

**FERENCZI AND FREUD – FROM PSYCHOANALYSIS AS A  
“PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL HOME” TO THE CREATION OF A  
“PSYCHOANALYTIC HOME” FOR THE PATIENT.<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

The author explores the relationship between Sándor Ferenczi and Sigmund Freud in the light of their correspondence. This allows us to see how Freud was able to offer and create for Ferenczi a “professional and personal home” that enabled the latter to find a much more meaningful and creative contact with himself. According to the author, this experience played an important role in Ferenczi’s later readiness to offer to and create with his patients a similar “psychoanalytic home.” As Freud was not able to share such clinical research work with Ferenczi, a conflict developed between them whose nature has occupied psychoanalysts ever since, and whose seeds can be found in the 1246 letters that they exchanged between January 1908 and May 1933. From this point of view, Ferenczi’s Clinical diary (written in 1932 and published only in 1985) can be seen as the continuation of the dialogue they had entertained for so many years, as well as Ferenczi’s attempt not to give up the “professional and personal home” that they had created together.

**Key words:** Ferenczi, Freud, correspondence, professional, personal and psychoanalytic home, Clinical diary

**RESUMEN**

El autor explora la relación entre Sándor Ferenczi y Sigmund Freud a la luz de su correspondencia. Esto nos permite ver cómo Freud pudo ofrecer y crear para Ferenczi un “hogar profesional y personal” que le permitió encontrar un contacto mucho más significativo y creativo consigo mismo. Según el autor, esta experiencia desempeñó un papel importante en la disposición posterior de Ferenczi para ofrecer a sus pacientes un “hogar psicoanalítico” similar. Dado que Freud no pudo compartir dicho trabajo de investigación clínica con Ferenczi, se desarrolló un conflicto entre ellos cuya naturaleza ha preocupado a los psicoanalistas desde entonces, y cuyas semillas se encuentran en las 1246 cartas que intercambiaron entre enero de 1908 y mayo de 1933. Desde este punto de vista, el *Diario Clínico* de Ferenczi (escrito en 1932 y publicado solo en 1985) puede considerarse como la continuación del diálogo que mantuvieron durante tantos años, así como el intento de Ferenczi de no renunciar al “hogar profesional y personal” que habían creado juntos.

**Palabras clave:** Ferenczi, Freud, correspondencia, hogar profesional, personal y psicoanalítico, Diario Clínico.

This paper is divided into the following four sections:

1. the relationship between Ferenczi and Freud in general, that is, in terms of how it has been seen and evaluated by a variety of colleagues;
2. Ferenczi’s experience of his relationship with Freud as the “professional and personal home” that he could count on for many years and that played such an important role not only for him as a person, but also for his work with his patients;
3. how Ferenczi created for his patients the kind of “psychoanalytic home” in which they could be treated and through which they could develop in the best way;

4. last but not least, the collapse of such a nurturing frame and experience in connection with Ferenczi's clinical research work during the last years of his life, as we know it from his *Clinical diary* (1988) and from his Wiesbaden paper of 1932.

### **The relationship between Ferenczi and Freud**

Although the relationship between Ferenczi and Freud has become a topic of growing interest in the last few years, I will limit myself here to mentioning just some of the most important authors who have dealt with it, and to giving the reader a feeling for the variety of positions formulated about it.

In a paper centered around the first volume of the *Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi*, Michael Schröter spoke of it as reflecting "a collective process of learning" (Schröter, 1996, p. 147), and of Ferenczi as "contributing a lot ... with his boundless, unsparing courage of self-examination ... to this collective store of experience" (p. 148).

In the last section, "Developments in psychoanalytic technique, 1914–1919," of his Introduction to the second volume of their correspondence, Axel Hoffer shows how Ferenczi's so-called "active technique" can be seen as the utilization with his patients of a technique that Freud had "subtly but unmistakably used on (not with) Ferenczi" (Hoffer, 1996, p. xlii).

And here are the words with which Judit Dupont concluded her own Introduction to the third volume of *The Correspondence*: "If in the past Ferenczi was considered by many of his colleagues as a deviationist, today his work and his research have become indisputably integrated into the analytic movement. These days, it is possible to be both Freudian and Ferenczian" (Dupont, 2000, p. xl).

*Disappearing and reviving. Sándor Ferenczi in the history of psychoanalysis*, published by André Haynal in 2002, contains a chapter with the title "Freud and Ferenczi: difficult friendship or a tragic love affair?" But we have to come to the final chapter, "Ferenczi's legacy," to find the best formulation of the author's position on their relationship:

The book on psychoanalytic practice that Freud had intended to write, but which was never to see the light of the day – *The method of psychoanalysis* – was in fact composed implicitly by Ferenczi in the course of his oeuvre. Throughout his life and on the basis of his experiences, he wrote, corrected, and rewrote it. Present-day psychoanalytic technique, the importance assigned to the transference and the countertransference, the part played by the analyst, the role of the mother and of trauma: all this comes from Ferenczi – none of it is in Freud. (Haynal, 2002, p. 129)

In other words: "Freud (1933) wrote that Ferenczi had made all psychoanalysts his pupils, and this may now come to pass" (Haynal, 2002, p. 129).

