

## WHY DID FERENCZI & RANK CONCLUDE THAT FREUD HAD NO MORE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THAN A PRE-OEDIPAL CHILD?

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In February 1926 Sándor Ferenczi offered to analyze Sigmund Freud, his beloved Professor and mentor. "I find it actually tragic that you, who endowed the world with analysis, find it so difficult to be -- indeed, are not at all -- in a position to entrust yourself to anyone," Ferenczi told Freud, who had been tormented for three years by cancer of the jaw and was, in 1926, also suffering from heart pains. "I will come to you for a few months and place myself at your disposal as analyst -- naturally: if you don't throw me out" (Falzeder et al., 2000, p. 250). Few human beings understood Freud's emotions more deeply than Ferenczi, who, for almost two decades, had immersed himself, with all his heart and soul, in Freud's most intimate thoughts, anxieties, and feelings (Mészáros, 1999). "Don't forget," Ferenczi once reminded Freud, "for years I have been occupied with nothing but the products of your intellect, and I have always felt the man behind every sentence of your works and made him my confidant" (Brabant et al., 1993, p. 219).

### "A MOST THOROUGHGOING SELF-SCRUTINY"

Ferenczi analyzing Freud? In the recent explosion of writings on Ferenczi, I have found no one -- not a single analyst, writer, or historian -- who has been willing to take Ferenczi's offer seriously. It seems inconceivable, especially to institute-trained analysts, even those favorable to Ferenczi, that Freud could have benefited from therapy with Ferenczi. Did Freud need emotional insight from Ferenczi, of all people? Absurd! It was Ferenczi, the quintessential "needy child" and lovesick enfant terrible of psychoanalysis, who was the patient, not Freud. What emotional insights could Freud, the aging Oedipal father, have possibly experienced in analysis with an ill "wise baby"? The very idea is preposterous, unspeakable, unthinkable -- subversively calling into question the integrity of Freud's self-analysis, the foundation stone of all psychoanalytic theory and practice.

According to historians such as Peter Gay, and resolutely maintained to this day by legions of institute-trained analysts and psychoanalytically inclined academics in the arts and humanities, Freud's self-analysis of his infantile emotions in the late 1890s was a brilliant success, and established the Oedipus crisis as the nodal point for the attainment of maturity. During the late 1890s, Freud, in correspondence with Fliess, struggled against almost insuperable odds to reach the neurotic harbor of his own Oedipus complex, writes Gay, by "subjecting himself to a most thoroughgoing self-scrutiny, an elaborate, penetrating, and unceasing census of his fragmentary memories, his concealed wishes and emotions" (Gay, 1988, p. 97).

Some recent writers, while sympathetic to Ferenczi, claim that Ferenczi "wished to analyze Freud, his own analyst, so that Freud, in turn, would be enabled to complete Ferenczi's analysis" (Aron and Harris, 1993, p. 4). Who could deny that Ferenczi pleaded, in dozens of letters, year after year, for emotional help from Freud, his revered master and friend? But something is missing, I feel, from such a one-sided -- or, may I say, "one body"? -- perspective. There are two hearts and two minds, plus a host of internal objects, entangled in every relationship. All analysis is mutual. Ferenczi, a pioneer of "two body" psychology,

the most compassionate and empathic of the early clinicians, considered himself a “specialist in peculiarly difficult cases” (Ferenczi, 1931, p. 128), the last glimmer of hope for souls who had abandoned all hope.

Unlike those who infantilize Ferenczi by refusing to take him at face value, I believe that, by offering to analyze Freud, in addition to wanting to complete his own analysis, Ferenczi was unselfishly and sincerely offering an extraordinary gift to the Professor, his friend and mentor, an opportunity to experience emotionally – perhaps for the first time -- the genuine possibility of healing in the therapeutic encounter. “I am also [not] that *psa. superman* whom we have constructed,” Freud once told Ferenczi (Brabant et al., 1993, p. 221.). In a slip of the pen, Freud forgot to write the word “not” in this confession of humility. But surely Ferenczi saw at once that Freud’s slip was a human-all-too-human cry for help. And who better than Ferenczi, trusted above all others, to reach out and help Freud in a time of such great need, when the Professor had been diagnosed with an agonizingly painful, and eventually fatal, oral cancer?.

