

## COULD BALINT HAVE DONE MORE FOR FERENCZI?.

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After Ferenczi's death of pernicious anemia in 1933 at the age of 59, Michael Balint became the greatest advocate of his late analyst, teacher, colleague, and friend. He was faced with widespread avoidance, a conspiracy of silence against Ferenczi in the psychoanalytic movement. Ernest Jones, in particular, an analyst and fellow member of the Secret Committee founded by Freud before World War I, seriously attacked Ferenczi. In the third volume of the Freud biography, Jones alleged that in the last years of his life Ferenczi suffered mental deterioration caused by the pernicious anemia, and that this mental decline was the real cause of Ferenczi's technical experimentations, thereby belittling the importance of Ferenczi's independent work in the last phase of his life. This article answers whether Michael Balint, who later became the literary executor of Ferenczi, was devoted enough in countering the charges that led to a fifty-year silence on Ferenczi's eminent place in psychoanalysis. Correspondence between Balint and Jones is cited, as are reports of Ferenczi's contemporaries; Balint's efforts are placed within the context of the psychoanalytic rivalries after Freud's death.

**KEY WORDS:** Balint; Ferenczi; Balint–Jones correspondence; history of psychoanalysis.

Después de la muerte de Ferenczi de anemia perniciosa en 1933 a la edad de 59 años, Michael Balint se convirtió en el mayor defensor de su extinto, maestro, colega y amigo. Se enfrentó a una generalizada anulación, a una conspiración de silencio contra Ferenczi en el movimiento psicoanalítico. Ernest Jones, en particular, un analizando de Ferenczi y miembro del Comité Secreto fundado por Freud antes de la Primera Guerra Mundial, atacó seriamente a Ferenczi. En el tercer volumen de la biografía de Freud, Jones alegó que en los últimos años de su vida Ferenczi sufrió un deterioro mental causado por la anemia perniciosa, y que este deterioro mental fue la verdadera causa de los experimentos técnicos de Ferenczi, menospreciando la importancia de los trabajos independientes de Ferenczi, durante la última fase de su vida. Este artículo responde si Michael Balint, quien más tarde se convirtió en el ejecutor literario de Ferenczi, se dedicó lo suficiente a contrarrestar los cargos que condujeron a un silencio de cincuenta años sobre el lugar eminente de Ferenczi en el psicoanálisis. Se cita la correspondencia entre Balint y Jones, al igual que los informes de los contemporáneos de Ferenczi; los esfuerzos de Balint son comprendidos en el contexto de las rivalidades psicoanalíticas después de la muerte de Freud.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Balint; Ferenczi; Correspondencia de Balint-Jones; historia del psicoanálisis

Several significant documents, unpublished or partly published until now, point to Jones's determination to maintain his opinion about Ferenczi's "progressive mental deterioration" and the process that went on for decades and resulted in the long and widespread conspiracy of silence against Ferenczi in the profession of psycho-analysis. It was, of course, a very complex situation that made this possible, consisting of many different personal reasons, motives, and historic events, but it was Jones who started the process publicly and kept it going for decades. The questions that often have been raised are: How could things degenerate to such a point that a cold war atmosphere surrounded assessments of Ferenczi in the profession? Could his defenders have been more effective?

These are the questions I address, mainly through the discussion of several documents by Balint about Ferenczi. I hope to add new evidence and perhaps a new perspective on this issue that recently has interested

several colleagues, notably Judith Dupont (1988), André Haynal (1988), Peter T. Hoffer and Axel Hoffer (1998), and Carlo Bonomi (1999). From Bonomi's article, a coherent picture is obtained of all research and knowledge on this theme.

On Ferenczi's death, Jones (1933) immediately publicly expressed his allegations in Ferenczi's obituary: "Younger colleagues have perhaps seen Ferenczi through a tinted glass, his personality impaired by chronic illness and his later work not readily to be understood or appreciated" (p. 463). Jones statement was not unprecedented. In Freud's Diary (1932/1992) and his correspondence (Freud to Jones, September 12, 1932, quoted in Paskauskas, 1993, p. 709) with Jones, there are important notes about Ferenczi's personality changes. Some days before the Wiesbaden Congress, Ferenczi visited Freud with his wife.

The Ferenczis came.... She friendly as ever, he exuded an icy coldness. Without any further question or greeting he began: I want to read you my lecture. This he did and I listened thunderstruck. He is totally regressed to the etiological views I believed in and gave up 35 years ago, that the gross sexual traumas of childhood are the regular cause of neuroses. . . . No word about the technique by which he obtained this material.... The whole thing is actually stupid or it seems so since it is so devious and incomplete. (Freud to Anna Freud, September 3, 1932, quoted in Molnar, 1992, p. 131)

Freud did not accept Ferenczi's ideas on the trauma theory that was later published with the title: "Confusion of tongues between adults and the child. The language of tenderness and passion." Freud did not want Ferenczi to read that paper at the Wiesbaden Congress, but Ferenczi did.

