

FERENCZI'S ANTICIPATION OF THE TRAUMATIC DIMENSION OF LANGUAGE: A MEETING WITH LACAN.

Miguel Gutiérrez-Peláez, Ph.D. ¹²

ABSTRACT

The work of Sandor Ferenczi anticipates various challenges of contemporary psychoanalysis – clinical, technical, and theoretical. Among the most novel is his elaboration of the concept of trauma. Ferenczi's 1930s writings were mostly read by the psychoanalysts of his time, including Freud, as a return to Freud's seduction theory. Nevertheless, in Ferenczi, there is an innovation that distinguishes him from Freud. Although today's psychoanalytic community expresses a growing interest in Ferenczi's trauma theory, the field pays less attention to his focus on the traumatic dimension of language itself and the effects language has on the subject. In fact, Ferenczi's later work uniquely explores the relationship between trauma and language. In part, what makes Ferenczi's trauma theory unique is that it anticipates Jacques Lacan's work on the traumatic dimension of language, which the French psychoanalyst referred to in his final theoretical production through the concept of *lalangue*.

Key words: Confusion of tongues, Ferenczi, infans, Lacan, *lalangue*, trauma.

RESUMEN

El trabajo de Sandor Ferenczi anticipa varios desafíos del psicoanálisis contemporáneo: clínicos, técnicos y teóricos. Entre las más novedosas está su elaboración del concepto de trauma. Los escritos de Ferenczi de la década de 1930 fueron leídos principalmente por los psicoanalistas de su época, incluido Freud, como un retorno a la teoría de la seducción de Freud. Sin embargo, en Ferenczi hay una innovación que lo distingue de Freud. Aunque la comunidad psicoanalítica actual expresa un interés creciente en la teoría del trauma de Ferenczi, el conjunto presta menos atención a su enfoque en la dimensión traumática del lenguaje mismo y a los efectos que el lenguaje tiene sobre el sujeto. De hecho, el trabajo posterior de Ferenczi explora de manera única la relación entre el trauma y el lenguaje. En parte, lo que hace única a la teoría del trauma de Ferenczi es que anticipa el trabajo de Jacques Lacan sobre la dimensión traumática del lenguaje, a la que el psicoanalista francés se refirió en su producción teórica final a través del concepto de *lalengua*.

Palabras clave: confusión de lenguas, Ferenczi, infans, Lacan, *lalengua*, trauma.

Speech is telling the story of the trauma.
Ferenczi, *Clinical Diary*, 1932

FERENCZIAN INNOVATIONS ON TRAUMA

Ferenczi's 1930s trauma theory can be read either as a regressive return to the first Freudian seduction theory, or as a progressive anticipation of contemporary psychoanalysis and of the deepest implications of Freudian thought. I firmly endorse the latter. Ferenczi's later writings display a complex concept of trauma that is, by no means, a return to Freud's first trauma theory, but rather the elaboration of a new psychoanalytic theory. Reading texts such as "Confusion of Tongues between the Adult and the Child" (1932), *Clinical Diary* (1932), and "Notes and Fragments" (1930-32) as a return to Freud's early trauma theory has led to limited and misguided interpretations.

The Freud-Ferenczi polemic, which followed the presentation of “Confusion of Tongues between the Adult and the Child” (1932), has been thoroughly analyzed and commented upon using novel and complex historical, psychoanalytic, and psychological approaches (Jones, 1953; Sulloway, 1979; Masson, 1984; Sabourin, 1984; Rachman, 1989; Modell, 1991; Blum, 1994; Berman, 1995; Harris & Aron, 1997; Rachman 1997; Zaslów, 1998; Press, 2006; Gutiérrez-Peláez, 2009; Hunyady, 2012). The Freud-Ferenczi correspondence of those tumultuous years includes intimate and personal exchanges (Falzeder & Brabant, 2000), many of which can be linked to the issue of the Ferenczian return to the first Freudian trauma theory.

Ferenczi and Freud frequently discussed trauma theory, and Freud believed Ferenczi was reviving a theory he had left behind. Ferenczi’s “Confusion of tongues...” was badly received by the psychoanalytic community (Masson, 1984, p. 151) and contributed to the forgetting and isolation of his work for many years.

Another quarrel between Freud and Ferenczi was about the death drive. As I have commented elsewhere, “there is indeed a less noticed aspect of the Freud-Ferenczi polemic about the *Confusion of Tongues*, which has to do with the drive element, and which could be expressed as follows: Whereas for Freud there is a deadly component in every subject, for Ferenczi this component is attributable to the ‘other’; it comes about owing to the traumatic effect of the other’s action, and if this were not the case there would, in his view, be no reason for it to be unleashed” (Gutiérrez-Peláez, 2009, p. 1225). Ferenczi refers widely to (an) other who traumatizes through abandonment, rage, and sexual abuse (Ferenczi, 1929). These are concrete actions that exceed the capacity of the child’s psyche to process them in his or her framework of experience; they cannot be symbolized by the child. This forms a traumatic nucleus that shapes the symptoms and the *Wiederholungszwang*, the compulsion to repetition³.

As will be argued in this paper, it is possible to read in Ferenczi’s later writings a fundamental divergence from Freud’s theories, producing an original and powerful trauma theory with important consequences for clinical practice.