### **“WHENEVER AN EMOTIONAL REACTION IS SUPPRESSED, INTERRUPTED, OR REPRESSED, SOMETHING IS ACTUALLY DESTROYED IN US”**

I began to be curious about the intent of Ferenczi’s February 1926 offer to analyze Freud only recently, after spending many years studying the lifework of Otto Rank, Ferenczi’s close friend and collaborator in the early Twenties (Kramer 1995; 1996; 1997). Following the trail blazed by Esther Menaker’s rediscovery and masterful exposition of Rank’s legacy (Menaker, 1982; 1995; 1996), I became convinced that Rank, of all the early pioneers of psychoanalysis, was the most brilliant and the least appreciated, although his prescient writings on will and emotional intelligence would later capture the imagination of Carl Rogers, Rollo May and other founders of humanistic psychotherapy (Kramer, 1995). Like Ferenczi, Rank was exceptionally intimate with Freud, but, unlike Ferenczi, Rank ultimately refused to recant the pre-Oedipal “heresies” he had championed (and shared before publication with Ferenczi) in *The Trauma of Birth* (1924). Confronted with Freud’s decisive opposition, Rank chose to resign in protest from his positions as vice-president of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, director of Freud’s publishing house, and editor of *Imago* and *Zeitschrift*, the two leading psychoanalytic journals, and move to Paris, and later America, where he enjoyed great success as a therapist, lecturer, and writer until his death in 1939 (Lieberman 1985).

Although Ferenczi and Rank, the two most creative thinkers in Freud’s inner circle, had broken off their relationship by early 1926, I began to wonder about the timing of Ferenczi’s offer to analyze Freud in February 1926. Even after Ferenczi publicly attacked Rank in the psychoanalytic journals, it is evident, based on a reading of Ferenczi’s recently published *Clinical Diary*, that Ferenczi still harbored all of Rank’s pre-Oedipal “heresies.” Was it merely coincidence, I thought, that Ferenczi mentioned Freud’s oral cancer -- “your jaw malady” (Falzeder et al., 2000, p. 250) -- in the February 1926 letter in which he offered to analyze the Professor? “Whenever an emotional reaction is suppressed, interrupted, or repressed, something is actually destroyed in us,” says Ferenczi in his *Clinical Diary*. “The annihilated part of the person falls into a state of decay and decomposes” (1988, p. 88). I can easily imagine that, by 1926, after he had “proved” his loyalty to Freud, the keenly sensitive Ferenczi might very well have felt that Freud’s oral cancer, the gaping hole in Freud’s jaw, was a kind of teratoma: a physical expression of the isolated fragments of Freud’s arrested infantile experience and emotions – the return, so to speak, of the repressed. “My own analysis,” Ferenczi confided to his *Clinical Diary*, “could not be pursued deep enough because my analyst [Freud]... could not follow me down into those depths” (1932, p. 62) – obviously, the same pre-Oedipal depths plumbed so fearlessly by Rank. With respect to how Freud’s incomplete self-analysis of his infantile emotions might have inadvertently harmed his own unfinished analysis with Freud, Ferenczi asked poignantly in 1932: “Is it not possible, or even probable, that a doctor who has not been analyzed well ... will not cure me but, instead, will act out his own neurosis or psychosis at my expense? (ibid., pp. 92-93).

In early 1926 Ferenczi knew that Freud had long been fed up with therapy, seeing it as impossible, equivalent, as Freud once told Rank, to “the whitewashing of the Negro” (Rank, 1941, p. 272). By then Freud had lost almost all hope for the curative potential of classical analysis, focusing his energies instead on “scientific investigation” of the unconscious and building his increasingly complex psychoanalytic theory. Couldn’t Freud, therefore, learn something from Ferenczi’s analysis of him? Now that Rank, the only other intellectual peer of Freud, had been catapulted out of the inner circle, who but the empathetically gifted

Ferenczi was left to grasp Freud in the deepest emotional strata of his unconscious?.