Jones, in his letter after the Wiesbaden Congress, wrote to Freud:

I have followed F's evolution (including the pathological side) closely for many years, and knew it could only be a question of time before this denouement arrived. . . . His exceptionally deep need of being loved, together with the repressed sadism, are plainly behind the tendency to ideas of persecution. . . . He is, I am afraid, a sick man—also physically—but also unprofitable—to make comparisons with the brilliant past. (Jones to Freud, September 9, 1932, quoted in Paskauskas, 1993, p. 707)

Freud, in his answer several days later, took his idea further:

For three years already I have been observing his increasing alienation, his unreceptiveness to warnings about his technical errors, and what is probably most crucial, a personal hostility toward me for which I have certainly given him even less cause than in previous cases....Unfortunately in his case the regressive intellectual and affective development seems to have a background of physical decline. His perceptive and good wife let me know that I should think of him as a sick child.

Thus, it was easy for Jones to name the symptoms Freud describes above: "I am afraid the paranoia is public news: it was sufficiently obvious to all analysts from his last Congress paper" (Jones to Freud, June 3, 1933, quoted in Paskauskas, 1993, p. 722). Peter Gay, quoted by Carlo Bonomi (1999), pointed out that Jones's allegation was only a literal transcription of the diagnosis of Freud (p. 518).

This distress about Ferenczi had to be obvious in a smaller or wider circle because a few days after his death, Géza Róheim sent the following letter to Jones (1933):

I was analyzed by Ferenczi in 1916 and 1917 and ever since that time he has been in a sense, part of my life. He was active in bringing about the expedition— and well, it's a great pity. Ferenczi had been suffering from pernicious anaemia since [for] some time. He was unwell at the Wiesbaden [conference] and afterwards but picked up in autumn and worked all through the winter. At Easter he

had to give up analyzing because he was too fatigued by his illness to concentrate. Then things seem to be improving again but he was in bed most of the time. . . . he suddenly died after luncheon.

So, Róheim's statement was that Ferenczi had concentration problems several weeks before his death because of his illness. That was all.

The first public reactions to Ferenczi's death were the memorial sessions organized by the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society, the German Psychoanalytic Society, and the British Psycho-Analytical Society, all three on the same day: June 13, 1933. The Hungarian Psychoanalytic Society organized its memorial session on October 3, 1933. Jones's paper (1933) quoted above was read before the British society first. Interestingly, Ernest Simmel reacted absolutely differently from Freud and Jones. He greatly appreciated Ferenczi's Wiesbaden paper. At the memorial meeting of the German Psychoanalytic Society, Simmel (1933) said in his speech:

I cannot finish this appreciation of the oeuvre Ferenczi left us, as the theoretician of technique and the technician of theory, without mentioning what I consider a particularly outstanding work and which has only recently appeared in the latest issue of "Zeitschrift" entitled "Confusion of tongues between adults and child."<sup>1</sup> We are deeply moved to think that Ferenczi delivered this lecture personally at the last congress and that this was his farewell to the International Psychoanalytic Society. On that particular occasion he presented us with a great gift of newfound wisdom, regarding our behaviour towards sufferers as proved by his own experience as a sufferer. It seems the simplest, yet is the most difficult technical problem, which some of us have probably succeeded in solving on our own by listening to our feelings. But up to now, many analysts were waiting in vain for concrete guidance on this subject. The issue here is: how can I be allowed to remain a human being in analysis, namely the person I really am? Ferenczi, the wise, now presents us with a key, referring to that phase of analysis when not only does the patient not understand the analyst, but the analyst does not understand the patient. This is the mirror image of the childhood situation when the child, under pressure of sexual trauma, through the artificial provocation of his/her as yet naturally immature instinctual life, suffers the premature, artificial bringing to maturity, "the progression", of his/her ego. The aggression which flares up connected with this, but is, at the same time, suppressed by superior external force, creates characterological reactions which confront the outside world in such a hopelessly depressive and counterproductive way, that its very incomprehensibility appears to be a manifestation of being unloved. (p. 306)

In his paper, read at the memorial meeting of the Hungarian Psychoanalytical Society, Balint in 1933 said the following:

Even the pitch of his voice, if the criticism of his patient was directed against this, and he was always ready, even at the cost of the greatest self-renunciation, to force himself to sincerity. He did not allow himself a single false or even a vacant tone in the presence of a patient. Why was this very great labour necessary? He had to learn in certain cases that his otherwise well-substantiated interpretations or advice had proved useless; for with these he could not succeed in setting the associations going again. In seeking for the cause of this lack of success he discovered that at such times his patients mistrusted him, feared and suspected him. They obeyed him only out of fear, not from insight, and only the lack of results, the unaltered condition, showed him that behind the obedience was hidden mistrust and resistance. (Balint, 2000 p. 151)

Balint continued:

The patients put their physician to the test as to whether they can speak with him sincerely, whether he also will not demand of them a false, would-be moral behaviour. Therefore freedom, elasticity, psychological fine-feeling, or as Ferenczi has called it, -the tact of the physician is exceedingly important. This inner freedom is not so easy to achieve, we physicians had also to endure this hypocritical education and these lying phrases adopted through identification continually lead us into temptation. Ferenczi has shown us how we have to take care of every tone, every movement, every gesture, so that only real sincerity echoes the patients to silence. (p. 152)

The conceited, so-called “serious experts” did not really like him, rather feared his *èlan*, regarded him as an “enfant terrible”. Ferenczi took this name with a bitter smile; it hurt him, but also made him proud. He felt that he was not quite understood, that mutual misunderstanding, the “confusion of tongues” surrounded him also, although he had devoted his life’s work to the removal of the same between the child and the grown up, between the patient and his physician.<sup>2</sup> (Balint, 1934, p.153)

This was Balint’s first public reaction to Ferenczi.

Even if we do not know who Balint was speaking about when he said “serious experts” did not really like him, rather feared his *èlan*, regarded him as an “enfant terrible”, “mutual misunderstanding” the “confusion of tongues” surrounded Ferenczi, although we may not be wrong in thinking that Balint knew about Jones’s and Freud’s opinion of Ferenczi. He could have known about it from Ferenczi himself, and he could have seen, or heard something about, Ferenczi’s *Clinical Diary*.

Balint was very close to Ferenczi and his *ars poetica*: the patient, the illness and the cure, the therapeutic relationship, and the doctor–patient relationship are inseparable. It was no coincidence that the obituary he wrote on Ferenczi and read at the memorial service held by the Hungarian Psychoanalytic Society was called “Ferenczi as Doctor.” From the beginning of his practice, as a resident doctor, or as a young neurologist, Ferenczi cooperated with his patients. This two-way communication was rare at that time in the medical profession. Ferenczi not only created contact with the symptoms of the patients, but also tried to treat the “whole” patient, many times with his or her whole social context.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting that Balint was, and remained, so sensitive to that kind of “body–soul” integrity. The interview with him decades later is a clear testimony to this (Swerdloff, 2002): How Balint worked with general practitioners?

**Balint:** No formalities, no lectures, no demonstrations, no nothing. Each doctor brings up the cases that he finds difficult, in his practice. He reports the case. Then we discuss the case, discuss the doctor-patient relationship

... **Swerdloff:** in the psychological field, is there a problem...

**Balint:** Sh! No! This is medicine; medicine ... **Swerdloff:** He doesn’t come to you with a problem in diagnosing a specific illness, or does he? **Balint:** Please, really listen! Medicine... Medical students go around the ward, and they are clerks there and so on. So they come and say: “I have a patient who has”—let’s see, what? [after presenting the tests and the organic illness] Now, let’s see what the woman like? . . . how her personality and her problem with her marriage and her children are connected with her illness. This is medicine.

**Swerdloff:** You assume a connection. **Balint:** I do not “assume”! This is medicine! . . . we see . . . how these things are connected”.

It is a reflection of how deeply rooted psychoanalysis was in the culture and in the everyday life of Budapest that the memorial service was open to the public. Three memorial lectures commemorated the founder of the Hungarian Psychoanalytic Society (1913) and its president from first to last, who was also, until his death, the director of the Psychotherapy Out-patients Clinic, set up a few years previously. István Hollós placed his emphasis on Ferenczi’s oeuvre and his personality. At the memorial session, Imre Hermann (1934/2000) dealt with Ferenczi’s trauma theories (pp. 144-147). He mentioned that, after his death, Vilma

Kovács<sup>4</sup> had examined Ferenczi's unpublished papers. She had found some unpublished notes, which were translated into Hungarian and presented at the memorial session with the title, "On the Psychology of Shock," "On the Revision of the Interpretation of Dreams," and "Trauma in the Relaxation Technique."<sup>5</sup>