THE TRAUMATIC DIMENSION OF LANGUAGE

A close reading of Ferenczi’s later writings (1930-1932, 1931, and 1932) reveals a particularly unique aspect of his trauma theory, what we could call the traumatic dimension of language. This focus on language is rarely mentioned in the psychoanalytic literature, yet it involves one of Ferenczi’s greatest insights for contemporary psychoanalysis and is precisely the point where the work of Sandor Ferenczi and the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan meet. Ferenczi’s theory on the relationship between trauma and language, and the effects it has on the subject, anticipates Lacan’s work on the traumatic dimension of language, a dimension found in Lacan’s (1972-3, 1975-6) concept of *lalangue*, to which we will return later.

Lacan admired and identified with Ferenczi for having been “excomulgated”⁴ (as he called himself; see Lacan, 1964/1998) from the IPA. As he stated in his 1953 seminar: “Ferenczi was to some extent considered, up to 1930, to be the *enfant terrible* of psychoanalysis. In relation to the analytic group in general, he remained a freewheeler. His way of raising questions showed no concern for couching itself in a manner which was, at that time, already orthodox” (Lacan, 1975, p. 208). In Lacan’s “Rome Discourse,” he said that “psychoanalysts who are also mothers, even those who give our loftiest deliberations a matriarchal air, are not exempt from that confusion of tongues by which Ferenczi designated the law of the relationship between the child and the adult” (Lacan, 1953, p. 36, cited by Barzilai, 1997, p. 568). Barzilai also cites Lacan’s

...further praises [for] Ferenczi for posing ‘the question of the analyst’s being ... very early in the history of analysis,’ and thereby introducing ‘the problem of analytic action’ almost 50 years before in an essay entitled ‘Introjection and Transference’ (1909). According to Lacan, the essay “anticipated by a long way all the themes later developed about this topic” (Lacan, 1958, p. 250, cited by Barzilai, 1997, p. 568).

Of course, there are other times in Lacan's seminars and writings in which he speaks poorly of some of Ferenczi's theoretical developments, such as when he states, in relation to the further expansions of this work by his Hungarian disciples, that they are now dispersed and will soon be turned into ashes (Lacan, 1958/2006, p.33). As Barzilai (1997) puts it:

...clearly, he [Lacan] admires the risk-taking methods and intellectual enterprise of Ferenczi. He likes him whom he is like. Lacan has read the work of Ferenczi with great attention and admiration. However, he also charges him with expounding a doctrine of developmental stages for which Ferenczi was not solely responsible, while ignoring or 'forgetting' to mention his insight into the cognitive gains of ambivalence -an insight that predates Lacan's thesis about the dialectical structure of human thought. (p. 568)⁵

The concept of *lalangue*, a particularly 'dark' concept in Lacan's work (beyond the evident complexity of his writings), could be related to the difficulty of using language to talk about that which cannot be grasped by the contours of language; taking hold of the limits of language and symbolization through a symbolic medium such as language. Evans (1996) states that "Lacan coins the term *lalangue* (from the definite article *la* and the noun *langue*) to refer to those noncommunicative aspects of language which, by playing on ambiguity and homophony, give rise to a kind of *jouissance*⁶ (S 20, 126). The term 'language' now becomes opposed to *lalangue*" (p. 100). So, whereas language is the cultural heritage of the Other⁷ and is directed to the other, *lalangue* is absolutely singular, private, and does not address the Other. "*Lalangue* is the primary chaotic substrate of polysemy out of which language is constructed, almost as if language is some ordered superstructure sitting on top of this substrate: 'language is with no doubt made of *lalangue*. It is an elucubration of knowledge [savoir] about *lalangue*' (S20, 127)" (p. 100). It is important, however, not to confuse this elaboration of a superstructure with a metalanguage. Rather, instead of *lalangue* "completing" language, it is the fair proof of the "inconsistency" of language. *Lalangue* is not a formal or communicative medium, like the language of linguistics, but rather an experience (Toboul, 2005, p. 78). The child's *lalangue* is grounded in the physical/sensual experience of the infant engrossed in sensual production of sound, and in free expression of 'itself,' in the absence of an Other. This babbling (or chirping) is not directed to an Other; it lies in a private experience that mobilizes a *jouissance*.

It is commonly accepted that what is traumatic is that which cannot be symbolized, the experience of the real that does not enter into the symbolic order. But, what if there is an original (failed)⁸ rejection (Freud used the word *Ausstossung* [expulsion] as opposed to *Bejahung* [affirmation]) of the symbolic order in the infant? What if language itself constitutes the *Urtrauma* (that "pre-primal-trauma [*ururtraumatischen*]" (Ferenczi, 1932, p. 83)? That portion of the child's language (babbling), which is not directed to the other, is the trace (mark) of the original enjoyment, before language disrupts it to establish order, a symbolic order. Precisely, the substance of *lalangue* is extracted from the child's glossolalia (Toboul, 2005, p. 58) or babbling. In an entry entitled "The Language of the Unconscious," Ferenczi (1930-1932) writes:

If the intellectual cs [conscious] urge to communicate is completely eliminated and the speech organs are given free reign [...] there comes – after senseless vowels and consonants (as in the play of *infants* with lips and tongue) *imitations* of things, animals, and people. (p. 265)

Ferenczi intends to unveil a realm prior to language, free of trauma; concepts such as "*Thalassa*" (1924), the primordial sea, or "infant," he who is speechless or unable to speak, point directly to this. Precisely, in *Thalassa: A Theory of Genitality* (1924), Ferenczi establishes analogies between sleep and regression to primordial states of the organic, past the womb, to the poikilothermia⁹ of diverse amphibians and fishes (p. 76). More radically, as Ferenczi structures the basis of his bioanalysis¹⁰ he states that:

By carrying over into biology this piece of insight gained in the psychic sphere, it is possible for us to think of coitus and sleep as the conducting off of current traumatic stimuli and, at the same time, the expression of the striving to reproduce the intrauterine and thalassal situation seemingly long since transcended - nay, we could even perceive in them a return to still more archaic and primitive strivings towards repose (impulse towards the inorganic state, death impulse). (Ferenczi, 1924, p. 85).

The relation between sleep and regression, in reference to trauma, is also displayed in the *Clinical Diary* (1932), where he writes: "Sleep is regression to a primordial unity, as yet unsplit. (Without consciousness and, when completely *without objects*, dreamless.) Regression to the pretraumatic" (p. 113).

The case of B., in Ferenczi's *Clinical Diary* (1932), illustrates this traumatic dimension of language.

"Throughout the day's activities, which consist of tasks that, though very unpleasant, must be performed, there is a soft humming of a few melodies" (p. 17); "[...] incessant melodies were going on [...]" (p. 20); "For years, as a child, she could not fall asleep without first crouching and banging her head, always the forehead, against the mattress, over and over again with considerable force. [...] She had to give up this procedure as she grew up, but appears to have invented analogous but less obvious substitutes: endlessly repeated melodies; an endlessly sustained long note that 10 occasionally shifts to a higher tone, then after a while rises higher and higher, but so that the change occurs in jerks or waves" (p. 22-23).

Nevertheless, "melody" implies a symbolic organization that is inexistent in *lalangue*. In the entry of the 19th of July, Ferenczi writes: "[...] in addition to her clearly conscious work of thinking [*Denkarbeit*] she also has a melody permanently in her head, in fact a disharmonious polyphony, which she must resolve by musically logical means" (p. 162). In the vignettes of B., there is no reference to a communicative intention in her vocal sounds; the patient uses these melodies, apparently, along the lines of the pure *jouissance* of this frivolous sounding.

Referring to how exclamations are produced with sounds that do not belong to a particular native language, Heller-Roazen (2008) writes:

Nowhere is language more 'itself' than at the moment it seems to leave the terrain of its sound and sense, assuming the sound shape of what does not – or cannot – have a language of its own: animal sounds, natural, or mechanical noises. It is here that one language, gesturing beyond itself in a speech that is none, opens itself to the nonlanguage that precedes it and that follows it. It is here, in the utterance of the strange sounds that the speakers of a tongue thought themselves incapable of making, that a language shows itself as an 'exclamation' in the literal sense of the term: a 'calling out' (*ex-clamare*, *Ausruf*), beyond or before itself, in the sounds of the inhuman speech it can neither completely recall nor fully forget." (p. 18)

Language is traumatic in various ways. Words can hurt, degrade, conjure, and produce anxiety. Words can be unforgettable; they determine destinies. Words can take hold of the body, mark it, and transform it, as hysterics have taught us. Language is also traumatic through the *lalangue* it carries, those non-communicative aspects of language, a private tongue mobilizing a form of *jouissance* that can produce an unpleasant satisfaction for it lays beyond the Freudian pleasure principle. Finally, language is traumatic because it definitively transforms an infant's relation to the world, leaving only subtle traces of what that relation prior to language could have been.

FERENCZI-LACAN AND THE REAL

Lacan (1974-5) divides reality into three different orders (RSI): the Imaginary order, which consists of our fantasies; the Symbolic order, which includes all the different dimensions of language and communication; and the Real, an order that is neither accessible to language nor to fantasy, but which touches and haunts both. According to Shepherdson (2008):

The real is [...] an effect of symbolization, and thus an abyss in the field of meaning, a product of the Other, in Lacan's language; consequently, it does not have the status of a natural entity [...], but is rather a void introduced into being by the operation of representation." (Shepherdson, 2008, p. 94); "the real is a dimension of immediate existence or prediscursive reality that is never actually available to us as such, but only appears *through* the intervention of the imaginary or the symbolic [order]. (p. 30)

The three orders (RSI) are not independent, but entangled, constricted in what Lacan called the Borromean knot¹¹. This knotting of the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real can be illustrated through the myth of the Medusa's or Gorgon's face. Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (1999) refers to the Gorgon's face as that which cannot be represented (the Medusa's face cannot be seen without being turned into stone), but paradoxically, all of the representations that exist of the Medusa (Cellini, Rubens, Caravaggio, Bernini, Böcklin, even ancient ones, as those of the Basilica Cistern, the Temple of Artemis, and the Rondanini Medusa, amongst many others) are precisely of her face.

