

December, 2018, Volume 78, Issue 4

First Special Issue: Ferenczi in Our Time and a Renaissance of Psychoanalysis - Florence International Sándor Ferenczi Conference

Introduction:

Koritar, A. (2018). First Florence Ferenczi Special Issue. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 331–341.

Abstract: The historic Convitto della Calza in Florence provided the venue for the 13th International Ferenczi Conference, *Ferenczi in Our Time and a Renaissance of Psychoanalysis*.

For four days in May 2018, it became a forum for members of the International Sándor Ferenczi Network to present their clinical and academic research to a diverse audience of psychoanalysts, psychologists, therapists, psycho-historians, academics, and psychoanalytic trainees. Held every three years, the gathering provides a thinking and debating space for those interested in mining the treasure trove of important ideas that Sándor Ferenczi contributed to the early days of the psychoanalytic movement, and which have proven to be harbingers of contemporary psychoanalytic discourse. Seeds of ideas that he planted in the early part of the 20th Century, had sprouted at the turn of the 21st Century, have borne fruit, and now provide contemporary analysts with much food for thought...

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9171-4>

Articles:

Haynal, A. E. (2018). Mutuality. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 342–349.

Abstract: Ferenczi's striving for mutuality, a call which Freud didn't take up, let him explore this concept with his analysands. He thus became the originator of mutual analysis, although with caveats, and of the concept of introjection, another important Ferenczian notion. The analyst's attitude of *knowing the 'objective' and independent Truth* is changing its orientation into that of a co-construction in the analytic work; here the analyst and the analysand build a third internal world, which they share and which remains their own. Clinical vignettes illustrate the implications of these views.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9158-1>

Frankel, J. (2018). Thoughts on the Limits of a Mutual Technique*. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 350–360.

Abstract: Ferenczi's appreciation of the inherently mutual nature of the analytic encounter led him, and many who followed, to explore the value of mutual openness

between patient and analyst. Specifically, Ferenczi saw the analyst's openness as an antidote to his earlier defensive denial of his failings and ambivalence toward the patient, which had undermined his patient's trust. My own view is that, while the analyst's openness with the patient can indeed help reestablish trust and restore a productive analytic process in the short term, it also poses long-term dangers. In certain treatments it may encourage "malignant regression", where the patient *primarily* seeks gratification from the analyst, resulting in an unmanageable "unending spiral of demands or needs" (Balint, [1968](#), p. 146). I suggest that an analyst's "confessions", in response to the patient's demand for accountability, can sometimes reinforce the patient's fantasy that healing comes from what the analyst gives or from turning the tables on his own sense of helplessness and shame by punishing or dominating the analyst. In such situations, the patient's fantasy may dovetail with the analyst's implicit theory that healing includes absorbing the patient's pain and even accepting his hostility, thus confirming the patient's fantasies, intensifying his malignant regression and dooming the treatment to failure. When malignant regression threatens, the analyst must set firmer boundaries, including limits on her openness, in order to help the patient shift his focus away from expectations of the analyst and toward greater self-reflection. This requires the analyst to resist the roles of rescuer, failure, or victim—roles rooted in the analyst's own unconscious fantasies.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9157-2>

Eekhoff, J. Terrified by Suffering, Tormented by Pain. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp.361–369.

Abstract: Ferenczi's understanding of the primitive defenses required to cope with trauma, such as introjection, identification with the aggressor, atomization and reckoning, supports the author's clinical observations of patients who introject a pain mother. Introjecting a pain mother assures that the terrorism of the original external event of a suffering mother keeps the internal suffering going, resulting in being tormented by pain. Such an introjection creates technical difficulties for the analyst. A clinical case is presented to demonstrate.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9156-3>

Seitler, N. B. (2018). Suicide: A Patient's Wish to Kill Off "Bad" Introjects and Thus Achieve Rebirth. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 370–383.

Abstract: Benedict came for treatment because he experienced severe self-deprecating feelings that tortured him. He felt commanded—by what he characterized as internal demons—to kill himself. When he did not do so, he felt humiliated for having been a coward. Simultaneously, he reckoned that if he died his demons would be killed off, but that he would arise brand new. Because Benedict had already "killed off" several earlier therapists, he needed someone who could feel his pain, but would neither die from his emotional storms, nor give up on him. With considerable mutual work, he began to identify with my dogged determination to both survive his fierce attacks and to locate the

source of the introjected demons that viciously attacked him (and others). When his emotionally-driven storms finally ebbed, he combined forces with me and began the ordeal of overcoming his fears and relinquishing his delusional system.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9159-0>

Csillag, V. (2018). From Primary Maternal Preoccupation to Dead Mother. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 384–401.