In his own work, Balint concentrated on Ferenczi's innovations and techniques, which had become part of psychoanalytic theory and practice, without avoiding the most topical and sensitive issues. The "Confusion of Tongues," the reevaluation of the theory of trauma, moving it to the interpersonal level, was just such a sensitive and fundamental point. The "Confusion of Tongues" was published in German when Ferenczi was still alive, but immediately after his death, Jones prevented its English publication even though Ferenczi had given his permission. Against Ferenczi's wishes, Jones turned the motives upside down; Jones attributed his intentions to Ferenczi: "I hoped that Ferenczi himself would not publish it but when he received the proofs of the *Zeitschrift* I felt he would be offended if it were not translated into English. He seemed gratified and we have not only translated it but set it up in type as the first paper in the July number [why seemed?]." In the guise of a great protector, Jones withdrew the English publication.<sup>6</sup> "Since his death I have been thinking over the removal of the personal reason for publishing it. Others have suggested that now it be withdrawn... I therefore think it best to withdraw the paper unless I hear from you that you have any wish to the contrary." (Jones to Freud, June 3, 1933, quoted in Paskauskas, 1993, p. 722).

After Ferenczi's death, Jones did everything within his power, by all available means, to make sure that Ferenczi's ideas should at least be inactivated. He let them be seen as part of the past, part of the historic period of the psychoanalytic movement, and he let Ferenczi's work be a closed book that could not be continued in the future in any way. It was as if he wanted to realize Freud's words: "Ferenczi takes a part of the old era with him; when I step down, a new one will probably begin, in which you will still be prominent" (Freud to Jones, 29 May, 1933, quoted in Paskauskas, 1993, p. 721).

Ferenczi died the year Hitler came to power, as fascism was spreading through Europe. Before long, the members of the Berlin Psychoanalytical Society would be forced to emigrate, five years later, at the time of the Anschluss (with the annexation of Austria), the same fate would befall analysts in Vienna. Together with the establishment of anti-Jewish laws by the Hungarian government, this exodus was also a serious warning signal to analysts in Budapest. For the second time in twenty years, Hungary's Jewish citizens and many liberal intellectuals were forced to consider emigration.

It must be acknowledged that the question of preventing Jones from spreading rumors would necessarily have been pushed into the background in this period when many lives were lost and many European analysts found themselves in a state of emergency, even if the bad treatment of Ferenczi had offended their sense of justice. But, amid the crisis of the European analysts, the winding up of the psychoanalytic societies, and the struggle to start a new life of those forced into exile, there was one other factor that played an important part in the long term in upholding Jones's judgment of Ferenczi.

This was Jones's own powerful position. In this period of crisis, the leadership of the psychoanalytic movement became concentrated in his person. For one thing, he was the president of the International Psychoanalytic Society -continuously from 1934 to 1949- and at the same time was the president of the British Psycho-Analytical Society. His central position played a significant role in directing the emigration. One consideration was that the British Psycho-Analytical Society must be defended against an invasion of émigré analysts; therefore, every opportunity to redirect applications for residence permits, especially to America or Australia, must be grasped. Jones made it impossible for Róheim to move to England, and the Balints also had to settle in Manchester instead of London.<sup>7</sup> After the annexation of Austria, the American Psychoanalytic Association set up the Emergency Committee on Relief and Immigration. The committee had an outstanding role in saving European analysts (Mészáros, 1998). Of course, it is easy to see this trend with hindsight; it was not noticed at the time.

Five years after the war, ten after Freud's death, and fifteen after Ferenczi's death, the British Psycho-Analytical Society organized an anniversary meeting of Ferenczi's death. There is no doubt that Balint played a major role in this. After this meeting, the "Ferenczi Number" (1949, the 30rd volume of *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*) was published in *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*.

In the introduction of the volume, there are the following sentiments:

from a perusal of this collection something of Ferenczi's great gifts and weaknesses will no doubt impress itself upon the reader. ... His brilliance as a clinician and theorizer is till inspiration, his mistakes we cannot ignore -we aspire to be like him these, too, we shall try in fearlessness and in compassion to understand.-J.R.<sup>8</sup>

These are very well balanced, clear words with which to receive Ferenczi's later works, such as "Confusion of Tongues," "Notes and Fragments," which were also published there. Balint's "Obiit" [sic] (1949) was published as the first article of this issue, he wrote:

Except for Freud, perhaps no one contributed so many and such fundamentally new ideas to our science; Ferenczi's contributions belong, today more than ever, to the classical works of psycho-analysis... Ferenczi . . . was always admired for his freshness, originality and fertility, but was hardly ever understood, and often altogether misunderstood. He was seldom studied thoroughly, seldom quoted correctly, was often criticized and more often than not erroneously. More than once his ideas were re-discovered later and then attributed to the second "discoverer." He was the founder of the International Psycho-Analytical Association, was elected its President by the rump Congress of Budapest in 1918, but was only able to hold office for a few months. Because of political unrest in Central Europe at that time, which made postal connections uncertain and difficult, he handed over his office to Ernest Jones and was never even nominated again. (p. 216)

