

EVIDENCIAS TESTIMONIALES.



SÁNDOR FERENCZI AND CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYSIS:

A selection of papers from the
13th International Sándor Ferenczi Conference,

Florence, May 2018
Marco Conci & Carlo Bonomi

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EDITORIAL

On May 3–6, 2018, the International Sándor Ferenczi Network, chaired by Carlo Bonomi, organized the 13th International Sándor Ferenczi Conference with the title “Ferenczi in our time – A Renaissance for psychoanalysis.” This took place in Florence at the Convitto La Calza, not far from Palazzo Pitti, in the “Oltrarno” part of town. Around 350 colleagues from more than 20 countries spent four very intense days together, working and getting to know each other here.

The first Sándor Ferenczi Conference took place in New York City in 1991, inspired by Stephen Mitchell and organized by Lew Aron (1952–2019) and Adrienne Harris, the editors of the 1993 volume “The Legacy of Sándor Ferenczi.” In Issue 4/1998 of this journal, Carlo Bonomi edited a selection of the papers presented at the fourth of these conferences held in Madrid (Bonomi, 1998). In Issue 1–2/2004, Franco Borgogno edited the best papers presented at the seventh conference held in Turin in 2002 (Borgogno, 2004). In Issue 1/2014, Carlo Bonomi and Franco Borgogno edited a collection of papers presented at the 11th Conference held in 2012 in Budapest (Bonomi & Borgogno, 2014). The 12th Conference took place in Toronto in 2015, and the next one will take place in Sao Paulo in May 2021. Last but not least, a first selection of papers from the Florence conference appeared in Issue 4/2018 of the *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* (Koritar, 2018).

In the first article of this issue, “Freud–Ferenczi correspondence, revisited,” Ernst Falzeder and Eva Erhart (his daughter, an anthropologist) revisit the 1246 letters exchanged by Ferenczi and Freud between February 1908 and May 1933. They propose some of the most interesting, significant, and dramatic formulations through which Ferenczi and Freud tried to understand each other and to create what is perhaps the most fascinating relationship in the history of psychoanalysis. The authors end up agreeing with Peter Lomas’s amazement at Ferenczi’s courage, a virtue that also characterizes Ernst Falzeder’s unique contribution to making the history of psychoanalysis not only a scientific field (Falzeder, 2015) but also a new profitable professional activity.

Ferenczi’s letters to Freud also form the basis of the second article of this issue, “Ferenczi and Freud – From psychoanalysis as a ‘professional and personal home’ to the creation of a ‘psychoanalytic home’ for the patient,” by Marco Conci. From Ferenczi’s letters, it is possible to document how, through his relationship with Freud, Ferenczi found the kind of “professional and personal home” that allowed him to later offer his patients the “psychoanalytic home” they needed. From this point of view, his Clinical diary was also motivated by his desire to keep alive the dialogue with Freud that played such a crucial role in his life and work.

In the article “An extract of the analysis of the Monkey Puzzle Boy,” by the Irish colleague Fergal Brady, this journal’s editorial board also found the same courage and originality that characterize Ferenczi’s work and legacy. This made it possible for the author to constructively work with an artist who had been sexually abused as a child, and who had been able to psychically survive through his artistic work. Through Brady’s multiple readings and discussions with the patient of Carlo Bonomi’s work (Bonomi, 2015, 2018), the wider Ferenczi community also became part of the story of the analysis.

The Boston colleague Andrea Celenza puts Ferenczi right in the center of our contemporary analytic debate by revisiting his legacy in terms of his concept of mutuality, that is, in terms of his pioneering contribution to field theory. Her article, “From relation to the field: Modes of unconscious fantasy elaboration,” is also very stimulating in terms of her comparative analysis of relational and field theories, which she formulates in the light of a clinical vignette. Finding herself subscribing to both visions at different times, the author justifies her position by invoking a concept of unconscious as “potentially multiple,” that is, of unconscious fantasies as not existing separate from the moment in which they are formed and built – in line with the recent theorizing of Dominique Scarfone.

The next two articles deal with Ferenczi’s legacy in terms of the cultural, social, and political implications of the concept of trauma. In his article “In search of the human: The trauma of modernity and the ‘instrumental reason’ of the persecutors,” the Italian historian of law Francesco Migliorino revisits the Shoah in terms of a radical historical and epistemological watershed and defines the Nazi concentration camps in terms of the liminal space between Human and Inhuman. Also very interesting is the revisitation of the work and legacy of social scientist Theodor Adorno in terms of his use of Ferenczi’s concept of the identification with the aggressor, articulated in the article written by Canadian cultural historian Samir Gandesha “Adorno, Ferenczi, and a new ‘categorical imperative after Auschwitz.’” In fact, the author formulates such a new categorical imperative (Kant) in terms of a steadfast refusal to identify with the aggressor.

Through the seventh article of this issue, “IFPS 1960–1985: A new home for international and German psychoanalysis,” the German colleague Andrea Huppke revisits for us the history of our Federation – as she had already helped us do at the XXth IFPS Forum held in Florence in October 2018. In as much as Ferenczi’s alternative clinical approach, centered around his patients’ traumatic background, influenced the protagonist of the history of the IFPS Erich Fromm (1900–1980), Ferenczi is also an important part of such a history. In fact, as early as 1935, Fromm revisited Ferenczi’s legacy in terms of his critique of Freud’s clinical approach in the article “The social determinants of psychoanalytic therapy,” whose first English translation by Ernest Falzeder was published in this journal in 2000 (see also Conci, 2000). But the biggest merit of the research work done by Andrea Huppke in the IFPS Archives (located then in the Reichenau Psychiatric Hospital and now in the Koblenz Bundesarchiv), from which her doctoral dissertation (Huppke, 2018) resulted, consists in having revisited the history of the IFPS in light of the complex and dramatic history of German psychoanalysis after World War II (see also Conci, 2019). In Florence, in October 2018, we invited Andrea Huppke to join our Editorial Board as an associate editor, and she was happy to accept our invitation.

Two book reviews specifically connected to Ferenczi’s legacy accompany this issue. Carlo Bonomi reviews Jonathan Sklar’s book “Dark times: Psychoanalytic perspectives on politics, history, and mourning,” and Endre Koritar reviews Raluca Soreanu’s book “Working-through collective wounds: Trauma, denial, recognition in the Brazilian uprising.” Both are good examples of the kind of applied psychoanalysis we need if we want to extend our commitment to psychoanalysis beyond our clinical work with our patients.

The letter we received from Bob Hinshelwood on “Psychoanalysis in Iran” also goes in this direction, centered as it is around the possibility that psychoanalysis might contribute to building those bridges of dialogue and mutual understanding that can play such a crucial role in terms of the construction of social justice and peace in the world.

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