

RADICALITY AND POSTMODERNITY IN THE PSYCHOANALYTIC METAPSYCHOLOGY OF SANDOR FERENCZI.

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ABSTRACT:

This article explores Sandor Ferenczi's ideas and his unique focus on the relationship between trauma, love, and the individual. It addresses the notion of trauma as a form of writing, an "archi-écriture" rooted in the person, and examines how trauma influences identity construction. The text emphasizes the importance of understanding the materiality of trauma and how it manifests through rhetorical repetitions. It also delves into the quest for wholeness and the desire to return to a pre-traumatic state of unity. Through a philosophical approach, the author questions the coherence and disintegration of the individual, and how love and the tendency to form allegories affect subjective life. In summary, it offers a profound and original perspective on the interaction between trauma, love, and the human psyche.

Keywords: Ferenczi, trauma, tenderness, passion, relational psychoanalysis.

RESUMEN.

El presente artículo explora las ideas de Sandor Ferenczi y su enfoque único en la relación entre trauma, amor y el individuo. En él se aborda la noción de trauma como una forma de escritura, una "archi-écriture" arraigada en la persona, y se examina cómo el trauma influye en la construcción de la identidad. El texto destaca la importancia de comprender la materialidad del trauma y cómo se manifiesta a través de repeticiones retóricas, y también explora la búsqueda de la totalidad y el deseo de regresar a un estado de unidad pretraumática. A través de un enfoque filosófico, el autor cuestiona la coherencia y la desintegración del individuo, y cómo el amor y la tendencia a la formación de alegorías afectan la vida subjetiva, en síntesis, ofrece una perspectiva profunda y original sobre la interacción entre el trauma, el amor y la psique humana.

Palabras claves: Ferenczi, trauma, ternura, pasión, psicoanálisis relacional.

THE POSITION OF FERENCZI IN THE PSYCHOANALYTICAL PROFESSION

Sandor Ferenczi's position as one of the major figures of classical psychoanalysis cannot be disputed. Curiously enough, despite his death sixty-seven years ago, his work cannot be referred to in the past tense. In a sense, Ferenczi is still working here among us, as if he were a contemporary of ours. Several of his writings have been published only recently. His *Diary*, written between January and October 1932, was published in 1985 for the first time in French¹. The first volume of his correspondence with Freud came out in 1992². It happens to others too, that some of their works, especially letters and diaries, are published after their death. But Ferenczi's case is different. His last years were both extremely productive and, for many, deeply contradictory and hard to interpret. The attentive reader may have the feeling that -compared to these new publications- something was missing from the papers published earlier.

Ferenczi was possibly the only person among Freud's contemporaries who was able to achieve a level of theoretical abstraction in his papers close to that of his friend and master. This is not only a fair evaluation but something that may have a crucial function in understanding Ferenczi's later works and the nature of the conflict between him and Freud. Freud's oeuvre was extremely complex: he was a therapist, a theoretician, and also the initiator of a new discourse that changed our whole understanding of the human individual. Ferenczi, in contrast with his otherwise important contemporaries in the Committee, was prominent not only

for the elaboration of certain concepts of psychoanalysis or for the publication of interesting case studies, that is, for the elaboration of the details of the system, but also because he tried to modify and deepen the founding discourse, and discussed problems that were originally addressed only by Freud and by some of the earlier and later heretics of psychoanalysis (a tendency that begins to take shape in 1924 when the book written in cooperation with Otto Rank was published)³. It is crucial in understanding Ferenczi to reconstruct his intentions to establish a “turn,” a new discourse⁴ for psychoanalysis in his later papers.