Peter Rudnytsky formulates a similar evaluation of the relationship between Ferenczi and Freud in his 2011 book *Rescuing psychoanalysis from Freud and other essays in re-vision*: "Without quoting from Thus spoke Zarathustra, Ferenczi too, like Stekel and Jung, incarnates Nietzsche's idea of a pupil who goes beyond his teacher and, thus, may be said to 'represent Freud much better than he does himself'" (Rudnytsky, 2011, p. 70).

Last but not least, we owe to Carlo Bonomi (2015, 2018a) the articulated presentation of the long internal struggle that Ferenczi went through in connection with his perception of Freud's internal split, which enabled him to overcome such a "narcissistic split of the self" (see Ferenczi, 1931, p. 135) and to formulate the new therapeutic attitude at the center of contemporary psychoanalysis. According to Carlo Bonomi:

"Ferenczi ... traced the faulty development of psychoanalysis back to Freud's decision to withdraw and take a step back from the intense emotional involvement that had characterized his initial work with patients ... Ferenczi reflected on this theme in his *Clinical diary* and did so precisely in an effort to explain Freud's emotional abandonment and retreat from his patients. Ferenczi had most likely kept

his personal views on this theme to himself for years. (Bonomi, 2015, p. 34)

### **Ferenczi's relationship with Freud as Ferenczi's "professional and personal home"**

If we carefully read the three volumes of *The correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi*, covering the period January 1908 to May 1933 and including a total of 1246 letters, we can see how Ferenczi's relationship with Freud very soon became Ferenczi's "professional and personal home," and how this home remained intact for a very long time. Even though this home broke down as a result of the very gradual realization of their very different therapeutic attitudes and ideas, it must have played an important role for Ferenczi in terms of not only his personal identity, but also his work with his patients, that is, in terms of his capacity to offer them the kind of "home experience" that he had himself had with Freud.

Let us review some of the best examples of such a significant experience of contact and exchange by reproducing some of the quotations that I have offered to participants in the Discussion Group on "Freud as a letter writer" that I have held at the Congress of the American Psychoanalytic Association

over the last four years (2016–2019, the last three with Endre Koritar).

But before doing this, it is important to make the following premise. When I speak of "home" and of "professional and personal home," I have in mind the same dimension of meaning that lies at the center of Nini Herman's book *My Kleinian home: Into a new millennium* (Hermann, 2002). A German Jew who was able to leave Germany for London before the outbreak of World War II, the author shows the reader how only a Kleinian analysis – which she underwent after having experienced both a Jungian and a Freudian analysis – allowed her to overcome a whole series of traumas and to thus come in touch with and reconcile with herself. In other words, this is how Nini Hermann was able to find in herself, through a Kleinian analysis, her own home.

Indeed, this is exactly the experience that I have been undergoing as an Italian psychoanalyst working in Munich since 1999; here I have had the chance to work in the context of the local social security system, which covers psychoanalytic psychotherapy of up to 300 sessions, with up to three sessions a week, and mostly working with Italian patients. This allows the Italian patients I treat to work with me in their mother language, and thus to feel at home working with me. The importance for patients of working on themselves in their mother language is one of the central topics of the now classical book *The Babel of the unconscious. Mother tongue and foreign languages in the psychoanalytic dimension*, originally published in Italian in 1990 by Jacqueline Amati-Mehler, Simona Argentieri, and Jorge Canestri – and whose German edition Hediatty Utari Witt and I promoted in 2010 (see Amati-Mehler, Argentieri, & Canestri, 1993).

But this is only one aspect of this peculiar dimension. The second aspect is connected to the fact

that the common psychological denominator of people who emigrate is the search for the kind of psychological home that they have not found in their native country. The pioneers of the analytic study of this aspect of the phenomenon were León and Rebeca Grinberg, with their 1989 book *Psychoanalytic perspectives on migration and exile*.

This is how, working with me in their mother tongue, my Italian patients can end up finding their own home in themselves. In other words, this is how, through an adequate analytic therapy, they have the chance to find or reshape those internal objects without whose adequate presence their inner world has not been well enough structured to function as their home. On the other hand, by "home" I am not referring only to an adequately furnished home, that is, adequately furnished with internal objects, but also to the good analytic situation that I try to create with them, in other words, the situation in which they might eventually have the chance to feel listened to and seen in such a way as they did not have the chance to experience in their native country, in their own families of origin. It is exactly this fundamental lack that is, in my experience, the common denominator of the motivation to emigrate. I have already dealt with this situation and its treatment in several publications (Conci, 2010, 2015, 2018).

