Ferenczi for Our Times

Part 2: The Psychic Life of Fragments.

On Psychic Splitting

The Freud Museum, July 7, 2019

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Course Programme:

Part 2: The Psychic Life of Fragments. On Psychic Splitting

Day 2: Sunday, July 7
10:00-11:20: [5] Identification with the Aggressor. A Phenomenology of Psychic Splitting
14:00-15:20: [7] Neo-Catharsis. Innovations on Psychoanalytic Technique
15:40-17:00: [8] A Narcissism of Fragments. Implications for the Contemporary Clinic
Course Description:
The issue of psychic splitting is at the heart of contemporary psychoanalytic debates. Sándor Ferenczi makes a unique contribution to imagining psychic fragments and working with them clinically. We ask, with Ferenczi: what are the “lives” of the fragments that result from processes of psychic splitting? And how do these “lives of fragments” manifest themselves in the consulting room? We explore the Orpha-fragment of the psyche and its relationship to the superego. We discuss Ferenczi’s main contributions to psychoanalytic technique, including his formulation on active technique, the elasticity of technique, the principle of relaxation, and neo-catharsis. We conclude with some reflections on the contemporary clinic, focusing on the relevance of Ferenczian theory for the discussions on narcissistic pathologies and psychosomatics.

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 Ferenczi’s main directions of innovation 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 writings and from contemporary clinical practice.

Session Themes:
[5] Identification with the Aggressor. A Phenomenology of Psychic Splitting

Themes: The phenomenology of psychic splitting. Splitting for Ferenczi and for Klein. The identification with the aggressor. Alloplastic and autoplastic phenomena. A phenomenology of splitting: the moment of the attack and traumatic paralysis, dematerialisation and the process of traumatic imitation, the introjection of the guilt of the aggressor, getting beside oneself, traumatic progression or precocious maturity, self-caring and the emergence of the Orpha-fragment of the psyche, autotomy, the emergence new organs/neo-formations, psychic reconstruction.
Main readings:


Contemporary texts:


Further readings:


Main readings:


Contemporary texts:


Further readings:


[7] Neo-Catharsis. Innovations on Psychoanalytic Technique


Main readings:


Contemporary texts:


Soreanu, R. (2016). Ferenczi’s times: The segment, the tangent, the meandering line. American Imago, 73(1), 51-69.

Further readings:


A Narcissism of Fragments. Implications for the Contemporary Clinic


Main readings:


Contemporary texts:


Further readings:


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.