First of all, the Gorgon does not have a face in the sense expressed by the Greek term *prosopon*, which etymologically signifies 'what stands before the eyes, what gives itself to be seen.' The prohibited face, which cannot be seen because it produces death, is for the Greeks a non-face and as such is never designated by the term *prosopon*. Yet for the Greeks this impossible vision is at the same time absolutely inevitable. Not only is the Gorgon's non-face represented innumerable times in sculpture and vase painting, but the most curious fact concerns the mode of the Gorgon's presentation. 'Gorgo, the 'anti-face,' is represented only through a face ... in an ineluctable confrontation of gazes ... this *antiprosopon* is given over to the gaze in its fullness, with a clear demonstration of the signs of her dangerous visual effects' (Frontisi-Ducroux 1995: 68). (Agamben, 1999, p. 53)

Medusa's representations, and even the reflection of her face in Perseus' shield – as described in the myth – can be viewed as representing the imaginary; it is an "absolute image" (Agamben, 1999, p. 53). The myth itself, on the other hand, represents the symbolic, the myth's existence in language and culture through diverse traditions and to our present day. And, finally, the Gorgon's face, evoked in the representations and in the myth, but is not fully grasped by either, is the "Real" (Freud, [1922] and Ferenczi [1926] also referred to the Medusa head in relation to castration). It is this real dimension that can only be evoked and never fully captured by language or image.

Regarding the notion of "confusion of tongues," and using the Lacanian concepts of imaginary, symbolic, and real (RSI), it is possible to extract from Ferenczi's writings three dimensions of the confusion of tongues: an imaginary dimension, established between the innocent child and the passionate adult, which subverts that state and is linked to the seduction fantasies present in psychic reality; a symbolic dimension, related to the confusion of tongues as a metaphor, as conceptualized by Rachman (1989); and a real dimension, which is the purely traumatic dimension. It can be seen how the traumatizing agent does not appear in the symbolic narration of the traumatic situation, but in the real dimension that is hidden within the symbolic narration and the fantasies inherent in it.

Lacan believes that there is an incapacity of a 'discourse'¹² to name something of the Real. There is a singular tongue in each human subject that is not part of the shared language, which is -precisely- *lalangue*. How can we access this tongue? Are there fixed senses in the unconscious or can we liberate ourselves from that and read the unconscious in another way? For Lacan, writing is a resource for "unhearing" certain dimension of a person's discourse, unhearing one's language and the sense inherent to it, in order to grasp the Real dimension of *lalangue*. Not only are there things to be heard, but there are elements of the unconscious to be read. Lacan develops the notion of "letter" (and, in this sense, the reference to writing) to think of elements in the unconscious that cannot be linked to other signifiers or representations. The question is: how can we access that Real, traumatic dimension of language that lies beyond the symbolic substrate of language?

In his seminar *Of a Discourse that would not be of the Semblant* (1971), Lacan shows great interest in Chinese poetry, for it does not add elements but instead removes elements in order to produce an effect of

indetermination. Because “the real is ‘organized’ or ‘represented’ through images and words that do not actually capture the real, but always misrepresent it” (Shepherdson, 2008, p. 28), he believes that emptying produces a greater “proximity” to the Real. He sees the creation of sculptures as being different from the creation of paintings, as sculpting consists of extracting elements. He believes psychoanalysis should not add elements, i.e., meanings, but extract them in order to reach the dimension of the real that has not been captured or conquered by language¹³

There are then two levels of trauma: the violent, intense, unforeseeable experience, which cannot be symbolized¹⁴; and, before that (primordially or structurally), the symbolic order itself, which infests the infant’s body and psyche through its erogenous zones. There is a “nameless dread” (Bion, 1962a, p. 309; 1962b, p. 96), as well as a “dread of the name.”

Once, at the beginning of a seven-year analysis, and once near the end of treatment, my analysand had the following transference experience with language: He could hear that the analyst was saying something and that he was saying it at a volume at which he could hear it. He could identify that it was being said in a certain language he could understand, and he could even identify that the phrase was structured coherently and made sense, but he could not extract any meaning out of what was being said to him, even after the interpretation was repeated to him. He said he would not be able to repeat any of the words that had been said to him, even though he knew these words were familiar to him. There was a fracture, for the patient, in this experience, between the mechanics of language and the sense inherent in it. This experience made him anxious. He associated this event with a very early experience, before he controlled his sphincters, in which his father spoke to him; not only was he unable to extract any meaning from his words, but he felt his father’s voice came to him in the form of oscillating jerks or waves (similar to a radio’s volume being elevated and reduced intermittently), which was painful for his ears and was associated with intense anxiety.

Further in analysis, and accompanied by dreams, he spoke of a very deep and intense cry. Every time he linked this cry to sadness, I intervened to emphasize only “a cry,” breaking the association of it to the adjective “sad.” The analysand later stated that after a session, as he walked from my office, he was able to grasp the dimension of that cry with no sadness, or better, beyond sadness, feeling it intensely in his chest. He was able to grasp somatically that “primordial cry,” as he called it, as the infant’s most primitive reaction to need, before the response of an Other who could identify that cry as sadness. “It is like the Cheshire Cat’s smile: a mouthless smile; an impossible,” he said. A Real.