But, coming back to Ferenczi, here is what he wrote to Freud on April 5, 1910, in one of the letters they exchanged after having successfully brought to fruition the political operation of founding the International

Psychoanalytic Association (IPA). They had conceived this together and realized it in Nuremberg the week before:

Dear Professor, your letters always gave me extraordinary satisfaction in my intellectual and emotional isolation. This time your letter did this to an increased degree; being together for days with people of like mind spoiled me – and this evening I caught myself singing an Hungarian song with the following text: ‘On the great ball of earth no one so orphaned as I’. You told me once in Berchtesgaden: ‘Man must love something’. That also could be craft and science. But obviously not exclusively. One must also love people if one wants to be happy. Now, I am not quite lacking in that respect, either. I have such a person, as you know ... Obviously that is not enough for me, and I have to say that Jung is right when he urges me to gather around me young men whom I can teach and perhaps also love somewhat. (Letter 127; Vol. 1, p. 157)

It is no wonder that Ferenczi, on March 31, 1910, in Nuremberg, promoted the foundation of the IPA in the following way:

Thus it would be doing violence to human nature were we to drive the principle of liberty too far and seek to evade the ‘family organization’. For, though we analysts are now formally unorganized, we already live in a kind of family community, and in my opinion it would be right to give outward recognition to the fact. (Ferenczi, 1911; 1950, p. 303)

In fact, Ferenczi declared himself to be “convinced that an association working on the basis of these principles will not only create favorable conditions for work among ourselves, but will also be in a position to gain us respect in the outside world” (Ferenczi, 1911; 1950, p. 302).

And here is what Ferenczi wrote to Freud on July 9, 1910, two days after his 37th birthday:

Dear Professor, my birthday the day before yesterday – my 37th – released a few thoughts in me that I don’t want to keep secret from you, first of all because I know that you are interested in my personal life, and second, because they are – I believe – of general interest. The thoughts are a continuation of your pessimistic line of reasoning about the immutability and unchanging nature of men. I must contradict it. I have already often thanked you for beautifying my profession, in fact, my whole life, through the psychoanalytic way of looking at things. But if I compare my inner psychic existence before and after psychoanalytic insight, I must regard the most valuable thing to be precisely the inner change that you deny. It was only through psychoanalysis that I became a man from a child, only since its mastery in me can I better subordinate the ‘pleasure principle’ to the ‘reality principle’ ... I am also more optimistic than you in another respect. I believe that psychoanalytic honesty can be effected, not only among friends but also among life’s companions of various gender. The analytic association with Frau G. is making decided progress. (Letter 145; Vol. 1, p. 186)

As we know, this unique relationship underwent a first important crisis in Palermo in September 1910, which Ferenczi, in his Letter to Freud of October 3, 1910, attributed to the frustration by Freud of his desire “to enjoy the man, not the scholar, in close friendship” and his need of “absolute mutual openness” (Letter 170; Vol. 1, p. 218)<sup>2</sup>.

But on April 24, 1911, after a “splendid excursion” of two days to Bozen-Bolzano and Klobenstein am Ritten/Collalbo al Renon, Ferenczi reminded Freud that “I never depart from you without benefit.”

Here is the very interesting way in which he described such a state of mind:

I mean by that not an increase in my understanding of mental activity in general but rather a deepening of insight specifically into my mental life, without which there can be no true knowledge – but especially no true faith. The relationship between knowledge and faith that has occupied people for so many centuries is zonly being made clear by means of analysis. Without self-analysis the most realistic truth can appear incredible. (Letter 213; Vol. 1, p. 270; italics are in the original)

This was precisely the topic that Ferenczi dealt with in the paper “Belief, disbelief and conviction” that he presented at the Fourth IPA Congress held in Munich in September 1913.<sup>3</sup>

It is only on February 29, 2012 that Ferenczi is able to thank Freud for having helped him to renounce his plan to marry his partner Gisela’s daughter Elma, in the context of a “visit with you” that has “given me such undisturbed intellectual and emotional satisfaction” (Letter 281; Vol. 1, p. 350).

Ferenczi’s tone starts to change at the beginning of the second volume of his correspondence with Freud, which its scientific director André Haynal let coincide with the first week of July 1914, that is, the week after the killing of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo. The dominant topic in those days, in terms of the history of the psychoanalytic movement, was Freud’s break with Jung. This allowed Ferenczi –on July 23, 1914 – to formulate to Freud the following interesting considerations:

I may be overestimating Jung’s significance for your emotional life, as he himself did, and you can believe me that when I say that I am not very edified by this symptom of unconscious identification with him ... I have also known for a long time that I ‘grasp things differently’ from you, and that you can pursue my work plans only with considerable strain ... Certainly my reason tells me that the manner in which you grasp things is the correct one; still, I can’t prevent my fantasy from going its own way (perhaps astray). The result is a mass of ideas which never become actualized. If I had the courage simply to write down my ideas and observations without regard for your method and direction of work, I would be a productive writer, and in the end, numerous points of contact between your results and mine would still be the result. Up to now, at least, it was always the case that I have found many of my own ideas in your works (albeit in much more proper order). The better in you is the enemy of the good in me! (Letter 492; Vol. 2, pp. 7–8; italics are in the original).

