

Something Was Lost in Sigmund Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*:

A Ferenczian Reading¹

Raluca Soreanu

Abstract: Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* brought a lot of new possibilities to psychoanalytic theory, but also a series of losses. While I recognise the importance of the death drive as a metapsychological construct, I argue that the first thing that went missing with the arrival of this ground-breaking Freudian text is the theorisation of the ego instincts or the self-preservative drives. Freud never articulated some plausible inheritors of the ego instincts. I follow the Budapest School, and especially the voice of Sándor Ferenczi, for addressing this loss. The second thing that went missing after *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is our openness in thinking through repetition. With the seductive formulation of the "demonic" repetition in this 1920 text, our theoretical imagination around repetition seems to have been affected. I draw on the work of Sándor Ferenczi for exploring new forms of repetition. Finally, I offer a Ferenczian re-reading of the Freudian *Nachträglichkeit*, which I see as crucial in the process of pluralising our thinking on repetition.

Keywords: repetition; reliving; the death drive; ego instincts; self-preservative drives;

Nachträglichkeit

¹ The author would like to thank Stephen Frosh, Ana Maria Furtado, Claudia Garcia, Endre Koritar and Carlos Lannes. The writing of this article was supported through a Wellcome Trust Fellowship in Medical Humanities.

What Was Lost in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*?

Freud's 1920 text, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, marks one of the most significant breaks in his thought. It is in this text that Freud inaugurates the idea of the death drive. In what follows, I ponder on some of the unspoken losses that psychoanalytic theory has suffered with this ground-breaking text. This is not to say, however, that the theoretical ramifications of introducing the pair death drive – life drive are few. The clinical implications of being able to speak in terms of the death drive are outstanding. Here, I diverge from voices arguing that we can do without the idea of death drive in clinical work (De Masi, 2015), or that the death drive can be treated as an unaccomplished and ambiguous metaphor for human aggressiveness (Frank, 2015).

After Alfred Adler and Carl Jung had left the theoretical domain constituted around the libido theory, Freud had very high stakes in affirming it and preserving it. But, curiously enough, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, he questions the libido theory as he had proposed it so far. This break was hard to handle even in Freud's circle of the time. Freud's followers (Karl Abraham and Max Eitingon, for instance) remained somewhat puzzled when confronted with Freud's radical revision, and with the discovery of the death drive. Some of them attributed it to a philosophical disposition in Freud, or to a kind of cultural pessimism of the time, which had little to do to metapsychology (Young-Bruehl, 2011; Frank, 2015). The death drive proved to be less than a temporary philosophical leaning in dark times. It became the core of a revised metapsychology.

Freud starts from a newly observed kind of repetition – or a repetition he is now able to look at from a new perspective – which brings him to the hypothesis that there is something akin to a death drive operating in the psyche. The repetition he speaks of is not directly in service to the pleasure principle. He discusses the repetition in traumatic dreams; and the repetition in children's games (the famous “Fort/Da” game). In both these examples, the dreamer or the child playing cannot derive pleasure from their repeated act. This means that there is another force organising these acts (or compulsions to repeat): Freud will give this force the name of “death drive”.

If in this 1920 essay we move, together with Freud, closer to understanding a “demonic” kind of repetition that operates in the psyche, my question here is: what do we miss? I argue that there are two things lost in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and I believe they are subtly interrelated. Firstly, Freud does not construe theoretical “inheritors” for what until 1920 he referred to as “the ego instincts”. There is something akin to a suspension. The death drive fully dominates the scene and we never come to see an articulation of ego-preservative instincts. Secondly, there is a foreclosure in Freudian thinking to further typifying repetition. Once we make the connection between the compulsion to repeat and the death drive, we are in danger of getting stuck with a nearly automatic solution. Surely, whatever needs to be said, in metapsychological terms, about repetition, could not be exhausted with Freud's 1920 *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. By focusing on the metapsychological propositions of Sándor Ferenczi, it is my aim here to give a well-deserved weight to the issue of the lost ego instincts; and to pluralise our thinking on repetition. The last

point on repetition extends to a rereading of the Freudian version of deferred action or afterwardness [*Nachträglichkeit*] and of the temporalities of the psyche.