This quality of Ferenczi’s work is hardly accessible and even less explicit for several reasons. Not only because of his early death and the negative attitude that accompanied his last years but also because of the unfortunate turn taken by psychoanalysis, which switched toward a direction later to be called “American ego psychology”. Just like Lacan some twenty years later, Ferenczi too started to re-read Freud⁵, in search of the foundations, the early Freud (the concept of hysteria, the technique and function of hypnosis and the question of trauma). But Lacan emerged at a time when Freud was already dead and ego-psychology was close to or even beyond its zenith. Ferenczi had to confront the old master personally and he was unable to counter the gradual shift of the geographical center of the psychoanalytic profession. It is quite probable that even Freud could not understand clearly his own resistance to his friend and student. Since the founders of a new discourse, while clearly seeing the theoretical position of certain key concepts, they are necessarily blind towards the inner form, the foundational structure of their insight. Ferenczi too could never clearly express the essence of his dissidence in a properly written theoretical paper; he continually had both a general feeling of difference and a firm attachment to Freud’s ideas.

Due to the early death of Ferenczi and his limited theoretical-historical position, the task of this explanation is inherited by his successors. Our position is much more advantageous in that not only has the influence of ego psychology worn off, but we have now the positive and negative experience of a complete re-reading of Freud in the work of Jacques Lacan. I believe that there is a strong and general expectation present in contemporary psychoanalysis to make Ferenczi’s approach readable again in a way that would not reduce him to the principles of orthodox psychoanalysis but which reconstructs it as a possible paradigm of psychoanalysis, a new understanding of the individual, one that remains inside classical psychoanalysis but restates its early, radical hermeneutics, which was still present in the *Interpretation of Dreams*. The aim of this paper is to offer a few ideas towards the reconstruction of this foundational psychoanalytic discourse, this “metaphysics of the individual” that is implicit in Ferenczi’s later papers.

We know that Ferenczi was deeply disappointed by the prevailing therapeutic practice of his contemporaries, of Freud’s, and -very critically- of his own as well. He thought of it as deceptive and hypocritical and was shocked to hear Freud’s openly stated strategy of insincerity with his patients. This moral attitude, however, was not only just a slowly articulating difference emerging between Freud and Ferenczi but also a gradual differentiation between the later and the earlier Freud. In reading Ferenczi’s later writings, it becomes clear that he systematically returned to the themes Freud developed at the turn of the century but abandoned later. However, Ferenczi was not Masson, who, as is well-known, interpreted Freud’s move to abandon the theory of seduction as a dishonest decision⁶. Masson, who discussed Ferenczi in a full chapter in his 1984 book and retranslated the “Confusion of Tongues” as an appendix, did not realize that Ferenczi had not only turned back to the position of the early Freud but had also reread him and had used his master’s insights to restructure the results of the forty years of psychoanalysis. The analysis and evaluation of this rereading need to be carried out in the future, but, as a working hypothesis, a rather crude differentiation could be suggested. In the last phase of his career in his works, Freud progressively promoted a more and more scientific psychoanalysis with a strong and active medical-clinical-institutional component and a clear-cut, systematic metapsychology. This direction becomes consummate in American ego-psychology, but its roots can be shown in the publications of Freud as early as the twenties. Ferenczi’s differences also started in the same period, professionally represented by the publication of the *Development of Psychoanalysis*, institutionally-personally acted out in the process of the 1924 Rank debate in which he sided with Rank and opposed the German-English members of the Committee. Taking his later development into consideration, Ferenczi tried to follow a hermeneutic, sometimes hermetic, even mystic explanation and

advocated a therapy based on a personal and deeply committed dialogical activity, placing self-knowledge in the center of his whole work as the actual hermeneutic practice of life. This is the general reason why he regularly returned to the concepts of countertransference, trauma, and hypnosis in his later papers.

In looking back from our present position, the difference between Freud's and Ferenczi's general psychoanalytic discourse can be labeled by two popular terms of recent metatheoretical thinking: in contrast to Freud's *modern* theory of mind Ferenczi initiated a different understanding that would be called *postmodern* today. Behind our self-imposed logocentric composure, Ferenczi saw alarming desires with no center, detotalizing activities articulating these desires into life. I would stress again that this idea, in a very vague but consistent manner, was already present in the early works of Freud. Possibly, this is the source of that strange contradiction that no one who emphasized Ferenczi's heresy could really make a clear, theoretical objection against him, except for a general feeling that "something is out of order." Ferenczi, in contrast to Jung and other deserters, never refused any basic psychoanalytic idea but changed "only" the invisible foundations of the discourse, the general attitude of talking about the human individual. The *Diary* and the letters sent to Freud in the last ten years of his life may help us clarify this slowly but steadily changing general attitude.