I do not know the situation in the British Society when Balint read this paper. Probably Jones was there. Balint could have told this story about Ferenczi's presidency in a different way, for example, not emphasizing that Ferenczi handed over his office to Jones. It was the first time that Jones became president of the International Psycho-Analytical Association. His eagerness to assume this position can be seen even on the cover of the first issue of *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* in 1920. Next to the name of Professor Freud, Jones's name appears with two titles: as the provisional editor of the journal and as an acting president of the International Psycho-Analytical Association. Ferenczi's name, either as elected president or president ex officio, was omitted.

In a return to Balint's words (Balint, 1949, pp. 216–217) on Ferenczi:

[Ferenczi] was always treated with a mixture of admiration and guarded suspicion. As the years went by, this tension of ambivalence around him increased rather than subsided and he who had so many friends all over the world, died almost entirely isolated, escaping only by a hair's breadth a fatal break with Freud, his friend and master, whom he had loved so loyally and so devotedly.

For Ferenczi words and technical terms were only -more or less- useful means expressing mental experience, the experience was the important thing that had to be described as strikingly as possible, and he was not willing to grant to any word or term a "vested interest" in any particular meaning or sense. This was the source of the freshness of his approach -he was always able to look at old things and phenomena without bias and as naively as if he were seeing them for the first time ... he never filed away anything as finally dealt with or definitely solved. Lastly, being himself a child, he was accepted as an equal, as a matter of course, by every child, and the same thing was true with those unhappy children, his patients.

Balint, publicly again, in a strong society where Jones himself was a distinguished member, tried to create a very complex, very realistic, demythologized human picture of Ferenczi. This was a possibility for a "new beginning."

I do not know what happened in 1954, when Balint wrote the following letter to Jones.

I can imagine that, as Carlo Bonomi (1998) presumed, “Probably, reading the various letters in preparation for Freud’s biography reactivated Jones’s old envy and jealousy of Ferenczi” (p. 535). After the first letter from the beginning of 1954, there are three more, on the same theme. Balint attempted the impossible: to change Jones’s mind or at least to defend Ferenczi from Jones’s public allegation.

January 22nd 1954

Dear Dr. Jones,

Ferenczi’s last years were really tragic ones, but I do not think they could be called a paranoid phase. It’s true, that he was profoundly disappointed, and very bitter, against Freud especially. The reason was that Freud could not see the importance of the discovery by Ferenczi (and Rank) that everything that happens in analysis has also a meaning as a transference phenomenon. In a way Freud could not develop beyond his great discovery as it is described in the Dora case and his papers on metapsychology. Ferenczi was not able to realize that this was a scientific controversy, and felt it as a personal slight. As he was profoundly attached to Freud, he tried to solve the resulting increased ambivalence by looking for scapegoats, who would then account for Freud’s reluctance to acknowledge the importance of his discovery, the correctness of which was proved to him every day by every analytic session. The Americans, especially Brill, and through them you, and to some extent Eitingon, were the easiest targets. It is very difficult to say who poisoned whose mind; whether it was Freud, whose inability correctly to assess the intensity of the American resistance against lay-analysis inflamed Ferenczi’s enthusiasm for the “right cause”, or whether it was Ferenczi, who used a cause which he knew to be very dear to the Professor.

As I saw Ferenczi very frequently during his last years, and towards his end even several times a week, I can testify from first-hand experience that there was not much paranoia in him, although, like everyone else in a situation of this kind, he used paranoid mechanisms to a certain extent. If I had to describe his state of mind, I would rather call it a severe depression, the main symptoms being a feeling that nobody could love him, especially not his master, and a gnawing fear that once again his enthusiasm had carried him away, and that he had lost forever the respect and esteem of his colleagues. In his last months he talked a lot of rewriting his last papers, but never of attacking anybody, or being attacked—only of being misunderstood, partly because of his own mistakes.

Your second question about the Ferenczi book; perhaps you remember that we agreed on the famous occasion when I appeared in the huge Humber, on the list of papers to be published, and only two items were left open (a) the inclusion of the two critical papers about Jung and Rank, and (b) whether or not to include in the volume all his last four papers. (Nos. 9, 10, 11 and 13 of the Table). We agreed that I should read these up again and decide.