Ferenczi interprets his famous, and many times cited, dream of the “wise baby” (1952, p. 349) as a baby who knows of sexuality and can speak of it. But Ferenczi believes his interpretation is incomplete (Ferenczi, 1952, p. 349, see footnote) and this may authorize us to push it a little further. Isn’t a newborn who speaks, a baby who has managed to avoid the ‘trauma of language’? This baby is a subject who does not need to strive to find the signifiers who name him or her in the torrid terrains of the Other and whose body is not lacerated by the words and desire of that Other. The newborn would be the incarnation of a living ‘missing link’ between the *infans* and the child¹⁵. In his *Child Language, Aphasia, and Phonological Universals*, Roman Jakobson (1968) termed the “apex of babble,”¹⁶ (*die Blüte des Lallens*) the capacity of the non-speaking child to produce all of the possible sounds of the different tongues, a capacity that is lost as he or she emphasizes the sounds of the mother or native tongue, which, paradoxically, the child will acquire with great effort (Heller-Roazen, 2008, pp. 9-18).

In his *Clinical Diary* (1932) Ferenczi describes what he intuits the experience of the child is before he or she becomes submerged in the scalding bath of language:

The idea of the still half-dissolved state (consistency) of the childish personality tempts the imagination to suppose that the childish personality is in much closer contact with the universe, and therefore its sensitivity is much greater than that of the adult, crystallized into rigidity. It would not surprise us either if some day it were to be demonstrated that in this early state the whole personality is still resonating with the environment – and not only at particular points that had remained permeable, namely the sensory organs. So-called supernormal faculties -being receptive to processes beyond sensory perceptions (clairvoyance),

apprehending the communications of an alien will (suggestion from a distance)- may well be ordinary processes, in the same way that animals (dogs), whose personalities evidently always remain in a state of dissolution, possess such apparently subnormal faculties (sense of smell at a colossal distance, the inexplicable adoption of the owners' sympathies and antipathies). Here the first possibility to understand the so-called telegony (the influence of the mother's psychic experiences on the child in the womb). (p. 81)

Ferenczi was labeled a madman by Jones¹⁷ (1953) and was marginalized by analysts of his time and by generations that followed until interest in his work finally returned, much like forgotten psychic material returns from the repressed. Isn't it a landscape of madness that precisely touches the boundaries of language? Lacan (1967) calls the madman the free man -- he who has freed himself from the confines of the Other. For Ferenczi, insanity may be that which keeps us from dying (Orpha) (1932, p. 8).

THE EFFECTS ON THE PSYCHOANALYTIC TREATMENT

There are many examples of Lacan's clinical interventions where he avoids the use of language. One example is given by Suzanne Hommel. In a recent film on Lacan, directed by Gerard Miller (2011), this former analysand of Lacan describes what it was like to be in analysis with him. Hommel tells us she was born in 1938 and therefore lived through the horrors of World War II, its anguish, the post war period, the hunger, and the lies. She asked Lacan in one of her first sessions if she could ever get rid of the pain she felt, "Can I cure myself of this suffering?" for she had the idea that psychoanalysis could remove her pain. She says she knew by his silence to her question that this would not be possible, that she would have to deal with her suffering forever.

In analysis she speaks of a dream: "Every day I wake up at 5am." Then she adds: "At 5am the Gestapo came home looking for Jews." Immediately Lacan stands up from his chair, walks to the couch where she lay and gently caresses her cheek. She understood how he had transformed the "Gestapo" into a "*Geste-à-peau*", a gesture on the skin, a gentle gesture. She experienced this as the transformation of that horrific representation - "Gestap," - into something kind and human, an extremely tender gesture. "This surprise did not reduce the pain, but transformed it into something else. The proof is that now, 40 years later, I still speak of this gesture. I still have it on my cheek [...] It is also a call to humanity..." (Miller, 2011). The transformation produced by this "*Geste-à-peau*" carries with it the echoes of the trauma that has left an indelible mark. Lacan's gentle gesture is still on her cheek, as well as the scar left by the trauma.

Jacques-Alain Miller (2008) suggested, in a conference in Buenos Aires in 2008, that for Lacan, psychoanalysis was an experience and a logical deduction ("*deducción lógica*"). For Freud, he points out, it was a cure; for Melanie Klein it was interpreted as a communication; for Jung it meant an elevation; and, for Anna Freud, a pedagogy and an orthopaedic (p. 276). Ferenczi is not mentioned in this list, but it could be hypothesized that for him, psychoanalysis was a healing, a healing of the primordial trauma, of the *Urtrauma*. This is an important divergence between Ferenczi and Lacan: For Lacan, psychoanalysis is not about healing. To Ferenczi, this healing meant recovering the unconfused tongues, making the *infans* speak, bringing the child back to life, to his or her elemental *Thalassa*. For Lacan, it is explicit: we are sick of language; Ferenczi wrote (1932), language is "an alien will" (p. 111).