2. GENRES OF FERENCZI 'S WRITINGS

The Diary and the letters are not simply additions to the papers published in the same years, but are discursive types that complement each other as the supplements of a more comprehensive talk of an individual about individual existence. The network of these different types of writing constitutes a non-total but all-encompassing speech that is representative of Ferenczi's style.

2.1 THE THEORETICAL PAPERS - OBJECTIVE DISCOURSE

One of his last papers, the *Confusion of Tongues between Adults and the Child*⁷, by its very genre, is meant to discuss the main problem, the unavoidable personal character of human reality itself, the fact that life is a complex web of transferences and counter-transferences. The paper attempted to define or describe the typical processes, thus offering a modern, scholarly analysis of crucial inner processes. But even after a first, superfluous reading of this paper, it is clear that the *Confusion of Tongues* is not at all a properly organized, orderly work. In the light of general professional expectations, it is excessively subjective, loosely stated, poetic, and some of its terms are deeply metaphorical and personal. The author is in a paradoxical position: he does not only describe the confusion of tongues but also practices it, and the precondition of the insight is precisely the admission of the unavoidability of its actual practice of confusion. The first genre of writing can be qualified as an objective-scientific discourse that was made unstable in its logocentrism, wavering between personal and objective speech, deeply and essentially marginalized but still a professional style. A strategic absence of essence can be found in its center: the speaker questions his own absolute integrity, and through this self-understanding, through this extreme strength, the possibility of systematic understanding is also challenged. It is no wonder at all that the paper elicited Freud's angry resistance and his demand that it be withdrawn from publication, in addition to the mixed reaction of the audience of the Wiesbaden congress in 1932.⁸

2.2 THE LETTERS - TRANSFERENTIAL DISCOURSE

The second genre of writing consists of letters exchanged with Freud, which can be understood as one single, specially shaped analysis, a case study in letter form, an analytic diary written by two people, the "patient" Sandor Ferenczi and "Doctor" Freud⁹. The letters elaborate on the personal quality, the existential possibilities of the individual in the transferential relation; they are produced by dialogical practice but at the same time, they represent a problematic character, the essential lack of understanding of the Other in this dialogue. The letters clearly create the context of the analytic situation, but in this case, Ferenczi experiences in his own inner personal existence the deficiency that he himself possibly produces (or tries to avoid, supplement) in the case of his own patients. The lack here does not lie in the object of writing (as in the case of the professional papers) but in the other (in Freud) who is never really there, who constantly comes into existence precisely through his absence.

2.3 THE DIARY - THE COUNTER-TRANSFERENTIAL DISCOURSE

I take the *Diary* (quotations from the *Diary* will be given by the page numbers only)¹⁰ as the third, and probably the most radical new genre or style of writing. In this text, the leading force in the process of writing is counter-transference, in which the personal is articulated through self-production and the inner, inescapable contradictions, the lies of this self-creation. There is an existential split between the self as I and the self as non-I. The absence, the gap that this text articulates, through the self-torment of the author, is his own feeling of non-existence, the lack of himself. The *Diary* is a key text of the direction of theory as well as of more personal matters, a kind of turning point where body and intellect connect, and the chaotic nature of this crucial connection is revealed. It is a postmodern metaphysics, playful, personal, unordered, deeply disseminative.

The three genres produce three different meta-discourses but all try to articulate the same thing: the possible meaning of the hidden desires of the person (the author, the speaker, and the reader as well). Psychoanalysis appears in them as an existential practice that creates the essentially hidden. It is an existential practice that is built on silence, absence, and unbreakable secrets, on “basic faults” (to use Balint’s later term, a term that was deeply connected with Ferenczi’s oeuvre) that at the same time weave and tear apart the fabric of our existence.