### **“THE TEARS OF DOCTOR AND PATIENT”**

Let us, for once, take Ferenczi's offer seriously. If we do, the question arises: What would the emotional experience of analysis with Ferenczi have been like for Freud in the role of patient? Unfortunately, we are immediately stymied -- no one can possibly know the answer to this question. But what if we tried to consider this offer from Ferenczi's frame of reference? How might Ferenczi, for example, have conducted himself in the role of analyst? Here, I think we can be more confident in our guess. It seems safe to predict that Ferenczi, no matter how awed he was by Freud's genius, would have treated Freud along the lines of the tender emotional encounters he describes, with such poignancy, in his *Clinical Diary*: Should it even occur, as it does occasionally to me, that experiencing another's and my own suffering brings a tear to my eye (and one should not conceal this emotion from the patient), then the tears of doctor and patient mingle in a sublimated communion, which perhaps finds its analogy only in the mother-child relationship. (Ferenczi, 1988, p. 65).

The neurosis, Freud once warned Ferenczi, “is the motherland where we first have to secure our mastery against everything and everyone” (Brabant et al., 1993, p. 247). Psychoanalysis seeks mastery of the motherland? Throughout Freud's writings, the child's emotional relationship to its mother is a ghostly phantom, invisible and unthinkable, yet always present, between the sheets of his text. “I underestimate the strength of these [mother] complexes,” Freud told Ferenczi in 1916, “probably out of personal inexperience” (Falzeder et al. 1996, p. 121). Did Freud not have personal experiences with his own mother? By the early Twenties, it had become clear to Ferenczi and Rank that the psychic root of emotional joy and emotional suffering, mental health and mental pathology, lay buried in the “dark continent,” as it were, of the earliest mother-child relationship.

A new experience in a deeply emotional relationship with an empathic analyst -- what Ferenczi and Rank in *The Development of Psychoanalysis* (1924) had called *Erlebnis* (or experiential) therapy -- is necessary for healing. “This, then, is the New,” said Rank, “which the patient has never experienced before” (Rank, 1929-31, p. 65). Mere Oedipal interpretation by a cool, indifferent analyst, Ferenczi and Rank insisted, is more traumatic than helpful. In addition to tactfully analyzing transference and countertransference, and plumbing infantile history to its most painful roots, the analyst needs to relate emotionally to the patient, person-to-person, soul to soul -- I to Thou, Thou to I -- in the here and now of the analytic situation. According to Rank, all emotional life is grounded in the present. In *Will Therapy*, published in German in 1929-31, Rank uses the term “here and now” for the first time in the psychotherapeutic literature: “Freud made the repression historical, that is, misplaced it into the childhood of the individual and then wanted to release it from there, while as a matter of fact the same tendency is working here and now” (Rank, 1929-31, p. 39). Instead of the word “*Verdrängung*” (repression), which laid stress on unconscious repression of the past, Rank preferred to use the word “*Verleugnung*” (denial), which focused instead on the emotional will to remain ill in the present: “The neurotic lives too much in the past [and] to that extent he actually does not live. He suffers ... because he clings to [the past], wants to cling to it, in order to protect himself from experience [*Erlebnis*], the emotional surrender to the present” (Rank, 1929-31, p. 27).

So how was “here and now” experiential therapy to be effected with a patient named Sigmund Freud? Says Ferenczi in his *Clinical Diary*: “A contrast to the environment surrounding the traumatic situation -- that is, sympathy, trust -- mutual trust -- must first be created before a new footing can be established” (1988, pp. 169-70). Surely Ferenczi would not have practiced “classical analysis,” which he held in low regard, with Freud. He must, therefore, have intended some form of *Erlebnis* or experiential therapy, along the lines pioneered by him and Rank. But how might Freud benefit from such an emotional experience with Ferenczi? By fully experiencing the deep empathic understanding of Ferenczi, the proud but anguished creator of psychoanalysis might, at long last, become more open to his own emotional *Erlebnis*, more open to experiencing feelings that seemed to him so terrible that he had never been able to recognize their existence in himself. With Ferenczi's loving help, Freud might become more open to working through the pain of his archaic childhood, more open to loosening the chains that tied him to his tormented past, more open to letting go of defenses against threatening aspects of his experience -- more open, in short, to warming the frozen sea inside his soul. Freud, under the care of the trusted Ferenczi, might for the first time

become acquainted, gently and compassionately, with elements of his buried painful infantile experience, that, in his continuing self-analysis, tragically, he had found too threatening or too damaging to integrate into his adult psyche.