The Lost Inheritors of the Ego Instincts

What happens to the lost ego instincts in psychoanalytic theory? Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (2011) speaks in strong terms, using the formulation “the trauma of lost love in psychoanalysis”, and accounting for the text *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* as having a traumatic and inhibiting quality. In this text, as noted above, Freud was marking a change of theoretical route, but underneath it there was an ardent wish for further developing and integrating his previous formulations.

There are significant consequences in focusing on the death drive and of postulating that the pleasure principle operates in service of the death drive. As I show below, a form of love remains unaccounted for, and it is ultimately lost to psychoanalytic theory.

In his 1911 paper, *Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning*, Freud articulates his conceptual pair: pleasure principle [*Lustprinzip*] and reality principle [*Realitätsprinzip*]. As long as the new-born is adequately cared for, the *Lustprinzip* operates without much constraint. It produces tensions and excitations that the new-born is able to discharge, via hallucinations (attached to memories of past pleasures). The *Realitätsprinzip*, by contrast, has hunger as its prototype, and, in a brief formulation, refers to tensions and excitations that need an object (distinct

from mere hallucinations – for instance, real food) in order to be discharged. The 1911 theoretical “house” is thus governed by two drives – the libidinal one and the ego instinctual one.

Here, I draw attention to the fact that surprisingly little happened, in theoretical terms, to the ego instinctual drive (or the self-preservative drive), in the period between 1911 and 1920. In 1920 the ego instinct was finally discarded. No inheritors were construed for it, while Freud moved to a new theoretical house. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, all that Freud (1920) has to say about the ego-preservative instincts is contained in a short reference on page 10, where he mentions that the *Realitätsprinzip* is “under the influence of the ego’s instincts of self-preservation”.

It is the Budapest School that preserved and elaborated the idea of self-preservative drives or ego instincts as valuable in itself. It is also the thinkers of the Budapest School who saw that psychoanalysis could not proceed without a philosophy of love and a moral-political theory (Young-Bruehl, 2011, p. 261). In the works of the Budapest School we can encounter a metapsychological expression of the ancient Greek insistence on the fact that *eros* is a contrasting force to *philia*, but it also presents itself strongly intertwined with it. *Philia* refers to all bonds with living beings, without which survival and life in common are impossible to envisage. As Young-Bruehl (2011, p. 253) stresses, it refers to the affections and loves that exist between parents and children, between friends, between fellow citizens discussing the fate of the polity, between apprentices and their mentors. This return to *eros* and *philia* does not mean making of this ancient Greek idea a replacement for metapsychology. It can

instead be seen as a substratum for metapsychological formulations.

In his *Thalassa*, Ferenczi (1924) talks about a form of a self-preservative instinct, which presents itself as a longing to return to the womb. Proposing an extended analogy between phylogenesis and ontogenesis, he articulates his own version of a myth of origin, which begins in the depth of the sea, and manifests itself as a wish to return to that maritime environment. While creating this myth of origin, Ferenczi however does not lose sight of the sexual drives; and he also accepts a version of the death-instinct theory. Such an articulation stands as a proof that there is no necessary exclusion between working with an idea of a self-preservative instinct and working with an idea of the death drive.

In the 1929 paper, *The Unwelcome Child and His Death Instinct*, Ferenczi overtly recognises the importance of the Freudian dualism life drive – death drive: “Since the epoch-making work of Freud on the irreducible instinctual foundations of everything organic (in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*) we have become accustomed to look upon all the phenomena of life, including those of mental life, as in the last resort a mixture of the forms of expression of the two fundamental instincts: the life and the death instinct” (1929, p. 102). Still, Ferenczi (1929, p. 103) speaks of the “genesis of unconscious self-destructive trends” (manifested in circulatory and respiratory disturbances, in asthma, emaciation without anatomical causes, or glottal spasms that lead to self-strangulation). The genesis is in the child’s having been unwelcome to the family; or at first received well and later “dropped”. The death drive is thus not seen to operate in an autonomous way, but it is mediated by suffering and trauma, especially the trauma of an early lack of affect. In my view, Ferenczi here outlines the

relationship between the operation of the death drive and the strength of the ego. He states that the death drive is more forceful in the early stages of life, as “the infant is [...] much closer to individual non-being” and “[s]lipping back into this non-being might therefore come much more easily to children” (ibid., p. 105). The frail young ego is in much more danger of giving up on life and giving in to self-destructive tendencies. A strengthened adult ego is closer to the life drive.