When reading the Jung and Rank criticisms I became convinced that they are now of merely historical interest and so I decided not to include them. On the other hand, the last four of his paper although open to criticism on many counts, contain so many original ideas, a number of them still in the focus of attention today, that I decided to include all four.

Apart from this, the only change I have made is to include two book reviews, of Groddeck’s pamphlet on the Psychogenesis of Organic Diseases, and of the Seelensucher. I enclose a copy of the table of contents as it now stands, for your information.

And last, but not least, I wish to apologize for having missed your seventy-fifth birthday. Although I received the circular from the Society I was convinced that January was a mistake. I remembered well the most pleasant garden party in your house in the summer of 1939 and decided that it was to celebrate your sixtieth birthday, and that the “January” of the circular was a printing error for “June”. Humbly pleading guilty, may I now belatedly send my best wishes for many happy returns.

I am going away for a skiing holiday and shall return only early in February.

With kindest regards, Yours sincerely,

Michael Balint

[signed in ink]

31st May 1957

Dear Dr. Jones,

Enclosed I return the galleys you kindly let me have. May I say how much I enjoyed reading it and how much I admire your ability to put such rich material in so concise a form?

There are only two small inaccuracies that I could discover. To enable you to find the passage easily I have marked them with pencil mark in the margin....

The rest is much more difficult. It concerns your judgement of Ferenczi's later period, say from 1922 on. You describe on galley 14 Ferenczi, together with Rank, as progressively failing in mental integration. It is difficult to argue against this description because it is partly true. Unfortunately as an unqualified statement I think it is inaccurate and misleading. It is true that under heavy strain Ferenczi tended to give way to his emotions and he could then say or even write things that he later regretted and, I think we may add, that he never shirked to withdraw; but he never for a moment deviated from what we call psychoanalysis or from his loyalty to Freud. Although at times he felt badly hurt by, what he called, Freud's partiality and strongly disagreed with his master and friend, I can vouch from personal experience that even at the peak of their disagreement, both in the Rank period and in the years 1930/33, there was not a shade of doubt in him or in his words that he was, and meant to remain, a psychoanalyst and a follower of Freud.

Although you are writing a Freud biography, which means that your main concern is, and obviously must be, Freud's development, I think it might have added to the value of your description if you could have included some hints what the dissensions cropping up time and again round Freud meant -not only to psychoanalysis or to Freud- but to the dissentients themselves.

Unfortunately it is customary amongst us analysts to blame any dissension exclusively on the difficulties inherent in our dealings with the unconscious or on the more or less neurotic reactions of the various individuals to the impact of unconscious material on themselves, and equally customary among the opponents of psychoanalysis, to blame everything on Freud's intolerant personality.

It is true that whenever a crisis broke out Freud invariably showed himself what he really was, a truly great man, who was always accessible and tolerant to new ideas, who was always willing to stop, think anew, even if it meant re-examining even his most basic concepts, in order to find a possibility for understanding what might be valuable in any new idea. It has never been asked whether something in Freud has or has not contributed to a critical increase of tension during the period preceding a crisis. Still less has any analyst bothered to find out what happened in the minds of those who came into conflict with Freud and what in their relationship to him and psychoanalysis led to the exacerbation. We have been content to describe them as the villains of the piece.

Perhaps the conflicts arising between Rank and Freud on the one hand, and Ferenczi and Freud on the other, would offer a promising field to attempt such a venture, especially as we have ample material in their correspondence both before and after the crisis to enable us to follow the gathering storm and its denouement. Maybe Rank's case is less suitable for this examination but I am quite certain in Ferenczi's case one could follow the development which, prompted by the characters of the two protagonists, led to the tragic conflict. As I was in fairly intimate contact with Ferenczi at the time I have some memories and ideas about what the conflict meant to him, and how much he suffered under its weight.

Having said this much in general, I would now like to go to particular paragraphs, which I think might be reconsidered.



**Galley 14.** The two passages have already been mentioned.

**Galley 20.** Last Paragraph. The whole description is true, but I think it ought to be said that Ferenczi was wont to give way to his first reactions even in writing which, however, usually did not last very long as it proved -among other things- by the fact mentioned on galley 21, that at the General Meeting in Salzburg it was Ferenczi who proposed Abraham's election to the Presidency. On the other hand, it is equally true that there was quite a lot of rivalry between the two, which was fought with weapons characteristic of each of them. Ferenczi used his seniority and the fact that he contributed more, and more original, ideas to our science, whereas Abraham relied on his steadiness, imperturbability, soundness of judgement and undoubtedly much greater talent for organizing and running a society.

**Galley 22.** Third paragraph from the bottom. I think it would make the situation clearer if you would insert in the first sentence something like "In addition to his frank and through discussion with Freud ..." and then continue.