2.4 THE WRITING OF THE BODY

No doubt there is another genre of writing too, which, however, I do not intend to discuss here. In the last period of Ferenczi’s life, in 1932, the body of the speaker produced a deep and compulsive significant force in the form of a deadly illness. Ferenczi was absolutely aware of the meanings written in his body, the primordial interpretation of his existence that was offered by the illness. The pernicious anemia, in a very concrete biological sense, represented the fraying fabric of bodily construction, an “*arche écriture*” of personal existence, the absence that was stated on the level of self-destructive cells of his body. Silence and absence receive new and absolute interpretation; it is the study of death, the psychoanalyst’s confrontation with “The horror! The horror!” of Mr. Kurtz.

These four genres of writing represent a disturbing, non-logical but consequential course of postmodern existence: the objects (knowledge) of the world, the possible human relations (the experience of the other), the inner regions of the self (self-experience) spiral into the absolute personal, into the body, all being offered by, experienced through the hermeneutics of absence.

3. THE METAPHYSICS OF THE DIARY

I would like to touch upon four problems in the *Diary*. First, I shall discuss the basic character of personal existence, its relational nature (countertransference, mutual analysis); second, the metaphysical position of the concept of love; third, the nature of the objects, the inner formation of the outside world (trauma); and fourth, the special nature of subjectivity being formed (self and non-self; individual). The fourth aspect can hardly be separated from the other three, all are built on the idea of absence, and there is no generic concept that could integrate them. In a sense, they surround something that does not exist, and this is precisely the reason why one must talk and write about these problems.

3.1 The existential nature of the personal: the relation

The function of the concept of relation¹¹ is to offer an ontological foundation that produces and maintains personal existence. It can be stated in general that for Ferenczi, relation is not understood as the connection of two independent subjects. Quite the contrary, for him, relation is the only thing that exists, and everything else (the independent individuals and their connections or even the impossibility of their relation) can only be a further consequence of the original and primary relation. The general everyday term of relation is ‘love,’ which was discussed by Ferenczi from two angles: as a directly available material in the history of the relation of analyst and patient (the concept of countertransference and the theme of mutual analysis) and as an indirectly acquired story of the growing up of the subject (the confusion of tongues, language of tenderness and passion).

The theme of the first note in the *Diary* is typical and often returns later on: it is the “insensitivity of the analyst” (1). This is the definitive context of the *Diary*: people turn to the analyst, to him, Sandor Ferenczi, for help in their existential problems, and he, in a sense required by his profession, remains insensitive, trying to relate as an outsider. But this insensitivity leaves permanent traces in personal existence: the knot of a life is left inextricable, or new knots are produced on the thread, and the whole process inflicts further pain on life, covering up the old ones. Instead of self-understanding, this leads to misunderstanding, and the patient, instead of calling the analyst to account for his mistakes, considers himself to be mistaken; thus, by “retrojecting”, as we might say, he “introjects” the blame that is directed against us¹². This natural and sincere behavior, however, enforces a new therapeutic form, the deeply paradoxical mutual analysis. Natural and sincere behavior requires the uncovering of the analyst’s experiences, and this move changes analysis from a directed and professional activity into self-directional life activity. The Freudian conception is based on the secure institutional frames that include a necessarily unequal relation. In standard therapy, the positions are fixed, and the guidance of the interpretative process is in the hands of the analyst, who has the right to find and define meaning. In mutual analysis, the professional position is shifted from one side to the other, and this way the whole interpretative process is made unstable, the differentiation changes into deferment, and the artificial unity of the analytic situation is deconstructed. This situation makes the participants not only equal but also calls into question every institutionalization and shifts the process into the realm of the personal.