It is important to note that in a series of notes of his *Clinical Diary* (in the entry of August 13, 1932) Ferenczi comes to doubt the plausibility of the death drive and he affirms the insufficient exploration of the life drive.

Even science is “passionate” when it sees and recognises only selfish instincts. The natural urge to *share feelings of pleasure* following the corresponding normal satiation, and nature’s principle of harmony, are not sufficiently recognized.

The idea of the death instinct goes too far, is already tinged with sadism; drive to rest [*Ruhetrieb*] and SHARING (communication [*Mit-teilung*], *sharing*) of “excessive” accumulations of pleasure *and* unpleasure is the reality, or it was when not artificially – traumatically – disturbed.

BEING ALONE leads to splitting.

The presence of someone with whom one can share and communicate joy and sorrow (love and understanding) can HEAL the trauma.

Personality is reassembled “*healed*” (like “glue”) (pp. 200-201).

Avello (1998) interprets the connection Ferenczi makes between the idea of the death drive and sadism as a disavowal of the death drive. If we autonomise and biologise the functioning of the death drive, there is little recognition of the

traumatogenic actions performed by an aggressor. While I agree with the direction of this interpretation, I believe Ferenczi's diary entry cannot be taken as a fully-fledged refutation of the death drive, but rather as statement on the insufficient theoretical energies that have gone into understanding the life drive and the *Philia*, explicitly marked here as sharing and communicating pleasure.

Perhaps Ferenczi's most original contribution to imagining inheritors for Freud's lost ego-preservative drives is his theorisation around "Orpha". Ferenczi's "Orpha" – a feminine of Orpheus – is a very curious fragment of the psyche, resulting from the splitting process that happens in traumatic moments. Orpha is the form that the organising life instincts take at the time of the trauma, precisely when the enormity of suffering has brought a renunciation of any expectation of external help. As Ferenczi (1933) notes in his *Clinical Diary*: "[t]he absent external help [...] is replaced by the creation of a more ancient substitute" (p. 105). Orpha is a sort of "guardian angel", a healing agent, and a principle of salvation: by surprising and minute calculations around what it would mean to continue living (often in a basic sense of continuing breathing or maintaining a beating heart), Orpha acts in the direction of self-preservation. Orpha also "produces wish-fulfilling hallucinations, consolation phantasies; it anaesthetises the consciousness and sensitivity against sensations as they become unbearable" (ibid., p. 8). What is remarkable here is that any radical opposition between the life drive and the death drive, between creativity and destruction, between linking and un-linking, is put into question. Orpha is wise, but it is ultimately a fragment, it is split-off from other faculties. Orpha is formed when death is very near, but it acts as an organising life instinct.

Following up on the Ferenczian path, Michael Balint (1937) proposed important ideas for thinking through the inheritors of ego instincts. He introduced the notion of “primary love” or “primary passive object love”; and the characterological concepts “ocnophilism” (referring to a tendency of relating to objects based on clinging on to them) and “philobatism” (describing a relational tendency of crossing empty spaces and encountering obstacles). I see these contributions as attempts to tackle the inheritance of the ego-preservative drives, and to tackle Freud’s having allowed them to disappear from his metapsychology.

Imagining Repetition: Ferenczi’s Contribution

In 1920, Freud discovers a new kind of repetition, which is not in service of the pleasure principle. When he solidifies this important discovery, because of its strong anchoring in the primacy of the death drive, he closes the path to exploring other kinds of repetition. Our imaginary on repetition became partly “frozen” after the uncovering of its “demonic” aspect. In a succinct formulation, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud theorises two types of repetition. The first one is in service of the pleasure principle and it proceeds by linking. It happens in the transference, in the psychoanalytic setting, and it leads to recollection. The second type of repetition is in service of the death drive, and it is an attempt to restore a previous state of things, an attempt to return to the inanimate by way of a total extinction of tension in psychic life. It is this second kind of “demonic” repetition that represents the core discovery

of the text *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

The question I ask here is: what if there exists a track of repetition that does not serve directly the pleasure principle, nor does it bear its first and most important connection to the death drive? Can we come to conceive of a *reparative and restorative repetition*, in relation to the ego, aiming at eliminating residues of unworked-through traumas and at restoring a pre-traumatic state of the ego (or of the proto-ego)?