Indeed, the wartime letters are full of the self-analytic work that accompanied the three tranches of analysis that Ferenczi was able to convince Freud to give him. Axel Hoffer talks about them in detail in the above-cited Introduction to Volume 2 and gives us their time frame as follows: the first tranche took place in September 1914 for no more than three weeks, the second lasted from June 15 to July 5, 1916, and the third lasted from September 26 to October 9, 1916. But here is for example what Ferenczi writes to Freud on July 10, 1916:

Above all, I think I can establish that these three weeks were the decisive ones in my life and for my life. I find my psychic attitude toward almost all persons and things changed. Today I said to Gisela that I have become another person, one who is less interesting but more normal. I also admitted to her that something in me pities the old, somewhat unsettled man, who was nonetheless capable of such great enthusiasm (and certainly often needlessly depressed). I had – I told her –withdrawn the libido from many objects and not yet appended it onto new ones ... The feeling of gratitude that I owe you for your kind assistance will – I hope –permeate me more and more. (Letter 613; Vol. 2, pp. 132–133)

Of course, not only the three tranches of analysis, but also the possibility of keeping himself busy with psychoanalysis during the Great War allowed Ferenczi to survive it. This is the source of the particular gratitude which we find in the following lines that he wrote to Freud at the end of the war, on December 26, 2018:

The only thing that kept me going in these days and still keeps me going is the optimism that I owe to the circumstance that, as a collaborator in psychoanalysis, I feel I belong to an international movement which is without a doubt a part of the future. Considered sub specie psychoanalysis, the terrible events appear only as episodes of a still very primitive social organization. And even if the optimism were false and humanity remained a victim of its own unconscious to the end: we were still granted the opportunity to look behind the scenes, and the knowledge of the truth can also compensate us for much that one must otherwise renounce, and also for much suffering. (Letter 778; Vol. 2, p. 319)

Of a similar nature, although much more personal, are the following words that Ferenczi wrote to Freud some months later, on May 23, 1919:

Recently – during the move to my present residence – I had to lay hands on the big pile of detailed, amicably patient letters which you directed to me in the course of the last ten years. The entire new developmental history of the newer psychoanalysis has been put down in them. But at the same time they are also documents attesting the extent of the care, benevolence –indeed, I may say: love – with which you have pursued, led, shielded, my oh, so difficult development.(Letter 810; Vol. 2, p. 356; italics are in the original)

In fact, we have to wait until January 30, 1924 to find the very first sign of a professional crisis between Ferenczi and Freud, in connection with the publication of Ferenczi's and Rank's (1884–1939) innovative but controversial book *The development of psychoanalysis* (1925). Indeed, the book – which they partly wrote during a vacation in Klobenstein am Ritten in the South Tyrolean Alps – gave rise to such a series of heated discussions as to bring about the practical end of the “Secret Committee.” On the other hand, the book became a classic of analytic literature given the way in which Ferenczi and Rank revisited Freud's 1914 article “Remembering, repeating and workingthrough,” underlining the existence of unconscious aspects of the problems of our patients that can be remembered only after having been repeated, that is, acted upon together with the analyst. From this point of view, the Austrian colleague Michael Turnheim spoke about the book in terms of “the first *manifesto* of a new phase in psychoanalysis, which is usually called ‘post-Freudian’” (Turnheim, 1996, p. 98; emphasis added).<sup>4</sup>

But here is how Ferenczi – on January 30, 1924 –reacted to the first critical comments he received from Freud in connection to something he had published: “Your letter has shaken me considerably. For the first time since our acquaintance, which you soon elevated to friendship, I hear words of dissatisfaction from you” (Letter 946; Vol. 3, p. 119). However, this new development in their relationship did not hinder Ferenczi from expressing himself to Freud in the following way on August 10, 1925, after having visited him on the Semmering, where he was on vacation:

I have already spent many beautiful days near you, but seldom one more beautiful than the one of my last visit to the Semmering. The pleasure of seeing you again in good health and in the old good mood was, if possible, increased still further by the enjoyment that the reading of your two last works gave me. (Letter 1020; Vol. 3, p. 220)

### **The “psychoanalytic home” Ferenczi created for and with his patients**

Creating a “psychoanalytic home” for his patients is, in my view, one of the main themes of Ferenczi's Clinical diary, a theme that at the same time runs –not surprisingly – through his whole work. Having originally come out in French in 1985 with an Introduction by Judit Dupont, the 1988 English edition

was based on the translation by Michael Balint (1896–1970) and Nicola Zarday Jackson. Before quoting directly from Ferenczi in terms of how he tried to formulate his new way of working with his patients and redefine his analytic identity, I will provide some more reference points in terms of the revisitation of his

legacy that I deal with in this contribution. I will do this referring not only to Judit Dupont's Introduction, but also to the review that Johannes Cremerius (1918–2002) wrote about it 30 years ago.

