

CONFERENCE

(in German and English)

The Family Romance — Symbolic Structures or New Forms?

Friday, 15 February 2019, 14:30 – 20:30

Sigmund Freud Museum, Berggasse 19, 1090 Vienna

Family is not a natural phenomenon but a historically evolved creation that people interpret and live, suffer and preserve in very different ways. In psychoanalytic literature, the family therefore plays a pivotal role: psychoanalysis has in fact produced a mode of “family theory” with three protagonists which—by no coincidence—also represent the main figures of the classical nuclear family: father, mother and child. The tendency is to conceptualise the structural (and phantasmal) triangle of father, mother and child and the paths and dynamics of desire within this Oedipal triangle rather than the real family form. Here the Oedipus complex often acts as a regulative and normative configuration, assigning positions within the family and shaping interactions with social authorities.

In recent decades we have observed an extraordinarily profound transformation of family structures and the concept of kinship in the industrial nations: people are increasingly living family and kinship beyond the middle-class heteronormative model of the nuclear family with its triad of father, mother and child. However, only in recent years has psychoanalytic theory begun to take an interest in the current transformation of family forms—and its protagonists are usually still those of the nuclear family. Only haltingly are other, alternative constellations—and practically all of the child’s relationships outside of the nuclear family triangle—finding expression and being formulated in the psychoanalytic discourse: sibling relationships, the relationship with grandparents and peer groups, the influence of secondary socialisation agencies (school, but particularly the media), and the coexistence of biological and social parenthood and collective education.

On the basis of Freud’s writings and assumptions, the conference explores psychoanalytic theory concerning the concept of family. On the one hand, this conference subjects the classical shibboleth of psychoanalysis to critical scrutiny by rereading Freud’s writings. On the other hand, the aim is to work out the potential of Freud’s thought for a timely theory of current family forms.

In cooperation with the **Freud Research Group**

PROGRAMME

14:30 – 15:45

Welcome by **Daniela Finzi** and **Herman Westerink** (in German)

Herman Westerink and **Philippe van Haute**: “Family Romance and the Oedipalization of Freudian Psychoanalysis” (in English)

Moderated by **Claire Nioche-Sibony**

16:00 – 17:00

Mai Wegener: “The Family as a Romance” (in German)

Moderated by **Daniela Finzi**

17:00 – 18:00

Susann Heenen-Wolff: “‘It is a convention among us analysts that none of us need feel ashamed of his own bit of neurosis’. Happy and Eventful Times at Berggasse” (in German)

Moderated by **Barbara Zach**

18:00 – 19:00

Break

19:00 – 20:30

Welcome by director **Monika Pessler** (in German)

and beginning of the **Farewell for the “Old” Sigmund Freud Museum**

Ernst Falzeder: “Sigmund Freud and His Families in Vienna” (in German)

Moderated by **Christine Diercks**

14:30

Herman Westerink and Philippe Van Haute

“Family Romance and the Oedipalization of Freudian Psychoanalysis“ (in English)

Freud’s short text “Family Romances” (“Der Familienroman der Neurotiker”, 1909) can be seen as part of a set of texts in which he discovers the importance of sexual theories in early infantile sexual life and in relation to the first significant objects, the primary family members. Freud’s analyses of these infantile sexual theories are crucial for his first formulations of the Oedipus complex and the subsequent oedipalization of his theory of sexuality.

In this paper “Family Romances” will be carefully explored and critically questioned, notably with regards to its central topics of intellectual activities, sexuality and object-relations.

Herman Westerink is senior researcher and associate professor for the philosophy of religion and intercultural philosophy at the Radboud University Nijmegen and extraordinary professor for psychoanalysis and mysticism at the KU Leuven. He is the vice-chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Sigmund Freud Foundation. He has written many books and articles on psychoanalysis, sexuality, pathology and religion. Recent publications include commentaries on and text editions of the first edition of Freud’s *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* from 1905 (with Philippe Van Haute), and the volume *Dora - Hysteria – Gender. Reconsidering Freud’s First Case Study* (with Daniela Finzi).