Through analysis of his patients, Ferenczi intended to reach the human order before language itself, an order linked with the universe, the inorganic, with an absence of splitting and an access to the "language of the organs" (Ferenczi, 1932, p. 6-7), or the "anarchy of the organs" (Ferenczi, 1932, p. 69-70). In this sense, it can be understood why Ferenczi, as Lacan, needed to produce technical innovations, derived directly from 17 clinical work: he wanted to gain access to a stratum of the patient's psyche through a "talking cure" that was -and is- beyond the grounds of language.

REFERENCES

- Agamben, G. (1999). *The witness and the archive*. New York: Zone Books.
- Barzilai, S. (1997). History is not the past: Lacan's critique of Ferenczi, *Psychoanalytical Review*, 84/4, pp. 553-72.
- Berman, E. (1995). Confusion of tongues. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 76, pp. 1045-1046.
- Bion, W.R. (1962a). *Learning from experience*. London: Tavistock.
- Bion, W.R. (1962b). The psycho-analytic study of thinking. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 43, pp. 306-310.
- Blum, H. P. (1994), The confusion of tongues and psychic trauma, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 75, pp. 871-882.
- Dupont, J. (Ed.) (1932/1988). *The clinical diary of Sándor Ferenczi*, Balint, M, Zarday Jackson N, translators. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Evans, D. (1996). *An introduction dictionary of lacanian psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge.
- Falseder, E. & Brabant, E., editors (2000). *The correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi vol. 3, 1920-1933*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap.
- Ferenczi, S. (1924/1968). *Thalassa. A theory of genitivity*. New York: Norton Library.
- Ferenczi, S. (1923) 'Zur Symbolik des Medusenhauptes', *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, 9, 69, pp. 274 [On the Symbolism of the Head of Medusa,
_____ *Further Contributions to the Theory and Technique of Psycho-Analysis*, 1926, Chap. LXVI, London: Karnac]. 18
- _____ Ferenczi, S. (1928/1955). The adaptation of the family to the child. In *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis* (pp. 61-76). London: Karnac.
- _____ Ferenczi, S. (1929/1955). The unwelcome child and his death instinct. In *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis* (pp. 102-107). London: Karnac.
- _____ Ferenczi, S. (1930-1932/1955). Notes and fragments. In *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis* (pp. 216-279). London: Karnac.
- _____ Ferenczi, S. (1931/1955). Trauma and anxiety. In *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis* (pp. 249-250). London: Karnac.
- _____ Ferenczi, S. (1932/1955). Confusion of tongues between the adults and the child. In *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis* (pp. 156-167).
- _____ Ferenczi, S. (1955), *Further contributions to the problems and methods of psychoanalysis*, Rickman, J, editor, Sutie, JI, et al., translators. New York: Basic Books.
- _____ Ferenczi, S. (1955), *Final contributions to the problems and methods of psychoanalysis*, Balint, M, editor, Mosbacher et al., translators. London: Hogarth.
- Frankel, J. (2002), Exploring Ferenczi's concept of identification with the aggressor: Its role in trauma, everyday life, and the therapeutic relationship, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 12, pp. 101-139.
- _____ Frankel, J. (2004), Identification with the aggressor and the 'normal traumas': Clinical implications, *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 13, pp. 78-83.
- Freud, S. (1905). On psychotherapy (1905 [1904]). *Standard Edition*, Vol. 7, pp. 255-268, London: Hogarth Press. 19
- _____ Freud, S. (1920/1953). Beyond the pleasure principle. *Standard Edition*, Vol. 18, pp. 1-64. London: Hogarth Press.
- _____ Freud, S. (1922). Medusa's head. *Standard Edition*, Vol. 18, pp. 273-274.
- Granoff, W. (2004). Lacan, Ferenczi y Freud. [Lacan, Ferenczi and Freud]. Buenos Aires: École lacanienne de psychanalyse.
- Gutiérrez-Peláez, M. (2009). Trauma theory in the 1931 and 1932 writings of Sandor Ferenczi, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 9(6), pp. 1745-8315.
- _____ (2010). Diferencias entre los conceptos de Splitting en Ferenczi y de Spaltung en Freud [Differences between the Concepts of Splitting in Ferenczi and Spaltung in Freud]. *Universitas Psychologica*, 9(2), pp. 469-483.