To Judit Dupont – together with Michael Balint and André Haynal – we owe the eventual publication of not only Ferenczi's Clinical diary, but also the three volumes of *The correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi*. Born in Budapest in 1925 as the daughter of the sister of Vilma Kovacs (1883–1940; a close collaborator of Ferenczi and a pioneer of Hungarian psychoanalysis), Judit Dormandi migrated with her family to Paris in 1938, where she graduated from medical school in 1955, after having married Dr. Dupont. A member of the French Psychoanalytic Association, Judit Dupont dedicated her whole life to the promotion not only of Ferenczi's work, but of Hungarian psychoanalysis as a whole. As we can learn from her precious autobiographical book *Au fil du temps ... Un itinéraire analytique* (2015), in 1969 she founded the journal *Le Coq-Héron* exactly in order to carry out this important project.

As an aside, I can add that André Haynal's involvement in the rediscovery of Ferenczi's legacy and his collaboration with both Balint and Dupont are the "red thread" of his own autobiography, with the title *Encounters with the irrational. My story* (2017) –and that Carlo Bonomi promoted the Italian edition of Dupont's book and reviewed both Dupont's and Haynal's books in *the International Forum of Psychoanalysis* (Bonomi 2017, 2018b). But here are the words with which Judit Dupont concluded her Introduction, after having shown the reader that it is possible to understand the Clinical diary only in the context of the letters exchanged by Ferenczi and Freud, that is, only in the context of their relationship:

The Diary is a clinical diary. It recounts the clinical history of many of Ferenczi's patients, but also of Ferenczi himself. In other words, it offers a history of the multiple transferences and countertransferences that intertwine in an analytic practice, reported with unusual candor. Ferenczi dares to hear and dares to express feelings, ideas, intuitions, and sensations that generally have great difficulty working their way to consciousness and even greater difficulty allowing themselves to be formulated in words. He thus opens to psychoanalysis and to researchers in allied domains numerous doors – an achievement that has the merit not only of proposing new directions but also of bringing a healthy and invigorating breath of fresh air in those places, hitherto a little too enclosed, where the theories and technical principles of psychoanalysis have a tendency to settle and to become fixed. (Dupont, 1988, p. xxvi)

I come now to the 1989 review of Ferenczi's Clinical diary by Johannes Cremerius, which I had myself translated from German into Italian so that it could come out in the journal *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*. The German edition, on which Cremerius based his review, and the Italian edition, which I referred to in my translation of Cremerius' review, had both come out the year before, 1988. *Ohne Sympathie keine Heilung. Das klinische Tagebuch von 1932* was the German title of the book, intelligently including in it the words "Only sympathy heals," which the reader can find towards the end of the Diary (see Ferenczi, 1988, p. 200). Promoted by Glauco Carloni (1926–2000), one of the Italian pioneers of the reception of Ferenczi's work, the Italian edition, *Diario clinico. Gennaio-ottobre 1932*, was also published in 1988 – with the title referring to the time span of Ferenczi's diary. But here are the key words of Cremerius's review:

Reading Ferenczi's clinical vignettes and his technical reflections, one has really the impression of having to do with communications that he makes to his analyst: look, this is something I could have used, look, this is how you could have helped me! If we look at things from this point of view, we can conclude that two of the main themes of the Clinical diary, that is, the development of a theory of trauma, including its effects and its treatment, and the formulation of the concept of reciprocal analysis, represent an integral part of the endless exchange a dialogue [in the original German *der unendlichen Auseinandersetzung*] which Ferenczi conducted with his analyst. (Cremerius, 1989, pp. 126–127; translated by current author)

In other words, according to Cremerius, Ferenczi did not write the Clinical diary in order to separate from Freud, but in order for the “professional and scientific house” that they had built together to keep existing as such.