Let us start from a different notion, that of the “affectionate current” in psychic life. In the early editions of *The Three Essays of the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud (1905) referred to the “affectionate current” to designate the energies of the self-preservative drive; and to the “sensual current” to designate the libidinal energies in children. He also distinguished tenderness or affection [*Zärtlichkeit*] from sensuality [*Sinnlichkeit*]. Both the affectionate and the sensual current have as their first object the maternal breast. The relationship of the two is one of “leaning on” (or anaclitic): when the baby is nursing, the sensual current leans on the affectionate current. The breast thus becomes the anaclitic object, or the object leaned upon [*Anlehnungsobjekt*]. In the last version that Freud proposed for his *Three Essays*, however, the affectionate current lost its distinctiveness from the sensual current and took the more restrained and also negative form of inhibited sexual desire. In other words, it became sexual desire that cannot achieve full object love. In 1914, Freud had already formulated his ideas on primary narcissism. The theory of narcissism worked to efface the metapsychological autonomy of the self-preservative drive. What was once “the affectionate current” was now depicted as a kind of narcissism.

While Freud spoke of “the affectionate current” but failed to give it a destiny in his metapsychological texts, Sándor Ferenczi was the one to point out that self-preservative drives need reality from the very start. Even if we wish to speak of the life in the womb, there as well we find the reality of the functioning of the mother’s body.

Sándor Ferenczi made a significant step in giving a relational form to the affectionate current, by proposing a crucial dichotomy between the language of passion and the language of tenderness. Children experience as traumatic the interruption of the register of the language of tenderness, which is about gentle care and meeting basic needs, when they encounter the language of passion of the adults, where repression and guilt are central. Is it the case that the language of tenderness holds the key to recapturing some of the spirit of the ideas contained in Freud’s underdeveloped metapsychological ideas on the affectionate current in psychic life? And, an even more challenging question: how do we clinically have access to the moment of intrusion of the language of passion into the language of tenderness?

As mentioned above, Freud already marked a strong discovery of his own in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, which already pluralises our understanding of repetition. But this should not inhibit us from looking for other tracks of repetition, which are more capable to be in a productive connection with the observations we make in our contemporary clinical material.

Ferenczi’s *reliving*, although in a first instance might appear to come close to the idea of traumatic repetition formulated by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, still maintains its specificities. It is worthy of being investigated as *a different track of*

repetition, grounded in a different metapsychology. In brief, we can say that Ferenczi gave a whole different meaning to the series repetition/remembering/reliving. Freud contrasted remembering with repeating and had sharply distinguished between insight (memory or recollection) and experience (repetition or regression). Ferenczi saw repetition, and particularly regression or experiential reliving, as one of the tracks of remembering. Reliving is the way of gaining access to the child in the adult, or what Ferenczi (1931, p. 126) speaks of in terms of “child analysis in the analysis of adults”.

Ferenczi’s reliving is grounded in a different proposition on temporality than any of Freud’s ideas on *Nachträglichkeit*. As John Fletcher (2013) shows in his book *Freud and the Scene of Trauma*, Freud had remained in his entire work haunted by an idea of the authenticity of the scene of trauma. It is fair to say that while this haunting receives important elaboration in the passage from the first theory of trauma (the seduction theory) to the second theory of trauma, which gives status to fantasy (and thus seems to be pushing aside the disquieting questions about the authenticity of the original traumatic event), the theme of authenticity remains an important undercurrent even in writings that come long after the second theory. Laplanche and Pontalis (1964) rightfully point to the fact that the supposed “abandoned” theory of seduction, which is one of the commonplaces of thought of the commentators of Freud, actually contains many points that Freud preserved or returned to at later moments. Arguing along the same lines, Nicholas Rand and Maria Torok (1997) have stressed the oscillations between giving primacy to fantasy and giving primacy to the external event in Freud’s thought. All these complicated returns are played out

concepts such as the screen memory, the primal fantasy [*Urphantasie*], originary fantasy [*ursprünglich Phantasie*] and transference. That Freud was never able to set aside his questions about the authenticity of the traumatic event is only a statement of his untiring commitment to the understanding of human suffering. There is no easy resolution to the matter of the authenticity of the originary traumatic event; but there are more or less useful theoretical—clinical elaborations to this matter.

Sándor Ferenczi is the one who explored new solutions to the problem of authenticity and articulated the importance of achieving a sense of authenticity of the traumatic experience as part and parcel of the very process of healing. In consonance with the role that the third recognising presence has in the Ferenczian theory of trauma, the psychoanalyst becomes an agent of recognition, allowing the emergence of a sense of authenticity that the patient never had access to before.