Offering to analyze Freud must have taken enormous courage, great fortitude, for Ferenczi, who was keenly aware of his own tendency toward infantile dependence on, and ambivalence toward, Freud, a gigantic intellect, to be sure, but also a frail, sympathetic, suffering human being, a small boy trapped in the craw of an adult, who needed love and acceptance just as any other living person did. No matter how “ill” Ferenczi felt, he was convinced, I believe, that only the tender care of a “wounded healer” could help another “wounded healer” find the courage to face the deepest and darkest truths, conquer the daemons of his unconscious, and recover, finally, the will to heal himself.

### **“HOW SHOULD I MAKE FRIENDS WITH ONE THAT IS HARMFUL FOR MY LOVED ONES!”**

Now let us turn to how Freud responded to Ferenczi’s offer. Curiously, the usually suspicious Freud did not question Ferenczi’s motive in offering to analyze him; rather he thanked him warmly for the “touching suggestion [rührenden Vorschlag]” and conceded that there might, indeed, be a “psychic root [psychische Wurzel]” to his dangerous physical condition (Falzeder et al., 2000, p. 252). Just three years earlier, in 1923, Freud had been diagnosed with oral cancer. Until he died in 1939, Freud would suffer through thirty-three operations on his mouth and be forced to wear a series of painful prosthetic devices, severely limiting his hearing and speech -- the very means, ironically, by which psychoanalysis, the talking cure, relieved neurosis. None ever fit properly. “I am constantly tortured by something,” Freud complained to Max Eitingon, a member of the Secret Committee (Romm, 1983, p. 71). For the rest of his life, Freud called his prosthesis and oral cancer a “monster” (Jones, 1957, p. 99) and “an uninvited, unwelcome intruder whom one should not mind more than necessary” (Romm 1983, p. 33). Yet, unaccountably, Freud never seemed interested in analyzing the emotional origins of his daemoniac oral suffering, although he once told Thornton Wilder, the American writer, that someday it might be revealed that cancer is related to “the presence of hate” (Freud, 1992, pp. 297-98) in the unconscious. Who or what did Freud “hate” in his unconscious?

In his February 1926 response to Ferenczi, Freud was kindly but made clear that he was deliberately choosing not to let Ferenczi analyze him, giving his age – he was then approaching seventy -- as the major reason. But, almost in passing, he added another, more puzzling, reason: “how should I make friends with one that is harmful for my loved ones!” (Falzeder et al., 2000, p. 252). Ferenczi, Freud’s most intimate and devoted friend: “harmful for my loved ones”? Let us pause here for a moment. Freud’s cryptic response bears study and raises a number of questions, which no one has yet answered satisfactorily. Why, exactly, did Freud fear and resist analysis by Ferenczi? Take his first reason. Could it really be age? It was well known by Ferenczi and everyone else in Freud’s inner circle that “Freud never ceased to analyze himself, devoting the last half hour of his day to that purpose” (Jones, 1953, p. 327). Age and closeness to death never affected Freud’s daily self-analysis, although, in truth, he held little hope for analysis of older patients. The puzzle remains: What kind of “harm” did Freud fear that Ferenczi’s analysis would do to Freud’s “loved ones”? Who, exactly, were the “loved ones” that Freud felt were threatened? And what was the nature of this threat?

In his March 1926 reply, Ferenczi brushed aside Freud’s argument concerning his age or his fear of “harm” to “loved ones.” Instead, Ferenczi suggested, with remarkable candor, that overcoming resistance to emotional insight was possible even for the creator of psychoanalysis: “Please keep in mind that as soon as your disinclination (should I say resistance) has been halfway overcome, I can come to Vienna immediately” (Falzeder et al., 2000, p. 253). No one in psychoanalysis believed in the transforming power of analytic insight more than Freud. Psychoanalytic treatment, Freud had insisted from the beginning of his self-analysis, is “founded on truthfulness” (S.E., 12:164), ripping away all veils, facing the darkest truths of the soul, fearlessly filling in all the gaps of memory. The treatment “may be said to have filled in this gap and to have abolished man’s infantile amnesia” (S.E., 13:183). The repressed must “gain a hearing,” declared Freud tirelessly (S.E., 21:53). Even more than hearing, no metaphor was as beloved to Freud as vision-- i.e., psychoanalytic “insight” or seeing within: “Turn your eyes inward,” he demanded of his patients no less than of himself, “look into your own depths, learn first to know yourself! Then you will understand why you were bound to fall ill” (S.E., 17:143). Analytic insight is all.

