dreams**

14:00-15:20: [3] The Wise Baby. A Phenomenology

15:40-17:00: [4] Hypocrisy and the Confusion of Tongues

Ferenczi for Our Times

Part 1: Trauma and the Confusion of Tongues

Course Description:

Trauma remains central to psychoanalytic theory and practice. Sándor Ferenczi, a psychoanalyst of the Budapest School, formulates an original and compelling trauma theory. While Ferenczi was “forgotten” for many decades, we are currently traversing a “Ferenczi revival”, where many psychoanalysts around the world are exploring the implications of his ideas on theory and technique for their clinical practice. We start from Ferenczi’s “pre-trauma theory” period, looking at his ideas on introjection, memory and the symbol. We then approach his metapsychology of fragmented psyches, and analyse his conception of the “confusion of tongues” between the adults and the child, which is at the heart of his trauma theory. Ultimately, Ferenczi’s trauma theory is also a theory of the subject.

Method:

We aim for a historically-situated and critical discussion of Ferenczi’s work. We read Ferenczi’s texts closely, reflecting on how his metapsychology differs from the Freudian one, and on his main innovations in psychoanalytic theory and technique. We also work in dialogue with various theoretical and clinical perspectives (such as Klein, Winnicott, Balint, Lacan, Green, Laplanche). In so doing, we give significant space to clinical discussion, working with vignettes from Ferenczi’s own writing and from contemporary clinical practice.

Session Themes:

[1] The Ferenczi Revival

Themes: The place of Sándor Ferenczi in the history of psychoanalysis: Ferenczi, what kind of memory object? Ferenczi’s relationship with Freud. The traumatic forgetting of Ferenczi. The “Ferenczi revival”. Ferenczi’s main contributions to psychoanalytic theory and technique. Ferenczi’s trauma theory as a theory of the subject.

Main readings:

*Ferenczi, S. (1932). *The clinical diary of Sándor Ferenczi* (M. Balint & N. Z. Jackson, Trans.). (pp. 1-10). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988. [Entries of 7 January 1932, “Insensitivity [*Fühllosigkeit*] of the analyst”; and 10 January 1932, “Thinking with the body equals hysteria”]

Contemporary texts:

Aron, L. & Harris, A. (1993). Sándor Ferenczi: Discovery and rediscovery, In *The Legacy of Sándor Ferenczi*, (L. Aron & A. Harris, eds.). (pp. 1-36). Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press.

Bergmann, M. S. (1996). The tragic encounter between Freud and Ferenczi. In *Ferenczi's turn in psychoanalysis*, (P. Rudnytsky, A. Bokay, & P. Giampieri-Deutsch, eds.). (pp. 145–159). New York: New York University Press.

Soreanu, R. (2017). Something was lost in Freud's *Beyond the pleasure principle*: A Ferenczian reading. *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(3), 223-238.

Further readings:

Ferenczi, S. (1924). Thalassa: A theory of genitality (H. A. Bunker, Trans.). Albany: *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 1938.

[2] Introjections and Their Vicissitudes. The Memory of the Id. Traumatic Dreams

Themes: Ferenczi's "pre-trauma" period. Introjection, incorporation, projection. Vicissitudes of the introjective process. Ferenczi's conception of the symbol. The idea of imitation/mimetism. The idea of analogy and its implications. Memory as a "scar-tissue". The system of memory of the id. The system of memory of the ego. Ferenczi's ideas on the function of dreams. The problem of re-living.

Main readings:

*Ferenczi, S. (1921/1994). The symbolism of the bridge. In *Further contributions to the theory and technique of psycho-analysis*. (J. I. Suttie, Trans.). (pp. 352–356). London: Karnac Books.

*Ferenczi, S. (1913/1994). Stages in the development of the sense of reality. In *First contributions to psycho-analysis*. (E. Jones, Trans.). (pp. 213–239). London: Karnac Books.

Contemporary texts:

Hristeva, G. (2013). "Uterus Loquitur": Trauma and the human organism in Ferenczi's "Physiology of Pleasure". *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 73(4), 339-352.

Soreanu, R. (2018). Symbols. In *Working-through Collective Wounds: Trauma, Denial, Recognition in the Brazilian Uprising*. (pp. 17-50). London: Routledge.