Philippe Van Haute is professor of philosophical anthropology at Radboud University in Nijmegen and a psychoanalyst of the Belgian School of Psychoanalysis of which he was president from 2006-2009. He published extensively on the relation between psychoanalysis and philosophy. Among his last publications in English (with Tomas Geyskens) *Towards a Non-Oedipal Psychoanalysis? Clinical Anthropology of Hysteria in Freud and Lacan* (2012) and (with Herman Westerink and U. Kistner). *Sigmund Freud. Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality. The 1905 edition* (2017).

Moderation

Claire Nioche-Sibony is a practicing psychoanalyst. She studied philosophy at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (Paris) and at the Université Paris Sorbonne. She obtained her PhD in philosophy and psychoanalysis at the University of Paris VII, on the notion of the singular. She is Associate Professor at the University Paris 13 (Sorbonne Paris Cité) and works in a psychiatric ward (Hôpital Sainte-Anne). Her research interests encompass questions of singularity, madness, nomadism, and writing. Among her publications are a series of articles on literature (Virginia Woolf, Maurice Blanchot, Claude Simon, Pascal Quignard), contemporary philosophy and psychoanalysis (Bataille, Deleuze, Derrida, Freud, Lacan). Currently she is working on the problem of aesthetic judgment, from a psychoanalytic point of view, and on the 'uncanny'.

16:00

Mai Wegener

“The Family as a Romance” (in German)

Freud coined the term family romance (German: *Familienroman*, literally “family novel”) to describe those fantasies with which an adolescent dreams himself or herself into a different, better family or even dreams up such a family. Indeed it is words, stories and manners of speaking that hold a family together over generations – Laplanche and Pontalis aptly talk about the “the family sounds or sayings” (“le dit ou le bruit familial”). While this does not necessarily constitute a novel, it does highlight the linguistic and fictional nature of family ties: ties that are, however, stretched to breaking-point as they must hold together something that defies tying: sexual relations.

As we know, it was in the Oedipus myth that Freud discovered his great family romance, that he held to be universal. Unlike Lacan, who from the outset dismantled and questioned the Oedipus complex in order to find out what tied the family knot. In addition to theoretical questions of this kind the aim is also to unfold the romantic constitution of the family using one or two literary writings.

Mai Wegener is a psychoanalyst with her own practice in Berlin. She publishes and teaches in the field of psychoanalysis and cultural science, for example as a lecturer at TU Berlin (IFG Literary studies with an emphasis on literature and science). She recently became co-editor of *RISS: Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*. In 2011 she co-founded the *Psychoanalytic Library Berlin* (www.psybi-berlin.de) and in 1998 the *Psychoanalytic Salon Berlin* (www.pasberlin.de). Her publications include “Wissenschaft und Liebe – Notiz zur Übertragung” (in: *RISS* 89, 2018/2); “Nicht den Sinn, sondern den Körper treffen: Deuten in der Psychoanalyse” (in: *Was heißt Deuten?* ed. by S. Lüdemann, Th. Vesting. Munich 2017); “Fälle, Ausfälle, Sündenfälle. Zu den Krankengeschichten Freuds” (in: *Fall – Fallgeschichte – Fallstudie. Theorie und Geschichte einer Wissensform*, ed. by S. Düwell, N. Pethes, Frankfurt a. M. 2014); and *Neuronen und Neurosen. Der psychische Apparat bei Freud und Lacan. Ein historisch-theoretischer Versuch zu Freuds Entwurf von 1895*, Munich 2004.

Moderation

Daniela Finzi is a literature and cultural historian. She is a researcher at the Sigmund Freud Museum since 2009 and she has been scientific director and board member of the Sigmund Freud Privatstiftung since 2016. Since 2014 she is a board member of the cultural studies association aka – Arbeitskreis Kulturanalyse since 2014 and member of the editorial board of aka/Texte, which are published by Turia + Kant. Her research interests are Psychoanalytical Cultural Theory, Gender Studies and Balkan Studies. At the Sigmund Freud Museum she (co-)curated the exhibitions "Cultural Experiencing – Psychoanalytic Thinking" (2014); "'So this is the strong sex'. Women in Psychoanalysis" (2015), "'The apartment is doing well'. The Freuds at Berggasse 19" (2017) and "Parallel Actions. Freud and the Writers of Jung Vienna" (2018). Her most recent publications include the volume *Dora – Hysteria – Gender*, published by Leuven University Press, which she co-edited with Herman Westerink.