## **“NO MORE INSIGHT THAN A SMALL BOY”**

Six years after offering to heal Freud, and being turned away, Ferenczi wrote his Clinical Diary, musing about Freud with a mixture of love, sadness, bitterness, and anger. Throughout the diary Ferenczi repeatedly expresses profound disillusionment with Freud's capacity for self-insight -- with, what orthodox historians like Gay (1988) continue to call, Freud's "most thoroughgoing self-scrutiny" (p. 97). On many pages, Ferenczi shows unequivocally, in the words of Judith Dupont, that "Freud could not renounce defending himself" (in Ferenczi, 1988, p. xii). A few days before his last meeting with Freud in 1932, Ferenczi went so far as to tell A. A. Brill that "he couldn't credit Freud with any more insight than a small boy," using, Jones (1957) adds, the "exact phrase" that Rank did when he left Freud (p. 172). What can it mean, I wonder, that the two men closest to Freud, in their final assessment of Freud's capacity for emotional insight, are in perfect agreement? I have no doubt that this shocking judgment -- Freud has no more insight than a small boy! -- was purposefully quoted by Jones, a bitter enemy of both Ferenczi and Rank, to support his claim that the two men had fallen into psychosis: both, charges Jones, "developed psychotic manifestations that revealed themselves in, among other ways, a turning away from Freud and his doctrines" (Jones, 1957, p. 45). But we know now, as Dupont says, that the Clinical Diary "provides substantial proof, if any were needed, of Ferenczi's sound mental health" (in Ferenczi, 1988, p. xi) in 1932. Likewise, my own research shows that the reason for Rank's departure from the inner circle was not psychosis, but Freud's refusal to accept the pre-Oedipal theory of object relations that Rank had constructed by the early Twenties (Kramer, 1996). As Menaker (1982) long ago demonstrated, Rank was the first to propose a comprehensive psychoanalytic theory of ego psychology and object relations. Following Menaker's pioneering research, I documented that it was also Rank who first used the term "pre-Oedipal" in a public psychoanalytic forum (Kramer, 1996, p. 43). In the next edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, Rank will be credited with coining this term. My pre-Oedipal theories, Rank once wrote to a friend, were "already in the Trauma ... before anyone else dared to conceive them." (ibid.).

Rejecting Jones's animus, we would be better served to understand Rank and Ferenczi's sad, final analysis of Freud as having "no more insight than small boy" in a deeper, more psychoanalytic way -- in the poignant terms, for example, that Ferenczi spoke about patients who suffer from infantile trauma: The greater part of the personality becomes, as it were, a teratoma, the task of adaptation to reality being shouldered by the fragment of personality which has been spared. Such persons have actually remained entirely at the child level, and for them the usual methods of analytical therapy are not enough. (Ferenczi, 1929, p. 121).

By describing Freud in 1930 as having "no more insight than a small boy" could Ferenczi have meant, I wonder, that the creator of psychoanalysis, tragically, was unable for a lifetime to reach the emotional maturity of the Oedipus complex, remaining forever chained in his unconscious, like a small boy, to the loved and hated maternal object? Could it be that this is why Rank, when he left the inner circle in 1926, used "the exact phrase" that Ferenczi did (Jones, 1957, p. 172)?

As an outcome of the castration complex, Ferenczi and Rank had maintained in *The Development of Psychoanalysis* (1924), the small boy's anxious introjection of the powerful and loved mother serves the purpose of avoiding the Oedipus role (Kramer, 1996, p. 18). Was Freud blinded by a small boy's paralyzing need to protect the internalized image of his beloved mother, and, therefore, unwilling to analyze his conflicted emotional attachment to the first "good" and "bad" object? In his 1926 American lectures, Rank points out that Freud refused to "see" behind the Oedipus situation to the primal, ambivalent pre-Oedipal object relationship, denying the role of the powerful mother in the infant's emotional development and splitting off his hatred onto women in general:

[Freud] sees in the mother merely the coveted sex object, for the possession of which the child battles with the father. The "bad mother" he has never seen, but only the later displacement of her to the father, who therefore plays such an omnipotent part in his theory. The image of the bad mother, however, is present in Freud's estimation of woman, who is merely a passive and inferior object for him: in other words, "castrated." (Rank, 1996, p. 101).