Perhaps we should differentiate two types in Ferenczi’s mutual analysis: one type is represented by the events of analysis that took place between Ferenczi and R.N. This is what we might call technically realized mutuality. The other type does not go so far technically; it is a virtual mutuality, one that creates the frame of mutuality around therapy. The frame of mutuality is created when the therapist realizes, admits, and uses (and suffers over) all the powerful effects of countertransference. Traditional psychoanalysis is essentially transferenceal, and countertransference is understood only as one technical factor, a source of therapeutic mistakes. For Ferenczi, countertransference served as a creative force that helped to make the primary relation dynamic. If it is at all possible to draw a parallel between modern philosophy and Ferenczi, it can be stated that countertransference served for him as the active-creative hermeneutic side of relation (as Heidegger thought of the terms *Verstehen* versus *Sein*).

3.2 The two archetypes of love: tenderness and passion

For Ferenczi, “love” was that relation that operationally and concretely articulates personal existence. Speaking, the production of self-creative words is only possible in this context. Love has a hermeneutic nature; it is the ontologically primary understanding, something that we do not receive in reality but in which we actually exist.

Due to the different unconscious relations of a person toward his own desires, love is formed in two different languages, two different ontological love languages that are the source of every further word concerning the self. One of them, tenderness, is the understanding of the other, while passion is understanding through misunderstanding. The unavoidable mixture of the two leads to the confusion of tongues, the primary confusion of dialogical self-production. It should not be forgotten that these two terms are ontological concepts: misunderstanding is not defective understanding but the creation of a love-relation that, besides producing the person, creates a faulty existential fragment in the other, a fragment that cannot be handled freely, one that - in addition to its positive effects in self-construction - may cause unhappiness, absence or illness. Misunderstanding always happens in an unequal relation where one side is a grown-up and the other is a child, one is powerful, the other is powerless. Misunderstanding is an unavoidable active absence, an essential gap: “The prototype of all confusion is being misled about the reliability of a person or a situation” (50). Or with an even more metaphysical expression: “Being misled means having made a mistake” (50). The translation here cannot give back the playfulness of the German original: “Irrewerden ist: sich geirrt haben” (93). The sentence offers an interplay of mistaken existence and making a mistake on one hand, and a clear reference to the most mistaken existence of all: mental illness on the other, as in the German expression for a mental hospital, “Irrenhaus”

In the background of tenderness and passion, two hermeneutic forms of the relational can be detected: the unifying and the splitting relational. Of the two, the primary form is tenderness and the unifying relational, immersion in the sea of boundless love. In case it were possible to continue life in ‘an optimal environmental climate, then the child would be inclined (a) to share its own pleasures with the environment (b) to take pleasure, without a feeling of envy, in development and well-being in the environment’ (151). Such “perfect happiness”, however, “was perhaps enjoyed only in the womb, in a passionless period which is briefly interrupted by the trauma of birth, but which continues to be enjoyed during the period of nursing” (151). The birth of passion and the first possibility of a splitting, differentiating relation is the product of pain and suffering. In this sense, passion is the secondary hermeneutics of the person, a love relation that organizes its complex and individual desires. It is important that passion is born by suffering: “the unavoidable - but perhaps partly superfluous and unnecessary - sufferings of primary adaptation (regulation of organic functions, training in cleanliness, weaning) make every human more or less passionate” (151). The German and Hungarian languages offer an interesting etymology of this fact, as “passion” and “suffering” have the same roots (Leidenschaft - leiden). To summarize the love-metaphysics of this typology: tenderness is an ontological, primary hermeneutics, it expects mutuality, offers security, one that articulates personal existence through embracement. Passion is a secondary love hermeneutics that splits while it relates, it always has a narcissistic, selfish tendency, it wants to own and get security even at the expense of the other and articulates personal existence through penetration.

3.3. The psychic sources of personal objects: the trauma

Reality and its elements, its objects are defined in the process of the existential relation. For psychoanalysis reality is the world that opens up from the inside of desires, it is a psychic reality where the concrete object is only an accidental derivative. Reality, therefore, appears not in the form of representation but as experience; its decisive character is not truth-value but the value of its wish-fulfillment function. Experienced reality is produced in the process of events that articulate the experience (it is essentially narrative) and these events develop the form, the shape of the individually characteristic collection of objects and events. It is typical of psychoanalysis (or even of the human individual in general) that the representative events of experience, those that stay with us as memories for a long time, take shape along absence, lack, as perfectly satisfied desires remain invisible, imperceptible. Those fragments of experiences that are perceived as significant absences, gaps, are called traumas.