- _____ (2010). *Confusión de lenguas. Un retorno a Sandor Ferenczi*[*Confusion of Tongues. A Return to Sandor Ferenczi*]. Mar del Plata, Argentina : EUEDEM.
- Harris, A. & Aron, L. (1997). Ferenczi's semiotic theory: Previews of postmodernism. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 17, pp. 522-534.
- Heller-Roazen, D. (2008), *Echolalias. On the forgetting of language*, New York: Zone Books.
- Hunyady, O. (2012). Herr Professor and his "grand vizir": the Freud/Ferenczi relationship in its social context. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 48/2, pp. 166-182.
- Jacobson, R. (1968), *Child language, aphasia, and phonological universals*, Mouton: The Hague.
- Jones, E. (1953). *The life and work of Sigmund Freud*. New York: Basic Books. 20
- Lacan, J. (1958/2002). The direction of the treatment and the principles of its power. *Écrits. The First Complete Edition in English*. Bruce Fink, translator. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
- _____ (1964/1998). *The four fundamental concepts of psycho-analysis*; edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, ed.; Alan Sheridan, trans. London: W.W. Norton.
- _____ (1967). *Petit discours de Jacques Lacan aux psychiatres* [Brief discourse of Jacques Lacan to psychiatrists]. Unpublished.
- _____. (1971/2009). *El seminario. Libro XVIII. De un discurso que no fuera del semblante* [The Seminar. Book XVIII. Of a discourse that where not of the semblant]. Buenos Aires: Paidós.
- _____ (1972-3/1997). *El seminario. Libro XX. Aún.* [The Seminar. Book XX.Encore]. Buenos Aires: Paidós.
- _____ (1974-5). *El seminario. Libro XXII. RSI* [The Seminar. Book XXII. RSI]. Buenos Aires: Ornicar.
- _____ (1975). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book I. Freud's papers on technique 1953-1954*. Jacques-Alain Miller, ed.; John Forrester, trans. New York: Norton.
- _____ (1975-6/2007). *El seminario. Libro XXIII. El sinthome.* [The Seminar. Book XX. The Sinthome]. Buenos Aires: Paidós.
- Masson, J. M. (1984), *The assault on truth: Freud's suppression of the seduction theory*, New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux.
- Meszaros, J. (2014), *Ferenczi and beyond: Exile of the Budapest school and solidarity in the psychoanalytic movement during the Nazi years*, London: Karnac.
- Miller, G. (2011). *Rendez-vous chez Lacan* [Meeting With Lacan]. Paris: Penelope 2 Cafés L'Addition. 21
- Miller, J.-A. (2008). Conferencia en el Teatro Coliseo. In *Conferencias porteñas. Vol. III* [Conference in the Coliseo Theater. Portenian Conferences. Vol. III] (pp. 257-276). Buenos Aires: Paidós. Modell, A. H. (1991), A confusion of tongues or whose reality is it?, *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 60, pp. 227-244.
- Press, J. (2006), Constructing the truth: From 'confusion of tongues' to 'constructions in analysis', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 87/2, pp. 519-537.
- Rachman, A. W. (1989). Confusion of tongues: the Ferenczian metaphor for childhood seduction and emotional trauma, *Journal of the American Academy of sychoanalysis*, 17, pp. 181-205.
- Rachman, A. W. (1997). The suppression and censorship of Ferenczi's confusion of tongues paper. *Psychoanalytical Inquiry*, 17, pp. 459-485.
- Sabourin, P. (1984), Prefacio. *Visir secreto y cabeza de turco* [Foreward. Secret vizier and Turk's head], In: Ferenczi, S, *Diario clinico* [Clinical Diary], pp. 11-20, Amorrortu: Argentina.
- Shepherdson, C. (2008), *Lacan and the limits of Language*, New York: Fordham University Press.
- Sulloway, F. (1979), *Freud: Biologist of the mind*, Basic Books, New York.
- Toboul, B. (2005), *La condensation, la métaphore et le réel, ou la structure revisitée* [Condensation, metaphor and the real, or the structure revisited], *Figures de la psychanalyse*, 11, p. 33-61.
- Zaslow, S. L. (1988), Comments on "confusion of tongues", *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 24, pp. 211-224.
- Zizek, S. (1993), *Tarrying with the negative: Kant, Hegel, and the critique of ideology*, Durham: Duke University Press.

(*) Address correspondence to Miguel Gutiérrez-Peláez, Ph.D., Universidad del Rosario (Rosario University), Cra. 24 # 63c-69, Bogotá, Colombia.
e-mail: miguel.gutierrez@urosario.edu.co

Published in: Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 51(1), pp. 137-154, (2015).

Electronic version:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276145816_Ferenczi's_Anticipation_of_the_Traumatic_Dimension_of_Language_A_Meeting_With_Lacan