Further readings:

Ferenczi, S. (1909/1994). Introjection and transference. In *First contributions to psycho-analysis*. (E. Jones, Trans.). (pp. 35–93). London: Karnac Books.

Ferenczi, S. (1915/1994). The analysis of comparisons. In *Further contributions to the theory and technique of psycho-analysis*. (J. I. Suttie, J., Trans.). (pp. 397–407). London: Karnac.

Ferenczi, S. (1919/1994). The phenomena of hysterical materialization. In *Further contributions to the theory and technique of psycho-analysis*. (J. I. Suttie, J., Trans.). (pp. 89–104). London: Karnac, 1994.

Ferenczi, S. (1926/1994). The problem of acceptance of unpleasant ideas—Advances in knowledge of the sense of reality. In *Further contributions to the theory and*

technique of psycho-analysis. (J. I. Suttie, Trans.). (pp. 366–379). London: Karnac Books.

Ferenczi, S. (1931/1994). On the revision of the interpretation of dreams. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis* (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (pp. 238–243). London: Karnac.

[3] The Wise Baby. A Phenomenology

Themes: The dream of the “wise baby”. The “wise baby” in the consulting room. Maternal hypnosis and paternal hypnosis. The taming of a wild horse. Images of the child in Ferenczi’s work: from psychoanalytic construction to political subject. *Homo infans*.

Main readings:

*Ferenczi, S. (1923/1994). The dream of the “clever baby”. In *Further contributions to the theory and technique of psycho-analysis*. (J. I. Suttie, Trans.). (pp. 349–350). London: Karnac Books.

*Ferenczi, S. (1931/1994). The birth of intellect. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis*. (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (pp. 244–246). London: Karnac Books.

*Ferenczi, S. (1913/1994). Taming of a wild horse. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis*. (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (pp. 336–340). London: Karnac Books.

Contemporary texts:

Bókay, A. (2015). The child as a traumatic self-component in Ferenczi’s later psychoanalysis. *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 75(1), 46-56.

Vida, J. E. (2005). Treating the “wise baby”. *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 65(1), 3-12.

Further readings:

Ferenczi, S. (1921/1994). Psycho-analytical observations on tic. In *Further contributions to the theory and technique of psycho-analysis*. (J. I. Suttie, Trans.). (pp. 142–174). London: Karnac Books.

[5] Hypocrisy and the Confusion of Tongues

Themes: Ferenczi’s trauma theory. The seduction/phantasy debate and its vicissitudes. The confusion of tongues between the language of passion and the language of tenderness. The grammar of the scene of trauma: two temporalities and three presences. The Other as internally differentiated category. Pluralising trauma. The experience of being “unwelcome”. The experience of being “dropped”.

Main readings:

*Ferenczi, S. (1931/1994). Child analysis in the analysis of adults. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis*. (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (pp. 126–142). London: Karnac Books.

*Ferenczi, S. (1933/1994). Confusion of tongues between adults and the child. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis*. (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (pp. 156–168). London: Karnac Books.

Contemporary texts:

Soreanu, R. (2018). Hypocrisy, alienation, ideology; Utopia and the *homo infans*. In *Working-through Collective Wounds: Trauma, Denial, Recognition in the Brazilian Uprising*. (pp. 61-73). London: Palgrave.

Frankel, J. (1998). Ferenczi's trauma theory. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 58(1), 41–61.

Haynal, A. (2014). Trauma-revisited: Ferenczi and modern psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 34(2), 98–111.

Further readings:

Ferenczi, S. (1929/1994). The unwelcome child and his death-instinct. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis*. (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (pp. 102–107). London: Karnac Books.

Dr Raluca Soreanu is a psychoanalyst, effective member of Círculo Psicanalítico do Rio de Janeiro, and Wellcome Trust Fellow in Medical Humanities, Department of Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck, London. She is the author of *Working-through Collective Wounds: Trauma, Denial, Recognition in the Brazilian Uprising* (Palgrave, 2018), which formulates a theory of collective trauma, drawing on the work of Sándor Ferenczi. In the past four years, she has studied the Michael Balint Archive, found at the British Psychoanalytical Society. Her most recent project is a monograph looking at psychic splitting and temporality, *The Psychic Life of Fragments: On Splitting and the Experience of Time in Psychoanalysis* (forthcoming, 2019). She is part of the *Waiting Times* project, supported by the Wellcome Trust, and exploring the connections between time and care.