



COMPONENT SOCIETY OF THE INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOANALYTICAL ASSOCIATION

ONE THOUGHT, ONE MASTER SÁNDOR FERENCZI - JUDIT MÉSZÁROS



“Confusion of Tongues and Identification with the Aggressor”

Judit Mészáros Conference and Film Screening
Hybrid Event

Sunday, 13 April 2025, from 10 am to 4.30 pm (GMT+3)
Istanbul Bilgi University santralistanbul Campus, Hall: Mahkeme Salonu

PROGRAM

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| 9.30-10.00 | Registration |
| 10.00-11.30 | First Part: Confusion of Tongues – Ferenczi’s Trauma Theory |
| 11.30-12.00 | Coffee Break |
| 12.00-13.30 | Second Part: Contemporary Views on “Identification with the Aggressor” |
| 13.30-15.00 | Lunch Break |
| 15.00-16.30 | Film Screening and Discussion: <i>Sándor Ferenczi (1873 – 1933)</i>
Hungarian Television, Hungarians Who Changed the Century Series, 2021.
English subtitle: Sándor Ferenczi Society. |

Online registration and Zoom link: www.psikeistanbul.org



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Themes of the Conference

Ferenczi's paradigm shift in trauma theory, its influence on our contemporary thinking and identification with the aggressor at individual, community and societal levels

by Judit Mészáros

Almost a century ago, Ferenczi's trauma theory summarized in 'Confusion of tongues between adults and the child' (1933) opened a new perspective on the theoretical and therapeutic approach to trauma. Why do we call this a paradigm shift and what are the main elements of it? The conference will provide answers to the question. Among them: Ferenczi stated that trauma is based on real experience, not a fantasy that triggers the traumatic effect as Freud had been stated since his second trauma theory. Ferenczi placed trauma within an *interpersonal and intrapsychic sequence of processes* and opened up a new perspective toward *dimensions of object relations*.

Ferenczi also recognized that both, the perpetrator and the victim, use different ego defence mechanisms during and after the trauma to maintain their psychic equilibrium. Beyond this in the 'Confusion' paper there are so many new discoveries, for example: What is the meaning of 'pleasure principle' in trauma? How could this Janus-faced phenomenon exist? Suffering, on the one hand, and experiencing pleasure, on the other? What is the consequence of this antagonistic process? Ferenczi also speaks about 'traumatic progression'. One can look at *traumatic progression as a key word in the development of resilience*.

Ferenczi also drew attention to *the presence or lack of a trusted person after the traumatic experience*. We will discuss the extraordinary importance of publicness, solidarity, and emotional and intellectual aid when the traumatized person does not remain alone or without help and we will also discuss the consequences of not happening.

Ferenczi was the first to describe the ego defence mechanism of *identification with the aggressor*. This lecture focuses on how the process of identification with the aggressor manifests in various dimensions of life, at the individual, community and societal levels: in family relations, schools, sport clubs, religious organizations and how it encourages sustaining autocratic, dictatorial regimes.



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Sándor Ferenczi was born in Miskolc, Hungary in 1873. After studying medicine in Vienna, he returned to Hungary and started to work.

After meeting Freud in 1908, the personal and professional relationship that developed between them resulted in Ferenczi's deeper involvement in psychoanalysis. In 1909, he published (deleted first paper, because it was not the first psychoanalytic article -- that was published in 1908) on early object relations theory, where he introduced the concept of "introjection." Ferenczi attached special importance to institutionalization and founded (It was Ferenczi who established the IPA -- sources: Ferenczi (1928), Simmel, (1933) Eitingon (1933) etc.) the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA) in 1910. In 1920, he created the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (IJP) and established the Hungarian Psychoanalytical Society in 1913. After the end of World War I, the topic of the 5th IPA congress in Budapest in 1918 was 'War Neuroses' and Ferenczi was elected as the president of the IPA.

Ferenczi emphasised the importance of the mother-infant relationship and underlined that this bond was fundamental in shaping the child's personality. 'Primary love' is the concept created by Balint and Ferenczi. Mahler and Klein have their roots in the Budapest School and the influence of the source of their training is evident in their work on early childhood. Ferenczi was Klein's first analyst and it was he who advised her to work with children.

Through his work with traumatised people and difficult cases, Ferenczi showed that psychoanalysis could be therapeutic not only for neurotic patients, but for everyone who suffers. Stating that trauma originates from real life, Ferenczi studied the effect of early experiences in the mother-child relationship on trauma, and the interpersonal and intra-psychic dimensions of the process between perpetrator and victim. He defined the concept of identification with the aggressor, which is the building block of current trauma theory.

Judit Mészáros Ph.D., is a training and supervising psychoanalyst of the Hungarian Psychoanalytical Society (affiliated with the IPA). Professor honoris causa, staff member at the European Psychotherapy Training Institute, Budapest and president of the Sándor Ferenczi Society. Mészáros has played a key role over the past four decades in revitalizing Ferenczi's legacy, facilitating researches and establishing institutions to bring him back into the mainstream of psychoanalysis. among them is the **Ferenczi House Project** which culminated in the purchase of Ferenczi's original office in 2011, laying the foundation for the **Ferenczi House and Archives**.

Mészáros has authored numerous papers, and books, One of her significant works is *Ferenczi and Beyond. Exile of the Budapest School and Solidarity in the Psychoanalytic Movement during the Nazi Years* (Karnac, 2014). Recently, two books she has edited and elaborated were published in Brazilian Portuguese: *Ferenczi: Preanalytic writings (1897–1908)* which covers almost a third of his oeuvre, and *In Memoriam Sándor Ferenczi* (INM Ediora, 2024)



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