For the early Freud trauma - as we know it - was a real act of sexual seduction that was suffered by a child unable to defend himself or herself. In the story of life, this material-bodily experience leads to a psychic split that later produces organic and psychic symptoms. Freud soon revised this interpretation by accepting that trauma is not an actual event but something made up in fantasy, and the real events connected to it are merely accidental. The concept of trauma became very complicated, as what we can find at its roots is not the real event itself, but the interpretation, a creative, rhetorical reshaping of a desire. The sufferer maintains the myth of suffering despite the fact that he has become the active party (and, to refer back to the relation of suffering and passion, we may say that the source of passion is essentially traumatic). Trauma, according to this view, is hermeneutic self-production, the unconscious construction of fate, the creation of the self as a primary myth. Trauma is a story elaborated by the unconscious, a story produced at the margins of the inner and the outer; it is possibly the most real (his)story. Freud understands trauma as transference, a reality that cannot be eliminated but cannot be realized either. Freud - first of all, as a response to Jung’s work - had to explain why there are so many traumas with a common theme and form. His answer was *Totem and Tabu*, in which he proposed an ancient act, the memory of which was later organized into fantasy with a radical and unavoidable hermeneutic function. Freud assumed a racial tradition that led from personal self-creation to the collective subjectivity of primitive man.

Ferenczi, without being aware of the novelty of his ideas, shifted the trauma concept into a radically new direction. This theoretical trend might seem to be a return to the early, pre-psychoanalytic idea of Freud’s: he also emphasized the importance of the original, actual event and used suggestion instead of rationalization. The parallel, however, is only apparent; it is very far from the intentions of Ferenczi to go

back to a pre-hermeneutic level. The difference between Freud and Ferenczi can be understood with the help of the 1924 book written by Otto Rank and Ferenczi, in which the rational understanding is removed from the center of therapy, and the idea of repetition takes its due place. Repetition changes the requirements of therapy, as the analyst is integrated into the course of real events; it is not enough for him to say something but he must act, embrace, react with love, with tenderness. The statement of the prevailing function of repetition also discards the secure separation of language and life, story told and story acted out. Ferenczi's innovation is that trauma is caused not only by fantasy with a hermeneutic function, but the source of the trauma is suffering and passion, that is, the other person in connection with whom the events took place. The logic is that in the background of the seemingly real traumatic event, there is a hermeneutic operation of fantasy, but if we go further back, again there is a real event, a real love-act that operated in the formation of the passion-tenderness construct. Fantasy is secondary compared to the primary and real love-relations, the ancient mother-child relation. The trauma-story is a real event that was used by fantasy. Hermeneutic fantasy is a self-producing narrative act (with linguistic nature) in the background of the traumatic object, but an even more hidden, more primary but at the same time real, material love relation exists, the absolute reality of individual life, a kind of basic love-text written in our body and the unconscious.

In Ferenczi's case, the key of the hermeneutic process is not transference projection, but the countertransference of the adult (in other words, this is the confusion of tongues situation). The adult, the analyst, or the educator creates traumas because he would not admit his unconscious desires; moreover, he passionately refuses them, and this way a fragment of the life of the patient or the child is split off and pushed into muteness, into negative silence, becoming an unavoidable narrative object, a trauma. Ferenczi, in contrast to Freud, understood trauma in a dialogical fashion. There was another difference between the earlier and later Freud in that the first, the agent of the trauma was the adult, later it was really the child himself. Ferenczi suggested that the agent of the trauma is the distortion of the dialogue between the unconscious desires, between the different articulations of desires. The more powerful side, the adult or the analyst, distorts the dialogue acting according to certain principles but desires something else. The child first tries to get rid of this disturbing, unstable situation, but as his possibilities are dramatically limited, he gives up, submits but in order to live through this story, to preserve his existence he splits off an extremely dynamic fragment of his psyche, which is dominated by an unbearable muteness and loneliness. The source of trauma is misunderstanding; the adult misunderstands tenderness, the child misunderstands passion, and the responsibility is, of course, on the side of the more powerful, in the countertransference position of the adult. What the adult, in a deep, unconscious manner, teaches the child is hatred, as the child originally knows how to love, to practice his own tenderness.