In fact, in 1983 Cremerius had already published in the German journal *Psyche – Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* a fascinating and very detailed revisit of Ferenczi’s 1932 paper “Confusion of tongues between the adults and the child,” whose summary allows us to see what a pioneering role he played in the German reception of Ferenczi’s work:

Unlike any other of Freud’s early students, Ferenczi distinguished himself through his readiness for theoretical and technical experimentation. Toward the end of his life this brought about a break with Freud. Fifty years after Ferenczi’s death, Cremerius reconstructs the latter’s innovative proposals concerning psychoanalytic treatment technique, especially the broadened criteria for analytic treatment and the reconceptualization of abstinence. He shows the line extending from Ferenczi by way of Michael Balint and Donald Winnicott to the contemporary object-relations theorists. (Cremerius, 1983, p. 1012; translated by current author)

But let us now come to Ferenczi, to his patients, and to the “psychoanalytic home” that he built for them and for himself through the Clinical diary. Here is what he wrote on August 13, 1932:

BEING ALONE leads to splitting.

The presence of someone with whom one can share and communicate joy and sorrow (love and understanding) can HEAL the trauma.

Personality is reassembled ‘healed’ (like ‘glue’). (Ferenczi, 1988, p. 201)

In the same context, on August 17, 1932, he also spoke – in line with what he had already written in the above-mentioned *The development of psychoanalysis* – about the following therapeutic requirement:

In addition to the capacity to integrate the fragments intellectually, there must be also kindness, as this alone makes the integration permanent. Analysis on its own is intellectual anatomical dissection. A child cannot be healed with understanding alone. It must be helped first in real terms, and then with comfort and the awakening of hope ... Kindness alone would not help much either, but only both together. (Ferenczi, 1988, p. 207)

And here is what Ferenczi wrote on August 24, 1932, under the heading “Being alone”:

The childish personality, as yet barely consolidated, does not have the capacity to exist, so to speak, without being supported on all sides by the environment ... Children have no ego yet, but only an id ... The analysis should be able to provide for the patient the previously missing favorable milieu for building up the ego ... A new *couvade*, so to speak, and a new taking flight. (Ferenczi, 1988, pp. 210–211)

Limiting ourselves to the theoretical dimension, we can say that we have here to do with considerations that make of Ferenczi an important pioneer of both ego psychology (see also Bonomi, 2010) and object relations theory.

On the other hand, if this is actually the type of environment and support that Freud had failed to give to Ferenczi (before we deal with his conflict with Freud, with his crisis, and with the solution that he found for himself and for psychoanalysis through his work with his patients), I can confirm that studying his letters can allow us to find the origin and the first steps he made in terms of the formulation of the concept of “reciprocal analysis” and of his revisit of the concept of psychic trauma.<sup>5</sup>

## **Ferenczi's conflict with Freud.**

We find the most detailed articulation of Ferenczi's conflict with Freud in the whole series of considerations that he formulated in his Clinical diary on August 4, 1932, and which he put under the title "Personal causes for the erroneous development of psychoanalysis." In fact, we have to deal with a series of such important considerations that I invite readers to look them up and read them for themselves, given the need for me to limit myself, for reasons of space, to the following selection.

But first I will remind readers that the 1928 paper on "The elasticity of psycho-analytic technique," a lecture given in Budapest to the Hungarian Society in 1927, was the very last paper whose writing Ferenczi was able to share with Freud, as also documented in their correspondence (see Freud's letter to Ferenczi of January 4, 1928; Letter 1.115, Vol. 3, pp. 331–332). Here is one of the central sentences of the paper: "The ideal result of a completed analysis is precisely that elasticity which analytic technique demands of the mental therapist" (Ferenczi, 1928, p. 99). The innovative nature of this sentence escaped Freud, whose major preoccupation concerned the necessity for the concept of "tact" (which Ferenczi introduced in the same paper) to "be robbed of its mystical character" (see Ferenczi, 1928, p. 99).<sup>6</sup> Up to this point of his personal and professional evolution a "welcome partner" of Freud, it is no wonder that a year later Ferenczi eventually felt free to write a paper with the title "The unwelcome child and his death instinct," in which he spoke of a series of patients whose reduced attachment to life was a consequence of their having "come into the world as unwelcome guests of the family, so to speak" (Ferenczi, 1929, pp. 103–104; emphasis in the original).<sup>7</sup>

But now we come to the first series of considerations concerning Ferenczi's personal relationship to Freud, who, "contrary to all the rules of technique that he established himself ... adopted Dr. F[erenczi] almost like his son" (Ferenczi, 1988, p. 184), regarding him at the same time as "the most perfect heir of his ideas" (Ferenczi, 1988, p. 184), including his fear of "dying as soon as his son takes his place" (Ferenczi, 1988, p. 184). This is the source of the following analysis by Ferenczi of Freud as a person and of the role, of which he himself was not aware, of his own personal problems in the formulation of his Oedipus theory:

The anxiety-provoking idea, perhaps very strong in the unconscious, that the father must die when the son grows up, explains his fear of allowing any of his sons to become independent. At the same time, it also shows us, that Freud as the son really did want to kill his father. Instead of admitting this, he founded the theory of the parricidal Oedipus, but obviously applied it only to others, not to himself. Hence the fear of allowing himself to be analysed, hence perhaps also the idea that in civilized adults primitive instinctual impulses are not in fact real anymore, that the Oedipal disease is a childhood disease, like the measles. (Ferenczi, 1988, pp. 184–185)