In Ferenczi's theory, memory operates both through the ego and through the id, constituting two different regimes or tracks of memory, defined in their difference by their object-relatedness (Stanton, 1990, p. 84). In the regime of id memories, we find "bodily sensations", referring to primal life and death trends [*zugen*]. When these are elaborated retrospectively by the ego, they are lived as emotions. In the regime of ego memories, we encounter "projected sensations", referring to the environment and to external occurrences. These tend to produce effects of objectivity, and they are experienced as verifiable consciously. The crux of the matter is how these regimes of memory interact, and whether the emotionality of the bodily sensations and the objectivity effects of the projected sensations come to be connected. We can argue that Ferenczian reliving aims at a composition between id memories and ego

memories.

Ferenczian repetition has its own track because it involves the memory register that has been constituted around bodily sensations. It is thus very far from mere remembering (which, in Freudian terms, would be the “colder” activity of the conscious part of the ego; or the passing of marks from the unconscious part of the ego to the conscious part of the ego). Ferenczian repetition is also oriented toward the clearing up of traumatic residues – we could call it *reparative repetition* (occurring in dreams and even in certain forms of regression or in enactments in the psychoanalytic frame). Finally, it stands in a curious relation to the idea of restoring a previous state of things, which in Freud is interpreted as restoring the inanimate state, where tension is absent. What is being restored in a Ferenczian paradigm, in my view, is *a pre-traumatic state of the ego or of the proto-ego*. This form of reparative recollection, therefore, passes through the self-preservative instincts or the ego instincts. In other words, we need the ego instincts to come to understand how this form of repetition works. It can only secondarily be said to operate in service of the pleasure principle, because it is more strongly marked by the operation of the self-preservative instincts.

To conclude, without the implication of the register of memory of the id, the re-attunement between emotionality and rationality, which became split from each other at the time of the trauma, cannot be achieved.

A Ferenczian Rereading of *Nachträglichkeit*

Let us take some space for a comment on Freud's important system of ideas around *Nachträglichkeit*. Strachey's translation is that of "deferred action". As this translation suggests a linear temporality, some more felicitous translations have been attempted by Thomä and Cheshire (1991) as "retrospective attribution" and by Laplanche (1998) as "afterwardsness". *Nachträglichkeit* refers to a temporal logic that governs the psychic world, and where we have a system of "scenes", a kind of psychic scenography emerging through the *interaction* effects between different moments in time (Birksted-Breen, 2003; Dahl, 2010; Faimberg, 2007; Fletcher, 2013). In short, the traumatic consequences of the first scene are only released in the form of a (hysterical) symptom as result of the retrospective action of the second scene, which has the power to reactivate or revitalise the memory traces of the first scene. As Freud explains when he discusses the case of Katharina, the memory of the first scene persists, in a defensively isolated state, in a kind of limbo, or "in storage". It is somewhat like a foreign body, constituted by way of the intensity of the excitation experienced at the time. The second scene reactivates it by way of connections and homologies. There is thus no exclusive power of the initial mnemonic trace, but the power emanates precisely from the interaction between the different moments. The effect of afterwardsness depends on the articulation of the various scenes, and crucially includes processes of defense and repression.

John Fletcher (2013) takes us through some indeed very interesting tensions that pass through the Freudian system of notions around the *Nachträglichkeit*. Crucially, in my reading, he points to Freud's insistence the centrality of the first scene

(which he will then trace back to an originary seduction scene). He refers to the other scenes as “auxiliaries”. This statement on auxiliaries is counterintuitively accompanied by the assertion that there is a kind of infantile sexual indifference or apathy in relation to the first scene of abuse. The first scene only gains its status through the occurrence of the subsequent ones. Thus, memory comes to be lived as a contemporary event. In simpler terms, without the second moment, there would have been no trauma in the first moment. This thesis on infantile sexual indifference or apathy is very difficult to defend. It installs a certain sense of equality among mnemonic traces that is also implausible. The idea of a very fragile ego, still unable to handle certain types of stimulation and easily broken by overstimulation, escapes any kind of systematic articulation.