Ferenczi's idea of trauma seems to be very close to everyday life, for it is understood as the outcome of the self-productive dialogue of persons. It does not need any special, essential starting point, such as the collective unconscious, as in the case of Jung, or such as the trace of primitive group memory, as in the case of Freud. Probably, this is a point that may serve to explain Ferenczi's postmodernity. Trauma is not a fixed phenomenon but a trace of an interplay between participating individuals. In a sense, it is nothing, because the trauma cannot be said and cannot be approached even by the analyst himself: "By no means, however, can I claim to have ever succeeded, even in a single case, in making it possible for the patient to remember the traumatic processes themselves" (67). According to Ferenczi, trauma is surrounded by a "retroactively amnesic sphere," and with this, the nothing, the absence, moves into the psyche. The absolute material, the concrete psychic reality, and the nothing are connected; or what is the same, "true reality" lacks materiality, concreteness, and serves only as a starting point, as a voiceless scream. Due to its structure as misunderstanding, the trauma becomes chaos itself. The deeply postmodern conclusion of this idea is that "trauma is a process of dissolution that moves toward total dissolution, that is to say, death" (130). And the whole process is turned into the final field of the body (Ferenczi's own body as well): "The body, the cruder part of the personality, withstands destructive processes longer, but unconsciousness and the fragmentation of the mind already are signs of death of the more refined parts of the body" (130-131).

Another important sign of the reworking of the trauma concept is the idea of the materiality of the trauma. In her introduction to her *Diary*, Judith Dupont quotes Ferenczi's letter written to Freud on 25 December,

1929, in which Ferenczi states that he succeeded in nearly all his cases in finding the “traumatic hysterical bases”. He wrote that “psychoanalysis deals far too one-sidedly with obsessive neurosis and character analysis - that is, ego psychology - while neglecting the organic hysterical basis of the analysis. This results from overestimating the role of fantasy, and underestimating that of traumatic reality”¹³. “The traumatic reality is a material phenomenon: the painful part of the psyche is represented in this instance materially, as a substance” (107); this materiality carries trauma close to death and signifies an original alloplastic mimicry that connects it to the nature out of which the person originally was born. The hysterical body is ontologically representative, because “if the psychically dormant substance is rigid, while the nervous and mental systems possess fluid adaptability, then the hysterically reacting body could be described as semifluid” (7). The complex dialogical-genealogical traumas are led back to a postmodern myth that is deeply personal and at the same time owned by everybody, suggesting the “existence of a pre-primal-trauma/*Ururtraumatischen*/(83) an *archi-écriture* of individuality that can be observed in the background of every later writing about the psyche.

Using philosophical terminology: Trauma is a writing, an *archi-écriture* in the person, an unstable and unordered material base that works with an allegorical-rhetorical technique. In life, trauma never comes to the surface again; only its allegories become visible. Our entire subjective life consists of, is constructed by such allegories. Trauma activates itself in rhetorical repetitions when the person faces heterogeneous love situations, encountering a mixture of passion and tenderness, love and the loss of love. A life that would completely eliminate traumatic repetitions is hardly possible; it would require a continuity of reliable love relations, passive object love, and pre-narcissistic tenderness. According to Ferenczi, this is possible only in the case of being in love.

3.4. The self-articulation of the person - the individual

The concepts of relation, love, and trauma are all connected with the general way in which the individual, the person handles his deepest desires that create him. It is not surprising that Ferenczi introduced a concept of the individual in the *Diary* that would lead to an essentially different direction than the institutionalized direction of ego-psychology and self-psychology.

