

## EVIDENCIAS TESTIMONIALES.

### ET. N° 67. SANDOR FERENCZI.

Martin Stanton, Ph. D. London: Free Association Books, 1990. 226pp.



**Gerald J. Gargiulo**

love is the unfamiliar name...  
which human power cannot remove...

**T. S. Eliot, Little Gidding**

Ferenczi, the forgotten genius of psychoanalysis, is slowly being remembered, with respect, within the psychoanalytic world. How many splits could have been avoided, particularly of the interpersonal school, had official psychoanalysis not suppressed the work of this original thinker and caring therapist? History will note that Ernest Jones had a complicitous hand in the suppression of Ferenczi's contributions. For those no longer interested in the meanderings of fratricide and not caught in the web of American ego psychology's reading of psychoanalysis, Martin Stanton's book will be a delight. Stanton's text is informative in its presentation, clear in its exposition and sensible in its evaluation of Ferenczi's thought, perspective, and contributions.

In the first 50 pages Stanton provides a *curriculum vitae* so that the reader can follow the events from the birth of Ferenczi's father in 1830 to Ferenczi's premature death, from pernicious anemia, in 1933. This historical overview, well researched and documented, is singularly helpful in understanding the social, economic, and intellectual background to the birth of psychoanalysis, as seen through the lens of Ferenczi, as well as in perceiving Freud's, Jung's, and Groddeck's contributions. The last entry gives an extensive overview of Ferenczi's widespread influence:

Ferenczi's pupils have a major impact on psychoanalytic work throughout the world... in Hungary, ... in France, ... in Great Britain, ... in the United States through Franz Alexander, who founds the Chicago School, ... Sandor Radó, who helps found the Columbia University Psychoanalytic Clinic, ... Geza Roheim, who directs research at the New York Institute, ... Clara Thompson, who helps Karen Homey, Erich Fromm, and Harry Stack Sullivan found the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis, ... and finally, Margaret Mahler, Theresa Benedek, Sandor Lorand, Sandor Feldman and Robert Bak. (p. 51)

The text provides a glossary for anyone not familiar with some specialized terms which Ferenczi used.

To encounter Ferenczi is to realize what any seasoned analyst knows: we either experience the fire of vitality in our work or we risk dull repetition. We either understand that love must be "in the ear" as well as the heart or else we are locked up within ourselves with our diagnostic categories as companions. Ferenczi refused to be locked up; he refused to participate in what he thought was analytic hypocrisy. I.e, the stance of the neutral analyst, that sanitized technique that has held sway, particularly in America, for many decades. His passion was to cure, and he knew that love, the essential ingredient in human development, would have to be refund if both analyst and patient were to move forward. Long before our recent "use" of countertransference, Ferenczi knew that he had to plumb the depths of his own psyche and find a way to communicate his findings, to give his patients an understanding of the relativity of all perceptions and interpretations. Such an approach was necessary, he reasoned, if the analyst did not want to impose, under the aegis of correct technique, his personal history on a patient. Long before D. W. Winnicott described the importance of the therapeutic holding of severely regressed patients, Ferenczi had reached such a place.

Ferenczi's distinction between the language of tenderness and the language of passion enabled him to conceptualize such holding, free of the reactive and highly judgmental response of many contemporary analysts. Although Ferenczi eventually found the limits to his experiences with "mutual analysis", he discovered what we take for granted today, namely that the patient goes no farther in personal integration than the analyst. The analyst's unconscious conflicts as well as his or her personal character will do more to affect the outcome of treatment than mandated technical interventions. The honesty that was reached for in "mutual analysis" was at least an attempt to construct a usable bridge between analyst and patient. We might disagree with the method; the goal, however, is still vital. Ferenczi reasoned, quite rightly I believe, that it was personal integrity and availability that ultimately enables meaningful and therapeutic communication to occur.

Ferenczi's thought was incisive and wide ranging. Note for example Stanton's reading of Ferenczi's interpretation of the libidinal stages: "[he] stresses that 'amphimixis' does not 'guide' sexual development by progressively displacing the site of gratification from the mouth to the anus to the genital. On the contrary, it diversifies the sites and their symbolic combination through which erotic drives are expressed. One does not abandon early amphimictic structures, but elaborates on them..." (p. 101). The text has many similar insightful observations commenting on and describing Ferenczi's thought. Of particular interest is his discussion of clairvoyance and transference, a topic which Francois Roustang has written about in detail. Ferenczi went down numerous analytic roads before us, imparting the knowledge that they seem to lead nowhere. For this we should be grateful not judgmental. In this regard it is helpful to remember that Freud permitted himself liberties which we would find incomprehensible today, such as his personal *interventions* in Ferenczi's love and marriage choice. Finally, I would like to note that of all the early analysts Ferenczi is the only one I know of who addressed Freud's refusal to be analyzed. Ferenczi could and did recognize Freud's genius, without any need for *idol-ization*.

Stanton's text is an excellent introduction to Ferenczi; it is full of thoughtful observations and much needed historical knowledge. The task of making psychoanalysis an honest endeavor is a constant one; knowledge of Ferenczi contributions will make that task easier as well as more rewarding. In this regard Dr. Stanton's work will aid all of us to become better analysts.

## REFERENCES

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