

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

11:40-13:00: [6] The Psychic Life of Fragments. Orpha, Teratoma and Other Monsters

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

Ferenczi for Our Times

Part 2: The Psychic Life of Fragments.

On Psychic Splitting

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 autoplatic 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:

- *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.
- *Ferenczi, S. (1932). *The clinical diary of Sándor Ferenczi* (M. Balint & N. Z. Jackson, Trans.). (pp. 16-19; pp. 38-40; pp. 76-78). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988. [Entries of 24 January 1932, “Suggestion, intimidation, imposition of an alien will”; 21 February 1932, “Fragmentation”; 3 April 1932 “Explantation and implantation of psychic contents and energies” (S.I.)]

Contemporary texts:

- Soreanu, R. (2018). The Psychic Life of Fragments: Splitting from Ferenczi to Klein. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 78(4), 421-444.
- Bokanowski, T. (2004). Splitting, fragmenting, and mental agony: The clinical thinking of Sándor Ferenczi. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 13(1–2), 20–25.
- Frankel, J. (2015). The persistent sense of being bad: the moral dimension of the identification with the aggressor. In *The Legacy of Sandor Ferenczi: From ghost to ancestor* (A. Harris & S. Kuchuck, eds.) (pp. 204-222). London and New York: Routledge.

Further readings:

- Ferenczi, S. (1930a/1994). Autoplastic and alloplastic adaptation. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis* (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (p. 221). London: Karnac.
- Ferenczi, S. (1930b/1994). Trauma and striving for health. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis* (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (pp. 230–231). London: Karnac.
- Ferenczi, S. (1932/1994). On shock. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis* (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (pp. 253–254). London: Karnac.

[6] The Psychic Life of Fragments. Orpha, Teratoma and Other Monsters

Themes: The psychic life of fragments. The Orpha-fragment of the psyche. The teratoma. Elements for a Ferenczian theory of the superego. The “mad” superego. Superego-as-a-scene. Orpha-superego dialogues and their clinical implications. Orphic phenomena in the consulting room. The times of the Orpha fragment of the psyche.

Main readings:

- *Ferenczi, S. (1932). *The clinical diary of Sándor Ferenczi* (M. Balint & N. Z. Jackson, Trans.). (pp. 8-10; pp. 102-106; pp. 106-108). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988. [Entries of 12 January 1932, “Case of schizophrenia progressiva (R.N)”]; 10 May 1932 “Traumatic self-strangulation”; 12 May 1932 “Compulsion to repeat the trauma”]

Contemporary texts:

- Smith, N. A. (1998). “Orpha reviving”: Toward an honorable recognition of Elizabeth Severn. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 7(4), 241–246.

Smith, N. A. (1999). From Oedipus to Orpha: Revisiting Ferenczi and Severn's landmark case. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 59(4), 345–366. Further readings:

Gurevich, H. (2016). Orpha, orphic functions, and the orphic analyst: Winnicott's "regression to dependence" in the language of Ferenczi. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 76(4), 322–340.

Further readings:

Ferenczi, S. (1930/1994). Fantasies on a biological model of super-ego formation. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis* (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (pp. 227–230). London: Karnac.

[7] Neo-Catharsis. Innovations on Psychoanalytic Technique

Themes: The place of countertransference in the Budapest School of Psychoanalysis. Active technique and its critique. The elasticity of technique. The principle of relaxation and neo-catharsis. The role of regression. The issue enactment. Working with psychic fragments and the clinic of recognition. Horizontality and ethics in psychoanalytic practice.

Main readings:

*Ferenczi, S. (1929/1994). The principle of relaxation and neocatharsis. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis*. (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (pp. 108–125). London: Karnac Books.

Contemporary texts:

Haynal, A. (1999). The countertransference in the work of Ferenczi. *The American journal of psychoanalysis*, 59(4), 315-331.

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

Further readings:

Ferenczi, S. (1919/1994). On the technique of psycho-analysis. In *Further contributions to the theory and technique of psycho-analysis*. (J. I. Suttie, Trans.). (pp. 177–189). London: Karnac Books.

Ferenczi, S. (1920/1994). The further development of active therapy in psycho-analysis. In *Further contributions to the theory and technique of psychoanalysis*. (J. I. Suttie, Trans.). (pp. 198–217). London: Karnac Books.

Ferenczi, S. (1921/1994). Contra-indications to the "active" psychoanalytic technique. In *Further contributions to the theory and technique of psycho-analysis*. (J. I. Suttie, Trans.). (pp. 217–230). London: Karnac Books.

Ferenczi, S. (1924/1994). On forced phantasies. In *Further contributions to the theory and technique of psycho-analysis*. (J. I. Suttie, Trans.). (pp. 68–77). London: Karnac Books.

Ferenczi, S. (1928/1994). The elasticity of psychoanalytic technique. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis*. (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (pp. 87–101). London: Karnac Books.

[8] A Narcissism of Fragments. Implications for the Contemporary Clinic

Themes: The Ferenczian narcissism of fragments. Between Freudian narcissism and Ferenczian narcissism. Narcissistic pathologies. Psychosomatic illnesses and “organ neuroses”. The case of R.N. in the *Clinical Diary*. The psychic life of fragments and its epistemological implications. The “Ferenczi revival”, reconsidered.

Main readings:

*Ferenczi, S. (1926/1994). Organ neuroses and their treatment. In *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis*. (E. Mosbacher, Trans.). (pp. 22-28). London: Karnac Books.

*Ferenczi, S. (1932). *The clinical diary of Sándor Ferenczi* (M. Balint & N. Z. Jackson, Trans.). (p. 117). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988. [Entries of 9 June 1932, “Psychosoma”]

Contemporary texts:

Frankel, J. (2017). Ferenczi’s evolving conception of narcissistic pathology and its basis in trauma. *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(3), 213-222.

Soreanu, R. (2019). The time of re-living. For an eventful psychoanalysis. *Vestigia* (forthcoming).

Wilson, E. (2015). The biological unconscious. In *Gut feminism*. (pp. 45-67). Duke University Press.

Further readings:

Ferenczi, S. (1913/1994). Transitory symptom-constructions during the analysis. In *First contributions to psycho-analysis*. (E. Jones, Trans.). (pp. 193–212). London: Karnac Books.

Ferenczi, S. (1919/1994). The phenomena of hysterical materialization. In *Further contributions to the theory and technique of psycho-analysis*. (J. I. Suttie, Trans.). (pp. 89-103). 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.