The second series of considerations concerns the long process of emancipation that Ferenczi went through, starting from his original role, which he defines in terms of a "blindly dependent son" (Ferenczi, 1988, p. 185). This went on until he had the feeling of perceiving in Freud what Ferenczi calls a form of "dishonesty," that is, "the seeking and finding of the causes of failure in the patient instead of partly in ourselves" (Ferenczi, 1988, p. 185), not to mention "the pessimistic view" according to which "psychoanalysis as a therapy may be worthless" (Ferenczi, 1988, pp. 185–186). It is at this point that we can read the following considerations:

This was the point where I refused to follow him. Against his will I began to deal openly with questions of technique. I refused to abuse the patients' trust in this way, and neither did I share his idea that therapy was worthless. I believed rather that therapy was good, but perhaps we were still deficient, and I began to look for our errors. In this search I took several false steps; I went too far with Rank, because on one point (the transference situation) he dazzled me with his new insight. I tried to pursue the Freudian technique of frustration honestly and sincerely to the end (active therapy). Following its failure I tried permissiveness and relaxation, again an exaggeration. In the wake of these two defeats,

I am working humanely and naturally, with benevolence, and free from personal prejudices, on the acquisition of knowledge that will allow me to help. (Ferenczi, 1988, p. 186)

Only in the last pages of the Clinical diary do we find a trace of the two opposed extremes or poles between which Ferenczi kept oscillating during his whole tiresome work of emancipation from Freud.

On the one hand, at the time when he was still working at the above-mentioned paper for the Wiesbaden IPA Congress, we can find the pole of the identification with the aggressor that probably contributed to accelerating his death, not yet 60 years old, on May 22, 1933. Here is the note that we can find under the date August 24, 1932 and the title “Terrorism of suffering”: “Fright: One part gets ‘BESIDE ITSELF’. *Splitting*. The place thus vacated is taken up by the aggressor. Identification” (Ferenczi, 1988, p. 211). This state of mind seems to have imposed itself upon Ferenczi even before Freud criticized his Wiesbaden paper to such a point as to ask him not to present it at the congress, which he in fact did on September 3, 1932, during Ferenczi’s last visit to him in Vienna.

The other pole is that of the so-called “reciprocal analysis” that he was able to share with Freud and with the following generations of analysts only by formulating it in his *Clinical diary*. In fact, this is the very topic around which center Ferenczi’s last notes of his Diary, written on October 2, 1932, from which I extract the following words:

Once mutuality has been attempted, one-sided analysis then is no longer possible – not productive. Now the question: must every case be mutual? And to what extent? ... I released R.N. from her torments by repeating the sins of her father, which then I confessed and for which I obtained forgiveness. (Ferenczi, 1988, pp. 213–214)

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This was not the way in which Freud used to work with his patients. His major aim seems to have been to cultivate the discipline he had himself created, psychoanalysis – a cultivation in terms of not only demonstrating his theories, but also formulating any possible new theories on the psychological way of functioning of his patients.

If the topic of how Freud really worked with his patients has accompanied the professional life of my generation, producing a whole series of papers and books from Samuel Lipton’s 1977 paper “The advantages of Freud’s technique as shown in the analysis of the Rat Man” to Paul’s Roazen’s 1995 book *How Freud worked*, the recent digitalization and online accessibility of the Freud Archives has put further important data at our disposal also in this regard.

This was the major source of information of the paper given on March 3, 2018 in Berlin by the historian of psychoanalysis Ulrike May, with the title “Müssen wir unser Bild von Freud verändern? Überlegungen auf der Basis einer neuen Quelle: K.R. Eisslers Interviews mit Patienten und Zeitgenossen Sigmund Freuds.” On the basis of some of the many interviews conducted by Kurt Eissler (1908–1999) with Freud’s patients and contemporaries, Ulrike May concluded that, yes, for Freud – at variance with Ferenczi – his patients were doubtless less important than the cultivation of his creature, psychoanalysis. This was precisely the source of the conflict that developed between Freud and Ferenczi in the late 1920s and also represents one of the main topics of his *Clinical diary*.

But there are two even more important points. First, Ferenczi’s professional contribution cannot be adequately reconstructed if not in terms of a constant dialogue with Freud (as, for example, Luís Martín Cabré showed in the paper he presented at the same Ferenczi Conference; Martín Cabré, 2018). Second – as I have tried to show – even his capacity to create a “psychoanalytic home” for his patients cannot be fully understood outside of his personal and professional relationship with Freud. Ferenczi experienced with Freud – as analyst, colleague and friend – the kind of “psychoanalytic home” that he was able to create for and with his patients. Indeed, the same is true for his *Clinical diary*, which we can reconsider in terms of Ferenczi’s attempt to protect the “professional and scientific home” that he had built with Freud.