It is here that the Ferenczian metapsychology of fragmented psyches can lead to useful questionings. The young fragile ego is neither apathetic nor indifferent; on the contrary, it is very sensitive to the moments when adults cease to address it in what Ferenczi referred to as “the language of tenderness” and start to address it in the incomprehensible and overburdening (at the time) “language of passion”, which is specific to a register of sexuality that is unliveable by the child but with the cost of the fragmentation of the ego. While Freud would say that there was no trauma as such in the first moment, with Ferenczi we come to understand how the selection between the mnemonic traces is done, so that not all memories have the potential of the subsequent contribution to the complicated palimpsest of different scenes and temporalities that can constitute a “trauma”. In brief, it is the stimulation of the child via the language of passion that results in the “pool” of scenes that the psyche can

then weave, via composing different temporalities, into a trauma.

In what follows, I would like to discuss the quality of the relation between the different scenes/elements that come to constitute a trauma. Fletcher (2013) suggests that in the construction of his idea of “screen memories”, Freud is primarily guided by a metonymical logic. This means that “the displacement from experience to screen takes place [...] between two adjacent elements within a simultaneous ensemble” (Fletcher, 2013, p. 116). Fletcher goes on to argue that Freud oscillates between this metonymic interpretation of memory (where there is a substitution of insignificant for significant parts within a large whole) to a metaphoric interpretation (where the elements are put in a relation of similitude or analogy). It is crucial to note that in his *Nouveaux fondements pour la psychanalyse*, Jean Laplanche (1987) proposed a use of the couple metaphor/metonymy that is crucial in making sense of the functioning of the life drive and the death drive, respectively.

According to Laplanche, the death drive and the life drive are two aspects of the sexual drive. The life sexual drive corresponds to a total and totalising object, it is linked (which in a Freudian sense, in Laplanche’s account, it means that it is maintained more or less coherent and it is not split in pieces) by a relation to an object in view of or in process of an act of totalisation (Laplanche, 1987, p. 144). This means that the life drive is more inclined to metaphorical, than to metonymical displacements. This is the case because precisely the kind of structures that present a certain totality, a certain internal articulation, are susceptible to become the matter of analogies. It is this act gesturing toward some sort of totality that makes an operation of analogy thinkable. The death drive seems to correspond more to

metonymical operations, because it is always achieving a partial object, in Kleinian terms, an object that is unstable, formless and in fragments. In this reasoning, it is of crucial importance if we can qualify a relation between different elements as metaphorical or metonymical.

This brings us to Sándor Ferenczi, to his conception of the symbol, and to his ideas on analogical thinking. Association – linking across levels of sensoriality and signification – brings an alteration of material structures, and a re-organisation of the very fleshiness of the body. Ferenczi is in dissonance with the Saussurean division of the sign into two constituent parts, material signifier (the word) and conceptual signified (the thing referred to by the sound). For him, things mean in their immediate materiality. Meaning is not detached, abstracted and located elsewhere. Materiality is not merely a lower order that entraps us, while the higher order of semantic fullness remains a horizon that we aspire for. “[T]he symbol – a thing of flesh and blood”, he writes in 1921. The word-presentation [*Wort-Vorstellung*] can only deceptively be equated with the symbolic. A word is at best a fossil outside chains of associations that include different sensorial impressions and thing-presentations [*Sach-Vorstellung*].

Although our space here does not allow a full reflection on a Ferenczian semiotics, it is crucial to mark the way Ferenczi differentiates “unsubstantial allegory” from “the symbol”. Not every analogy is symbolic in a psychoanalytic sense. The symbol emerges from a particular kind of *affectively charged non-arbitrariness*. How so? First, the symbol has a physiological basis, it “expresses in some ways the whole body or its functions” (Ferenczi, 1921, p. 355). Second, one of the two terms (things, ideas) of the analogy which can be considered symbolic is invested in consciousness

with an inexplicable over-charge of affect. This surplus of affect is rooted in the unconscious identification with another thing (or idea), to which it actually belongs. When Ferenczi distinguishes between unsubstantial analogy and symbolic analogy, he contrasts the bi-dimensionality of the first with the three-dimensionality of the second. But what is the third dimension that he is referring to? I argue that the “third dimension” is the analogical work of the mind/body of the analyst, linking the two series of elements that bear a homology (while having one of the series invested with inexplicable affect). The psychoanalyst thus works with symbols that are things “of flesh and blood”.