17:00

Susann Heenen-Wolff

“It is a convention among us analysts that none of us need feel ashamed of his own bit of neurosis’. Happy and Eventful Times at Berggasse” (in German)

The rooms at Berggasse 19 have seen countless different visitors: primarily patients but also many colleagues (and later sometimes opponents of Freud’s theories), friends, family members, and finally also the Gestapo. This is where psychoanalysis was developed, where the famous couch stood that would become a tool and symbol of the new science of the unconscious: where dreams, ideas and problems, banal affairs and everything else besides came to light. But Berggasse 19 was also a private place of life and love – naturally in keeping with each protagonist’s particular neurotic logic.

Susann Heenen-Wolff has researched on the different floors of the building and reveals various as yet little known occurrences. Contemporary psychoanalytic theories allow us to take note of them without any normative prejudices.

Susann Heenen-Wolff is a psychoanalyst (IPV) with her own practice in Brussels and a professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Louvain (UCL) and the Free University of Brussels (ULB). She studied education and psychology in Jerusalem, Frankfurt and Paris and received her PhD on the expression of the experience of antisemitism and assimilation in Freud’s thought. She trained as a group analyst at the “Institute of Group Analysis” in Heidelberg and as an analyst at the Société Psychanalytique de Paris (IPV). She is also a training analyst and for many years was a member of the training commission at the Société Belge de Psychanalyse (IPV). Current focus of research: problems of psychoanalysis in terms of scientific theory. Numerous publications in specialist German-, French- and English-language journals, most recent book in German: *Gegen die Normativität in der Psychoanalyse* (Psychosozial-Verlag 2018).

Moderation

Barbara Zach is a law graduate, person-centered psychotherapist and psychoanalyst. For several years she was a legal expert at the Ministry of Science on discrimination and promotion of women at Austrian universities. Followed by several years collaborating as a consultant and psychotherapist at “Frauen* beraten Frauen*”. Today she works as a psychotherapist and psychoanalyst with her own practice in Vienna, focusing in her work and research on: transference/counter-transference in the psychotherapeutic process, psychoanalysis and queer theory, personality disorders, individuation and development of autonomy, psychotherapeutic work with people with non-heteronormative desire and life trajectories (LGBTIQ). Together with Esther Hutfless, she edited *Queering Psychoanalysis. Psychoanalyse und Queer Theory – Transdisziplinäre Verschränkungen* (Zaglossus 2017).

19:00

Ernst Falzeder

“Sigmund Freud and His Families in Vienna” (in German)

Sigmund Freud would be unthinkable without his family, which not only comprised his closer and more distant relations but also his closest fellow-analysts and indeed psychoanalysis itself. The lecture deals with the occasionally difficult relationship of Freud and his own and “adopted” families with Vienna, and the city’s relationship with them.

Ernst Falzeder is a psychologist and historian, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of European Languages, Culture and Society at University College London, and editor and translator for the Philemon Foundation. He is a former Research Scholar at the University of Geneva, Fondation Louis-Jeantet (Geneva), at Cornell University – Medical School (New York City) and at Harvard University (Cambridge, MA). He has more than 200 publications, i.a. editor of the Freud/Ferenczi and Freud/Abraham correspondence. Recent books include *Psychoanalytic Filiations. Mapping the Psychoanalytic Movement* (Karnac, 2015); and as editor and translator: C. G. Jung, *History of Modern Psychology. Lectures Delivered at ETH Zurich 1933-1934* (Princeton University Press, 2018).

Moderation

Christine Diercks, specialist in psychiatry, works as a psychoanalyst (WPV/IPA) with her own practice and as a training analyst. Medical director of the Wiener Psychoanalytisches Ambulatorium 1999–2001, chairwoman of the Wiener Psychoanalytische Vereinigung (2005–2008, 2013–2015). Initiated foundation of the Wiener Psychoanalytische Akademie and its Sigmund Freud lectures, publications on the clinical practice and theory of psychoanalysis and the history of its institutions, editor of the Sigmund-Freud Vorlesungen series 2006–2012. Editor of the knowledge platform psyalpha.net. In addition to clinical work and teaching, currently involved in another digital project for a historical, text-critical edition of the complete works and letters of Sigmund Freud.