## **“† MOTHER DIED 8 AM”**

None of Freud's closest colleagues, many of whom paid courtesy calls on Amalia Freud, the Ur-Mutter of psychoanalysis, ever wondered aloud about Freud's relationship with his own mother (Roazen, 1993, p. 35). Who, exactly, was she? Even today, after an avalanche of books and articles on every aspect of Freud's life and work, almost nothing is known about his emotional relationship to his mother except for a few scattered

reminiscences (Kobler, 1962). “She was charming and smiling when strangers were about, but I,” writes Judith Bernays Heller, the maternal granddaughter of Amalia, “at least always felt that with familiars she was a tyrant, and a selfish one. Quite definitely, she had a strong personality and knew what she wanted.” (Heller, 1973, p. 338). “I really feared” her, says Heller (*ibid.*).

Freud’s son, Martin, describes his grandmother Amalia as “certainly not what we would call a ‘lady,’ [she] had a lively temper and was impatient, self-willed, sharp-witted, and highly intelligent” (Gay, 1988, p. 504). Even when ill or recovering from his dozens of operations for oral cancer, “Professor Freud always found time on Sunday mornings to pay his mother a visit and give her the pleasure of petting and making a fuss over him” (Heller, 1973, p. 339). Amalia Freud died on August 12, 1930, three years before Ferenczi. “Up to the last four months she continued to make her will felt,” according to Heller. “With her going, the strong and vivid bond that held the family together was broken” (*ibid.*, p. 340). Freud’s entry in his *Kurzeste Chronik* or “short diary” for August 12, 1930 reads, in English translation: “† Mother died 8 am” (Freud, 1992, p. 6). The cross is the regular mark Freud used in his laconic diary to symbolize death. There are many places in Freud’s correspondence where he used this symbol, which, early in his career, also signaled anxiety about female sexuality and, later, anxiety about the heretical “anti-Oedipal” theories of Rank and Ferenczi. For example:

- Ø On November 5, 1899, to Fliess: “... I do not have the slightest idea what to do with the
- ††† female aspect, and that makes me distrust the whole [Oedipal sexual theory] (Masson, 1985, p. 382).
- Ø On January 1, 1907, to Jung: “... I am referring to ††† sexuality” (McGuire, 1974, p. 19).
- Ø On June 5, 1910, to Pfister: “The transference is indeed a cross” (Meng and Freud, 1963, p. 39). Ø On April 23, 1926 to Ferenczi, after Rank took his final leave of Freud: “... we can make the sign of the cross over him” (Falzeder et al., 2000, p. 257).
- Ø On April 18, 1932 to Eitingon: “Isn’t Ferenczi a cross to bear?” (Gay, 1988, p. 582).

### **“HE RECOILS FROM THE TASK OF HAVING A SEXUALLY DEMANDING MOTHER, AND HAVING TO SATISFY HER.”**

What, exactly, was the nature of the “cross” that Freud bore so heavily throughout his life? No one can possibly know for sure. But traces of Freud’s unconscious are scattered everywhere in the body of his writings, and they often leak out, like an open wound, through the cracks in his text. Freud chose not to attend his mother’s funeral in 1930, even though it was held in Vienna, sending Anna in his place. “I feel only two things,” he told Jones after his mother’s death: an “increase in personal freedom” and “the satisfaction that she obtained at last the deliverance” that she richly deserved (Paskauskas, 1993, p. 677). He added that he did not share the grief or sorrow “displayed so painfully” by his brother Alexander (*ibid.*). But these one-sided remarks devoid of emotion are belied by a more ambivalent feeling that Freud seems to have had toward his mother, hinted at in a letter to Eitingon, a few months earlier: “Since, as you know, one must pay and atone some time for every unasked thing that one has received and enjoyed, the love of a mother as well...” (E. Freud, 1960, p. 278). In March 1926, a few weeks before Rank left Freud for good, Freud wrote to Ferenczi: “Everything must be paid and atoned for, that is my new insight [Einsicht] even when no civil guilt is present” (Falzeder et al., 2000, p. 253). But what “unasked” for love did Freud receive and enjoy from his mother? And how, exactly, did Freud “pay and atone” for this gift of maternal love?