## Marco Conci

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To cite this article: Marco Conci (2019): Ferenczi and Freud – From psychoanalysis as a “professional and personal home” to the creation of a “psychoanalytic home “for the patient, International Forum of Psychoanalysis, DOI: 10.1080/0803706X.2019.1643038

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0803706X.2019.1643038>

In: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0803706X.2019.1686916>

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## Notas al final

1.- This article is a modified and enlarged version of the paper given in Florence in May 2018 at the XIIIth International Sándor Ferenczi Conference. Correspondence: Marco Conci, Pettenkofersstrasse 4, D-80336 Munich; E-mail: marcoconci@aol.com. Via Zanella 17, I-38100 Trento; E-mail: concimarco@gmail.com.

2.- As this is one of the most important letters of the whole correspondence, let us at least take a look at its central sentences: I was longing for personal, uninhibited, cheerful companionship with you [Ferenczi wrote to Freud] ... and felt – perhaps unjustifiably – forced back into the infantile role. To be sure, I did, perhaps, have an exaggerated idea of companionship between two men who tell each other the truth unrelentingly, sacrificing all consideration. Just as in my relationship with Frau G. I strive for absolute mutual openness, in the same manner – and with even more justification – I believed that this, apparently cruel but in the end only useful, clear-as-day openness, which conceals nothing, could be possible in the relations between two psy.-minded people who can really understand everything and, instead of making value judgements, can seek the determinants of their psa. impulses. (Letter 170; Vol.1, pp. 217–218; italics are in the original)

3.- In this particularly original and significant contribution we already find themes, preoccupations, and considerations that will accompany Ferenczi for the rest of his life, including his conflict with Freud and the crisis of their relationship documented in the Clinical diary. See also how Carlo Bonomi dealt with this in his 2010 article “Ferenczi and ego psychology.”

4.- This is particularly true not only for the relational orientation pioneered by Stephen Mitchell (1946–2000), as Madelaine Miller-Bottomo and Jeremy Safran wrote in 2018: Ferenczi and Rank’s work was a clear precursor of later developments that have become central to the relational orientation: the concept and value of enactment (Jacobs, 1986), and more broadly the therapeutic value of non-interpretative interventions and the curative potential of implicit experience in the analytic relationship (Rachmann, 2010; Stern et al., 1998). (Miller-Bottomo & Safran, 2018, p

5.- As far as the first concept is concerned, a first trace of it can be found in the analytic work that Ferenczi undertook with Eugenia Sokolnicka (1884–1934; a Polish medical doctor and later pioneer of psychoanalysis in France), about which he wrote to Freud on June 4, 1920: Connecting with my experiments with ‘activity’, I advised her to give up masturbation ... But she seems to have been inwardly enraged by this intervention ... she began to analyze me ... and from now on suspected everything, no matter what I did ... In spite of this I remained steadfast and hope that in the meantime we will be able to continue working. (Letter 847; Vol. 3, pp. 24–25). As far as the trauma concept is concerned, a first clear and detailed new formulation of it is what we can find in Ferenczi’s letter to Freud of December 25, 1929. Here are his considerations on it: Summarized most succinctly, I can share with you approximately the following:

1. In all cases in which I penetrated deeply enough, I found the traumatic-hysterical basis for the illness.
2. Where I and the patient succeeded in this, the therapeutic effect was much more significant. In many cases I had to call in already “cured” patients for follow-up treatment.
3. The critical view that gradually formed in me in the process was that psychoanalysis engages much too one-sidedly in obsessional neurosis and character analysis, i.e., ego psychology, neglecting the organic-hysterical basis for the analysis; the cause lies in the overestimation of fantasy — and the underestimation of traumatic reality in pathogenesis. I don’t know if you can term that an “oppositional direction.” I don’t think that it is justified. It is only a matter of a tendency, based on experience, to even out a one-sidedness, to the development of which no field of knowledge is immune. I, too, can confirm almost everything that modern ego psychology has brought about; these studies have uncommonly facilitated and advanced the understanding of pathological processes; but I do not place these investigations, which I myself take up in every case, so very much in the center of theoretical and technical interest.
4. The newly acquired (although they do essentially sooner hark back to old things) experiences naturally also have an effect on details of technique. Certain all too harsh me

6.- In the paper he presented at the International Sándor Ferenczi Conference organized in Madrid in 1998 by Luís Martín Cabré, Franco Borgogno (1999) showed the central position of Ferenczi’s 1928 paper in his overall scientific evolution

7.- Pedro Boschán (1939–2011; Boschán, 2004) dealt with this short but very important paper of Ferenczi’s at the International Sándor Ferenczi Conference organized in Turin in 2002 by Franco Borgogno