The implications of seeing the symbol as an affectively charged non-arbitrariness are profound. I would here like to ponder on the idea of the non-arbitrary that emerges from Ferenczi’s work and from his philosophical ideas on mimetism and analogy. Even language imitates the body and body parts in a complicated manner. This means that associations have a *necessary* aspect to them, and thus they also need to be very *precise*. Marion Oliner (2013) has recently drawn our attention that although there is a growing body of work in psychoanalytic theory on the irrepresentable, the non-represented or non-represented mental states (André Green, René Rousillon), we are still confronted with an unsettling clinical-empirical puzzle in the fact that there is often a very striking *accuracy* in the enactments and actualisations of the traumatic events, even when the memory of them remains inaccessible to consciousness. This is to say that the psycho-soma is able to re-stage the traumatic events with a great level of precision. It is this precision and minuteness of detail that leads us believe that the crux of the matter is not that these marks were

not presented in any way to the psyche, or that they belong to the realm of the irrepresentable. Oliner (2013) uses “non-represented” in inverted commas, to draw our attention to the overuse of his term to cover situations where actually what is missing is the associations between different modes of representation (or, we would say, between different modes of presentation in the psyche). The crux of the matter, rather, is another Ferenczian theme: that of *splitting* of the psyche during a moment of excessive stimulation, when the psyche cannot convert the amount of free energy invading it into linked energy. In short, we can say that the reason why association is at times very difficult and painful across different sensorial modalities is because we are dealing with modes of presentation belonging to different split-off parts of the psyche, rather than because the traumatic event has not presented itself to the psyche in any way that produces a mark.

Returning to Freud, this brings a significant challenge to the thesis of the infantile sexual indifference. All the details that appear in the reliving of the traumatic scene have to have made a sensorial inscription, which was retained in some way. The choice of elements in the trauma scene and their relations are non-arbitrary. Also, non-traumatic memories compose details that needed to have had a personal significance at the time of their selection. Freud got disturbingly far from being able to account why one *particular* scene (and not another one!) out of the countless moments of a child’s life becomes the scene of trauma; and why some sensory elements and not others are tied into a non-traumatic memory.

The Ferenczian reading of *Nachträglichkeit* would entail, firstly, a psychoanalytically plausible version of a type of “time-travel”, where, via the what

Ferenczi calls memory of the id, or sensorial memory, we become able to “touch” (here, I use “touch” as a metaphor for multi-sensorial access, not just the strictly tactile one – it may be acoustic, olfactive, kinetic etc.) another time. Secondly, a Ferenczian *Nachträglichkeit* also involves in the structure of the traumatic scene a third presence, which “locks-in” the trauma, via denial (or misrecognition of the nature or of the magnitude of the child's experience, whose world was broken by the intrusion of the language of passion of the adult). When, in a clinical setting, different sensorial modalities become linked with one another, and the memory of the id becomes connected in stronger ways to the memory of the ego, what we achieve is *effects of authenticity*, which are at the core of the process of healing. Originally, the trauma brought the splitting of sensorial modalities and of parts of the more or less developed ego, producing *effects of inauthenticity*. It is crucial to mark that the memory of the id is capable of some form of inscription. This means that both in the “locking-in” of the trauma, and in its subsequent unpacking and working-through, the memory of the id has a leading role. The reliving of a different moment in time and the recuperation of the split-off parts of the ego unfolds *in the spirit of the marks inscribed via the memory of the id*. In other words, healing occurs guided by and in the spirit of the memory of the id. This is perhaps the most psychoanalytically plausible version of authenticity that we can arrive at.

A Ferenczian reading of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* leaves us in a stronger position, and brings us closer to understanding what we lost with Freud's 1920 text. In Ferenczi's work, there is a consistent investment in exploring the inheritors of the ego-preservative drives, through his ideas on trauma, on the “Orpha”

fragment of the psyche, on the symbolic, and on healing. With Ferenczi, we can come to imagine a creative repetition, linked to the operation of the ego-preservative drives. The Ferenczian *Nachträglichkeit* is somewhat narrower than the Freudian one, as it acknowledges the precision of the traumatic marks, the subsequent precision of their re-enactment, and the more limited operation of the death drive in their organisation. Kerz-Rühling (1993) stressed the difficulties of a purely hermeneutic conception of *Nachträglichkeit*. The radical clinical implication of such a hermeneutic reading would be that analyst and analysand can construe close to anything together, free from any necessity of the actual suffering of the original event. I have argued here that they construe in the spirit of the memory of the id, and while grounding themselves in the force of the ego-preservative drives.