**Galley 23.** I think this shows best what I meant by limited description used by analysts. There is no question that Freud was again taken in by Rank and this fact is accepted as something understandable. This sympathetic treatment, however, is not given to Ferenczi for exactly the same mistake. To my mind it is unfair to blame Ferenczi and not to blame Freud for the same error in judgement, especially as Ferenczi did not know as much about Rank in 1922/23 as Freud did in December 1925.

The joint book by Ferenczi and Rank, "Entwicklungsziele", is a curious mixture of clear vision, bold ideas, and neurotic reactions. We must not forget that this was the first book ever written which went beyond Freud's ideas about acting out and transference. Freud described these two phenomena exclusively from the point of view of the analyst, whereas Ferenczi and Rank tried to give justice to their importance from the point of view from the patient. This was possible for them because both of them had a kind of patient relationship to Freud (Ferenczi had had some analysis with him before and during the 1914-1918 war), and so they could describe as first pioneers what they themselves experienced in a transference situation. It is understandable that they could not escape carrying their ambivalent transference into their book, which is perhaps best shown in the ambiguity of its title. On the title page it is called "Entwicklungsziele", whereas at the head of the pages it is called "Entwicklungswege", as beautiful a slip as ever there has been.

We are going on holiday and will be returning to London on the 9th July.

Should you wish to get in touch with me before that date you can reach us about the 13th June at St. Moritz, Post Restante.

Once again many thanks for letting me see these most interesting chapters, and renewed apologies for arriving somewhat late on Sunday.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Jones and yourself,

Yours sincerely,

Michael Balint

[signed in ink]

12th December 1957

Dear Dr. Jones,

However hard we try to narrow down our controversy I am afraid we have to accept the fact that on certain points we disagree. Were it not so there would be not need for me to think of writing this awkward letter.

The two main points of our disagreement are:

1.) The value of Ferenczi's last writings. Although you say in your letter that you never stigmatized his last writings, this is not absolutely true. As a very convincing instance may I quote page 185 of your

Third Volume, paragraph 2, the sentence starting on the sixth line. After re-reading it I do not think you can disagree that you give as your opinion that Ferenczi's last Congress paper should be considered as a symptom of his "illness".

2.) That Ferenczi deteriorated mentally towards the end of his life and the diagnosis of this deterioration is a slowly developing paranoia.

Although I see the ways through which you came to this conclusion I cannot agree with it and that is the main reason why I feel I have to write this letter.

With all the other points you raise I am in full agreement and I have changed the text of my letter accordingly. I should be very pleased if you could accept that the description of your disagreement should be published in this form. I again enclose a copy.

As I mentioned, I have received several letters from all over the world urging me to do something; the last being from Elma and Magda, Ferenczi's step-daughters, who are, as you know, the legal owners of the Freud-Ferenczi correspondence, asking me to get either a rectification by you or to withdraw the permission to use this correspondence. Of course, I have advised them not to be as foolish as that, but I hope you will see from this that, quite apart from my own conviction, I have simply got to do something.

Once again, I am very sorry about this state of affairs and I hope you will understand my situation.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Michael Balint

[signed in ink]

19th December 1957.

Dear Dr. Jones,

You say quite rightly that whatever we do a certain amount of disagreement will remain between us, so after due consideration I came to the conclusion that I accept your request to leave out the reference to Ferenczi being the analyst of both of us, but otherwise not to change the text of my letter. I enclose a copy of the version I have sent to Hoffer.

May I use this opportunity to thank you very much for your understanding cooperation, and express my hope that highly unpleasant and awkward battle-axe between us two will have been buried for good.

One more point, and that is very important to me: perhaps you remember when I handed over the whole correspondence to you that I made the stipulation that as long as Elma and Magda are alive nothing from it may be disclosed to anybody concerning Ferenczi's private life, especially his relation to Gisela and Elma. As you know, Magda and Elma do not even know about the existence of the interchange of letters between Freud and Ferenczi, and I wish to do everything in my power to prevent them getting to know of this fact, which might cause them considerable embarrassment and suffering.

With best wishes for Christmas to both of you,

Yours sincerely,

Michael Balint

[signed in ink]

With the letter above, Balint had sent another one to Jones, which was addressed to the publisher. In that letter, which was published in *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* in 1958, accompanied by Jones's well-known response, Balint wrote:

The publication of the Third Volume of Dr. Jones's great Freud Biography created an awkward situation for me, Ferenczi's literary executor.

In this Volume Dr. Jones expresses rather strong views about Ferenczi's mental state, especially during the last years of his life, diagnosing it as a kind of slowly developing paranoia, with delusions and homicidal impulses in its final phase. Using his diagnosis as a basis on his participation in the analytic movement on the other, in this sense.