Modern psychoanalytic metapsychology defines the process of growing up as the creation of the coherence of the individual and suggests that mental illness is a decomposition. Ferenczi noted in his *Diary* on 10 April 1932 that the natural, primary state of the baby is “being loved, being the center of the universe (...) The first disappointments in love (weaning, regulation of the excretory functions, the first punishments through a harsh tone of voice, threats, even speaking) must have, in every case, a traumatic effect; that is, one that produces psychic paralysis from the first moment. The resulting disintegration makes it possible for new psychic formations to emerge. In particular, it may be assumed that a split occurs at this stage.” (83). In this key text, it is clear what Ferenczi suggests: that the growth of the person, the achievement of the adult state proceeds from an integrated early state toward a progressive disintegration, and the individual, through the very achievements of socialization, becomes fragmented, disseminated in the world. On June 30, 1932, he discussed Descartes and Malebranche only to arrive at a metaphysical conception of passion and stated the following general idea of individuality: “*The perception of one’s self (Sich-selbst-fühlen)* presupposes the existence of a *non-I; the ego is an abstraction*. Prior to this abstraction, we must have felt ourselves to be the Whole” (i.e. universe, p. 154, Ferenczi’s emphasis). The early complete ego (*Gesamt-Ich*), which is the experience of totality before becoming conscious, and a little later the hallucinatory wholeness that tries to substitute the original wholeness for some time, break up as a result of the primary-trauma, the “complete-suffering” (*Gesamtleidens*). The reaction to this is a splitting which tries to form from individual parts of the trauma separate smaller histories of suffering that can be handled more easily than the complete-suffering that would strike the whole personality. The ontologically problematic nature of the core of personal existence, its integratedness, can be resolved by removing the core and the center of the person which has disintegrated into fragments, into separate independent tasks, different possible experiences, roles.

The idea of disintegration, a basically anti-Cartesian principle, is stated in connection with the center of Cartesian philosophy, with the concept of knowledge: “the child is still closer to this feeling of universality

(without sense organs), he knows (feels) everything, certainly much more than adults, whose sense organs serve largely to exclude a major part of the external world (in fact *everything* except what is useful)” (154). The split nature of the self tries to form a fake unity, constructs a lie to direct attention away from incoherent existence. Split existence; that is, every adult existence, is essentially crazy existence; the only difference is that there are some who can and there are others who cannot hide or deny this: “The child is the only reasonable being in a mad world”.

The human being is driven by an eternal desire for the original pre-traumatic wholeness. “On the basis of this desire, certain covers, veils, or psychic armors are formed that recreate but at the same time re-distort” the wholeness. Fantasy, dream, and hallucination are the major forms of this process. Wholeness, however, can be brought closer only with one single act: “love built on tenderness: the recognition and assertion of one’s own self as a genuinely existing, valuable entity of a given size, shape, and significance - it is attainable only when the positive interest of the environment, let us say, its libido, guarantees the stability of this form of personality by means of external pressure, so to speak. Without such a counter-pressure, or put differently, counter-love (*Gegenliebe*), the individual tends to explode, to dissolve itself in the universe, and perhaps dies” (129). To achieve total existence, or just something vaguely similar to it, we need a tenderness-love that is never permanent but always attainable. Love is not a support here, not something additional to existence, but the creation of the person himself, the reading of somebody who comes into existence through this reading. The other form of this reading is suffering (that is passion and suffering), which besides the act of understanding becomes the unavoidable misunderstanding that builds and destroys at the same time.

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- 3.- Ferenczi e Rank (1942).
- 4.- Rudnytsky (1996), 3
- 5.- Felman (1987).
- 6.- Masson (1984).
- 7.- Ferenczi (n.d.), 156-167.
- 8.- Rachman (1989), 181-205.
- 9.- Eros (1996), 294.
- 10.- Ferenczi (1988)
- 11.- Aron (1996).
- 12.- Ferenczi (1985).
- 13.- See the introduction of Dupont to Ferenczi S. (1988)