What sustains the healing process in the course of psychoanalytic treatment and what makes possible to “glue” back together the split-off and deadened parts of the traumatised self is precisely the work of the ego-preservative drives, the instincts for harmony and sharing that Ferenczi was referring to in his diary entry of 13 August 1932, cited above. Healing is also sustained by a curious fragment of the psyche, by “Orpha”, the organising life instinct, found in a limbo between the life drive and the death drive.

References:

Avello, J.J. (1998). Metapsychology in Ferenczi: Death instinct or death passion?

International Forum of Psychoanalysis, 7(4), 229–234.

Balint, M. (1937 [1994]). Early developmental states of the ego: Primary object love.

In *Primary love and psychoanalytic technique* (pp. 90–108). London: Karnac.

Birksted-Breen, D. (2003). Time and the après-coup. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(6), 1501–1515.

Dahl, G. (2010). The two time vectors of *Nachträglichkeit* in the development of ego organization: Significance of the concept for the symbolization of nameless traumas and anxieties. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 91(4), 727–744.

De Masi, F. (2007). Is the concept of the death drive still useful in the clinical field? *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 96(2), 445–458.

Faimberg, H. (2007). A plea for a broader concept of *Nachträglichkeit*. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 76(4), 1221–1240.

Ferenczi, S. (1913 [1994]). Stages in the development of the sense of reality. In *First contributions to psycho-analysis* (pp. 213–239). London: Karnac.

Ferenczi, S. (1921 [1994]). The symbolism of the bridge. In *Further contributions to the theory and technique of psycho-analysis* (pp. 352–356). London: Karnac.

Ferenczi, S. (1924 [1938]). *Thalassa: A theory of genitality*, H.A. Bunker (Trans.). Albany, NY: The Psychoanalytic Quarterly.

Ferenczi, S. (1929 [1994]). The unwelcome child and his death instinct. In *Final contribution to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis* (pp. 102–107). London: Karnac.

Ferenczi, S. (1931 [1994]). Child analysis in the analysis of adults. In *Final contribution*

- to the problems and methods of psycho-analysis* (pp. 126–142). London: Karnac.
- Ferenczi, S. (1932 [1988]). *The Clinical Diary of Sándor Ferenczi*, M. Balint & N.Z. Jackson (Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Fletcher, J. (2013). *Freud and the scene of trauma*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Frank, C. (2014). On the reception of the concept of the death drive in Germany: expressing and resisting an 'evil principle'? *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 96(2), 425–444.
- Freud, S. (1905). Three essays on the theory of sexuality. In *Standard Edition* (Vol. 7, pp. 125–243). London: Hogarth Press.
- Freud, S. (1911). Formulations on the two principles of mental functioning. In *Standard Edition* (Vol. 12, pp. 213–226). London: Hogarth Press.
- Freud, S. (1920). Beyond the pleasure principle. In *Standard Edition* (Vol. 18, pp. 3–64). London: Hogarth Press.
- Kerz-Rühling, I. (1993). Nachträglichkeit. *Psyche-Z Psychoanal*, 47(10), 911–933.
- Laplanche, J. (1987). *Nouveaux fondements pour la psychanalyse*. Paris: PUF.
- Laplanche, J. (1998). Notes sur l'après-coup. Conference on psychoanalytical intracultural and intercultural dialogue, International Psychoanalytical Assn., Paris, 27–29 July.
- Laplanche, J. & Pontalis, J-B. (1968). Fantasy and the origins of sexuality. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 49(1), 1–18.
- Oliner, M. (2013). 'Non-represented' mental states. In H.B. Levine, G.S. Reed & D. Scarfone (Eds.), *Unrepresented states and the construction of meaning: Clinical and*

theoretical contributions (pp. 152–171). London: Karnac.

Rand, N. & Torok, M. (1997). *Questions for Freud: The secret history of psychoanalysis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Stanton, M. (1990). *Sándor Ferenczi: Reconsidering active intervention*. London: Free Association.

Thomä, H. & Cheshire, N. (1991). Freud's *Nachträglichkeit* and Strachey's 'deferred action': Trauma, constructions and the direction of causality. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 18(3), 407–427.

Young-Bruehl, E. (2011). The trauma of lost love in psychoanalysis. In S. Akhtar & M.K. O'Neil (Eds.), *On Freud's 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'* (pp. 250–264). London: Karnac.