. . . If now Dr. Jones's views about Ferenczi's mental state were to remain unchallenged by me who had made the whole Freud-Ferenczi correspondence available for the Biography, the impression might be created as if I, Ferenczi's literary executor, one of his pupils and a close friend, were in agreement with them. This would certainly make the psycho-analytic public feel that the writings of the last period -when, according to Dr. Jones, his mental health was declining- do not merit proper attention.

In my opinion exactly the opposite is the truth. Ferenczi's last writings not only anticipated the development of psycho-analytic technique and theory by fifteen to twenty-five years, but still contain many ideas that may shed light on problems of the present or even of the future." (p. 68)

This letter is the third public expression of solidarity by Balint for Ferenczi.

Jones's (1958) well-known answer to this Balint's letter stated "What I wrote about Ferenczi's last days was based on the trustworthy evidence of an eye-witness" (p. 68).

We must ask ourselves seriously, when Jones insisted on his opinion based on "an eye witness," why he was unable to consider other, authentic witnesses? They were available. There were many witnesses who knew Ferenczi well and expressed opinions contradicting Jones. Some of these opinions were stated before Jones published the "Third Volume."

Jones insisted on the one witness idea to hide his hostile feelings, and we can safely say that he stuck to this as to an obsession. He ignored every opinion, observation, or possibility to the contrary immediately after Ferenczi's death, just as he did a quarter of a century later.

Could Balint have done more?

Balint defended his position with his talent for diplomacy, paying due respect to his elders and to figures in authority, as was the custom amongst Central Europeans of his generation. He was able to rely on several factors besides Ferenczi -first and foremost on his unshakeable conviction that he was right and had the right to stand up for his opinions. Balint was unfaltering in his loyalty to Ferenczi. He was convinced that Ferenczi was the victim of a shameful injustice. . . . he was convinced that Ferenczi's ideas were deep insights which would be very useful for the analytic community. His own work also contributed to this. (Haynal, 1996, p. 70)

After Ferenczi's death, in the period from 1933 to 1958 when Jones published his allegations, Balint made several attempts both public and personal to restore Ferenczi's severely injured reputation. The fact that Balint was unable to prevent Jones from publishing his allegation that Ferenczi had suffered from a "slowly developing paranoia" is due to the fact that Balint's argument from 1933 until 1958 fell on deaf ears and came up against the sheer power and obsession of Jones, who was from the very beginning unable to give up or correct the picture of Ferenczi he had falsely constructed. We should add that, in the last years of Ferenczi's life, all this happened with Freud's complicity.

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## Notas al final

- 1.- Sprachverwirrung zwischen den Erwachsenen und dem Kind. (Die Sprache der Zärtlichkeit und der Leidenschaft.) Read at the 12th International Psychoanalytical Congress, Wiesbaden, September 1932. Published in *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, 19(1), 5–15. English translation (1949) in *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 30(4), 225–230.
- 2.- The Balint paper was published in Hungarian: “Dr. Sandor Ferenczi as Doctor”; the English translation of the Hungarian text—with some translation errors—was published under another title: “Dr. Sandor Ferenczi as Psycho-Analyst” in a journal probably rarely read by the European psychoanalysts: the *Indian Journal of Psychology* (Balint, 1934, p. 27).
- 3.- See, for example, *Homosexualitas feminina*. In J. Mészáros (Ed.), *Ferenczi Sándor: A pszichoanalízis felé. Fiatalkori írások 1897–1908*. (pp. 112–115). Budapest: Osiris; 1999
- 4.- Vilma Kovács was a central figure in Hungarian psychoanalysis at that time, the mother of Alice Balint and mother-in-law of Michael Balint.
- 5.- These three papers were published under the following titles: “On the Revision of the Interpretation of Dreams” (pp. 238–243), “On Shock” (pp. 253–256), and “Relaxation and Education” (pp. 236–238) in *Final Contributions* (Balint, 1955).
- 6.- It was published in English 15 years later in a special issue of *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* among Ferenczi’s unpublished papers. (*The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* Vol. xxx, Part IV, 1949)
- 7.- Carlo Bonomi (1999) also mentioned this unfriendly gesture in his work. “Jones did not accept him in London, but ‘advised’ him to go to Manchester” (Bonomi, 1999, p. 531).
- 8.- After consultation with Michael Molnar—the research director of the Freud Museum in London—there are two possible interpretations for J. R.: The initials either stand for John Rickman or Joan Riviere. Since John Rickman was analyzed by Ferenczi, he was probably more involved in publishing this Ferenczi issue.