



Ferenczi and His World: Rekindling the Spirit of the Budapest School.



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This book is a quick and easy read that provides a captivating story of surprising contemporary relevance. This volume honours Sandor Ferenczi, a central character in the birth of psychoanalysis, whose warm and passionate personality, ideas, and teachings permeate his world and his work, shaping psychoanalytical thinking of generations.

I had always believed that Sandor Ferenczi was quite a peripheral figure in regards to the contemporary practice of psychotherapy. His split with Freud seemed to belong to the remote history and temperamental clashes of the early psychoanalytic movement. That was before I read this intriguing book.

Hungary in the early decades of the 20th century is revealed to be a place of great intellectual sophistication and originality. Novelists, physicists, mathematicians and other analysts were part of Ferenczi's circle. It is intriguing to learn for example, that John von Neumann was part of the extended Ferenczi family.

Von Neumann invented Game Theory and his work remains fundamental to the operation of computers.

The work of Ferenczi may be better known in the U.K. because of the remarkable impact of his student Michael Balint. In North America Ferenczi has resurfaced because of the move in contemporary psychoanalysis from an intrapsychic to a relational model of practice. Ferenczi was a forerunner in this.

Firstly by his recognition that childhood sexual abuse did really occur and that therefore the external environment is critical to the development of psychopathology. This foreshadowed the modern emphasis on the real mother–infant relationship and attachment theory.

Ferenczi introduced a more active two-person therapeutic stance that recognized the importance of empathy and the impact of the analyst. This line of theoretical and clinical development continued through Winnicott and Bowlby to the present attachment–based experiential dynamic psychotherapies.

‘This book is much more than a reader on Sandor Ferenczi or about his contributions; in fact, it opens us to the world around this great pioneer of psychoanalysis, showing his cultural environment, associated memories, and the literary works inspired by him. In it we learn about Ferenczi's relationships with other leading psychoanalysts like Melanie Klein, Imre Hermann, and Michael Balint. We discover Ferenczi's innovative ideas as encountered in contemporary writings. This volume offers a multitude of stimulations: it is a rich anthology that leads us into a deep psychoanalytic world; reminds us of some forgotten points of view; and opens seminal new vistas. Once you begin to read, you cannot put this book aside.¹

1.- Judit Szekacs-Weisz , PhD, is a bilingual psychoanalyst and psychotherapist associated with the Independent Group of the British Psychoanalytical Society, training analyst of the Hungarian Psychoanalytical Society.

Andre Haynal , MD, psychoanalyst, Emeritus and Honorary Professor, University of Geneva, Switzerland.

‘This collection of papers by Sandor Ferenczi’s foremost commentators and heirs takes a considerable step towards reminding us not only of his importance in the development of psychoanalysis, but also of the freshness of his thinking in the 21st century. All those interested in understanding the relation between internal and external, mind and body, as well those interested in Ferenczi the man and clinician, would do well to savour this volume.’²

Ken Robinson, psychoanalyst, the Honorary Archivist, Archives of the British Psychoanalytical Society

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2.- Tom Keve lives and writes in Hampstead, London. Born in Budapest, he came to England as a refugee in 1956. A scientist by profession, with a Ph.D. from Imperial College, he is a Fellow of the Institute of Physics. Having travelled much and lived for a number of years in the United States, Holland and France, as well as England and Hungary, he has been exposed to a variety of cultures and is fluent in four languages.