In his *Clinical Diary*, Ferenczi (like Rank in his 1926 American lectures) wondered about “the ease with which Fr[eud] sacrifices the interests of women in favor of male patients.” Although unable to engage in an authentic “two-body” experiential psychotherapy with Freud, Ferenczi hypothesized, without offering specific evidence:

[Freud] may have a personal aversion to the spontaneous female-oriented sexuality: idealization of the mother. He recoils from the task of having a sexually demanding mother, and having to satisfy her. At some point his mother’s passionate nature may have presented him with such a task. (The primal scene may have rendered him impotent). Castration of the father, the potent one, as a reaction to the humiliation he experienced, led to the construction of a theory in which the father castrates the son and, moreover, is then revered by the son as a god. In his conduct Fr[eud] plays only the role of the castrating god, he wants to ignore the traumatic moment of his own castration in childhood; he is the only who does not have to be analyzed (Ferenczi, 1988, pp. 87-89).

Recent re-readings of Ferenczi’s paper on *Confusion of Tongues* suggest that the traumatic effects of adult sexuality on the “innocent” pre-Oedipal child seeking tender love are not necessarily due to physical abuse alone.

Considering the need to find a safe outlet for his unconscious drives, the pre-Oedipal child called Sigmund Freud may very well have become overwhelmed by adult sexuality merely through witnessing the primal scene (or passionate quarreling between his parents). Some young adults remain unusually obsessed with their parents' sex lives, jeopardizing the Oedipal maturity of their own emotional experiences (Kelley-Lainé, 2000).

### **“I HAVE TO BLIND MYSELF ARTIFICIALLY”**

Could Ferenczi, the most compassionate of clinicians and a “specialist in peculiarly difficult cases” (Ferenczi, 1931, p. 128), have helped relieve the agonizing pain of his beloved Professor and provide emotional support? We will never know. “I have to blind myself artificially in order to focus all the light on one dark spot,” the tortured Freud once told Lou Andreas-Salomé. “[F]or my eyes, adapted as they are to the dark, probably can't stand strong light or an extensive range of vision” (E. Freud, 1960, p. 312). Like Moses, with whom Freud also identified, was the Promised Land of Oedipal maturity always just over the horizon, tantalizingly out of reach, for the anguished discoverer of psychoanalysis, whose “insight [Einsicht] that the difficulties in treatment are due to the fact that in the end one is laying bare the patient's evil inclinations, his will to remain ill, is becoming stronger and clearer” (Masson, 1985, pp. 268-69)? After a lifetime of daily self-analysis, did Freud ever conquer his own “will to remain ill”? In a 1926 American lecture, at the same time that Ferenczi was offering to go to Vienna to analyze Freud, Rank suggested that the small boy “must, so to speak, make his father bad, in order to keep his picture of the good mother clear” (Rank, 1996, pp. 142-43). Freud, concluded Rank in almost the same terms as Ferenczi, was tragically “blinded by the castration theory” (ibid., p. 119).

What are we to make of the final, sad assessment by Rank and Ferenczi of Freud as, secretly, an enfant terrible -- a gigantic intellect with the emotional intelligence of a small boy, who seems to have lived, almost willfully, a life tormented by infantile love and infantile hate, trusting no one? Did Freud, as Rank hinted, live too much in the infantile past and, to that extent, not live in the present? Was Freud's refusal to be analyzed by Ferenczi due to a small boy's fierce will to cling to the pre-Oedipal past “in order to protect himself from experience [Erlebnis], the emotional surrender to the present” (Rank, 1929-31, p. 27)? “I find it actually tragic that you, who endowed the world with analysis, find it so difficult to be -- indeed, are not at all -- in a position to entrust yourself to anyone,” Ferenczi told his beloved Professor in February 1926 (Falzeder et al., 2000, p. 250). Were Ferenczi and Rank, the two men closest emotionally to Freud and most supportive of the cause during its formative years, “psychotic” for the heresy of “turning away from Freud and his doctrines” (Jones, 1957, p. ) and fostering emotional intelligence by pioneering object-relational, pre-Oedipal, experiential, client-centered, interpersonal and existential psychotherapies?.

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