Volver a Artículos sobre Ferenczi

Volver a Newsletter 20-ALSF

Notas al final

- 1.- Dirigir la correspondencia a Miguel Gutiérrez-Peláez, Ph.D., Universidad del Rosario (Rosario University), Cra. 24 # 63c-69, Bogotá, Colombia. Correo electrónico: miguel.gutierrez@urosario.edu.co
- 2.- Miguel Gutiérrez-Peláez, Ph.D., es psicólogo y psicoanalista residente en Bogotá, Colombia. Es psicólogo de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (PUJ) de Bogotá, Colombia, y recibió su Maestría en Psicoanálisis y Doctorado en Psicología de la Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA), Argentina. Actualmente es profesor del Programa de Psicología de la Universidad del Rosario en Bogotá y trabaja en la práctica privada de psicoanálisis. Es director de la revista *Avances en Psicología Latinoamericana* (<http://revistas.urosario.edu.co/index.php/apl/index>) y miembro fundador del Centro de Estudios Psicosociales (CEPSO) de la Facultad de Medicina y Ciencias de la Salud de la Universidad del Rosario. Es secretario nacional de la Rama Colombia de la Asociación Mundial de Rehabilitación Psicosocial (WAPR: www.wapr.info), así como miembro de la Asociación Mundial de Psicoanálisis (AMP/WAP) y de la Nueva Escuela Lacaniana (NEL).
- 3.- Finally, other fundamental concepts of Ferenczi's work, such as the "identification with the aggressor" (Frankel, 2002, 2004), and psychic splitting (Gutiérrez-Peláez, 2010) have also been extensively reviewed.
- 4.- Excommunicated.
- 5.- Barzilai (1997) and Granoff (2004) have explored other related aspects of Lacan's and Ferenczi's work.
- 6.- *Jouissance*, translated to English as "enjoyment," must be understood differently from, and opposed to, what Freud conceptualized as the pleasure principle. *Jouissance* is beyond the pleasure principle. As stated by Žižek (1993), "enjoyment (*jouissance*, *Genuss*) is not to be equated with pleasure (*Lust*): enjoyment is precisely 'Lust im Unlust'; it designates the paradoxical satisfaction procured by a painful encounter with a Thing that perturbs the equilibrium of the 'pleasure principle.' In other words, enjoyment is located 'beyond the pleasure principle'" (p. 280).
- 7.- In Lacan, the big Other is the symbolic order itself, but, secondarily, it also designates "radical alterity, an other-ness which transcends the illusory otherness of the imaginary because it cannot be assimilated through identification" (Evans, 1996, p. 136).
- 8.- If that rejection were successful, the infant would not enter into the symbolic order. It is not absolute either, for a substrate of *lalangue* prevails in the speaking subject.
- 9.- Related to body temperature that changes with the variations in temperature of the environment.
- 10.- Bioanalysis is a term used by Ferenczi. It can be found in *Thalassa* and in the article "Masculine and Feminine" (1929). It is also a term used by Freud in his obituary of Ferenczi. As Judit Mészáros states in her book *Ferenczi and Beyond* (2014): "In his bioanalysis within his book *Thalassa. A Theory of Genitality* (Ferenczi, 1989/1924), he described the melding of the biological and psychological functioning of the human being. This work, which would become known simply as *Thalassa*, discusses the current emergence of the onto- and phylogenetic instinctive tendencies in the human sexual drive" (p. 6).
- 11.- "Topology is increasingly seen as a radically non-metaphorical way of exploring the symbolic order and its interactions with the real and the imaginary [...] The Borromean knot, so called because the figure is found on the coat of arms of the Borromeo family, is a group of three rings which are linked in such a way that if any one of them is severed, all three become separated" (Evans, 1996, p. 19).
- 12.- "Whenever Lacan uses the term 'discourse' (rather than, say, 'speech') it is in order to stress the transindividual nature of language, the fact that speech always implies another subject, an interlocutor. Thus the famous Lacanian formula, 'the unconscious is the discourse of the other' (which first appears in 1953, and later becomes 'the unconscious is the discourse of the Other') designates the unconscious as the effects on the subject of speech that is addressed to him from elsewhere; by another subject who has been forgotten, by another psychic locality (the other scene)" (Evans, 1996, p. 45).
- 13.- Freud (1905) referred to the analogy of painting and therapy, and psychoanalysis and sculpture: "There is, actually, the greatest possible antithesis between suggestive and analytic technique—the same antithesis which, in regard to the fine arts, the great Leonardo da Vinci summed up in the formulas: *per via di pone* and *per via di levare*. Painting, says Leonardo, works *per via di pone*, for it applies a substance—particles of colour—where there was nothing before, on the colourless canvas; sculpture, however, proceeds *per via di levare*, since it takes away from the block of stone all that hides the surface of the statue contained in it. In a similar way, the technique of suggestion aims at proceeding *per via di pone*; it is not concerned with the origin, strength and meaning of the morbid symptoms, but instead, it superimposes something—a suggestion—in the expectation that it will be strong enough to restrain the pathogenic idea from coming to expression. Analytic therapy, on the other hand, does not seek to add or to introduce anything new, but to take away something, to bring out something; and to this end concerns itself with the genesis of the morbid symptoms and the psychical context of the pathogenic idea which it seeks to remove" (p. 260-261)
- 14.- Ferenczi (1932) defines this as follows: "What is traumatic is the unforeseen, the unfathomable, the incalculable [...] Unexpected, eternal threat, the sense of which one cannot grasp, is unbearable" (p. 171).
- 15.- As Ferenczi (1932) wrote in his *Clinical Diary*: "In infants these protective devices are not yet developed, so that infants communicate with the environment over a much broader surface. If we had the means to get such a child to tell us what this hypersensitivity makes him capable of, we would probably know much more about the world than our narrow horizon now allows" (p. 148).
- 16.- It is impossible not to link this "babble" of the child to that "Babel" of the "confusion of tongues" and the resonances of that Biblical myth in Ferenczi's paradigmatic paper (Gutiérrez-Peláez, 2012).
- 17.- "After their meeting in the previous September, Freud and Ferenczi did not again discuss their differences. Freud's feeling for him never changed, and Ferenczi remained on at least outwardly friendly terms. They continued to exchange letters, the burden of which was mainly Ferenczi's increasingly serious state of health. The medical treatment was successful in holding the

anaemia itself at bay, but in March, the disease, as it sometimes does, attacked the spinal chord and brain, and for the last couple of months of his life he was unable to stand or walk; this undoubtedly exacerbated his latent psychotic trends” (Jones, 1953, p. 176). The italics are ours.