Abstract: Ferenczi (1929) writes about the unwelcome child who is not ushered into this world with care and grows up in the grip of the death instinct, with a depressive streak and a weakness in the capacity for life. Andre Green's (1986) concept of the dead mother describes a similar phenomenon, by which the image of a loving mother is transformed into an inanimate, dead parent. The absent mother becomes the negative, which will then take up a central position in the child's psyche. Winnicott (1956) describes a different maternal participation, and proposes that towards the end of her pregnancy the ordinary devoted mother develops a psychological condition which he calls primary maternal preoccupation, the main feature of which is the mother's heightened attunement to her baby at the expense of all else. I suggest that there is a potent and clinically relevant connection among these concepts: a depressed or damaged mother can still provide temporary devotion before reverting back to a state of depressive absence and that, conversely, even the devoted mother will eventually recover from the state of primary maternal preoccupation and begin to tend to other matters, and the mother's reclaiming herself can be traumatic for the child even under the best of circumstances. The connection among these concepts is illustrated with clinical material, including transference and countertransference implications, from the treatment of a young woman who grew up as an unwelcome child.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9155-4>

Vida, J. E. (2018). The Blood Crisis: A Choice between Dying and Rearranging? *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 402–411.

Abstract: I began my Ferenczi studies in the fall of 1987, a year before the English translation of his *Clinical Diary* was published. Since then, I have demonstrated in writing, teaching, working, and living that there is scarcely a passage in this "laboratory notebook of psychoanalysis" that fails to illuminate the clinical and the personal. And above all is Ferenczi's late awareness that his personality had been constructed upon false assumptions. This is a reckoning of thirty years' conscious and unconscious usage of Ferenczi's experience to illustrate, to interpret, and to expose the clinical and personal dimensions of my own life lived as "the will of another person." What constitutes, what allows, a choice between dying and rearranging? Now that I am long past Ferenczi's fifty-nine years, I take the risk every day, and I know it.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9166-1>

Gondar, J. (2018). Ferenczi as Social Trauma Thinker. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 412–420.

Abstract: In the 21st century, the notion of trauma is so commonly used that one can speak of a culture of trauma. Today, a wide variety of people claim victimhood, pointing to their traumas as validation. Fassin and Rechtman denounce the way in which recognition strategies make use of the identity of victim to justify compensation policies and financial reparations. This paper presents Sándor Ferenczi's contributions on trauma, showing how his theory takes into consideration relational and political aspects that were underemphasized by Freud. When Ferenczi is compared to contemporary recognition thinkers (such as Honneth, Fraser and Butler), one can see that what is at stake in his theory is neither identity nor victimization. It is deeper: Ferenczi shows the importance of the vulnerable dimension in all of us, suggesting that recognizing mutual vulnerability is a basis of the sense of connectedness and solidarity with the other.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9165-2>

Soreanu, R. (2018). The Psychic Life of Fragments: Splitting from Ferenczi to Klein. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 421–444.

Abstract: The present paper starts from the reflection that there is a curious “phenomenological gap” in psychoanalysis when it comes to processes of splitting and to describing the “life” of psychic fragments resulting from processes of splitting. In simpler terms, we are often in a position to lack a precise understanding of what is being split and how the splitting occurs. I argue that although Melanie Klein's work is often engaged when talking of splitting (particularly through discussions on identification, projection and projective identification), there are some important phenomenological opacities in her construction. I show that by orchestrating a dialogue between Melanie Klein and Sándor Ferenczi, we arrive at a fuller and more substantive conception of psychic splitting and of the psychic life of fragments which are the result of splitting. This is even more meaningful because there are some unacknowledged genealogical connections between Ferenczian concepts and Kleinian concepts, which I here explore. While with Klein we remain in the domain of “good” and “bad” objects—polarized objects which are constantly split and projected—with Ferenczi we are able to also give an account of complicated forms of imitation producing psychic fragments and with a “dark” side of identification, which he calls “identification with the aggressor”. While attempting to take steps toward imagining a dialogue between Klein and Ferenczi, I note a certain silent “Ferenczian turn” in a late text by Melanie Klein, “On the Development of Mental Functioning”, written in 1958. In particular, I reflect on her reference to some “terrifying figures” of the psyche, which cannot be accounted for simply as the persecutory parts of the super-ego but are instead more adequately read as more enigmatic and more primitive psychic fragments, resulting from processes of splitting.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9167-0>

Prince, R. M. (2018). The Lonely Passion of the “People”. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 445–462.

Abstract: This paper explores the psychological sources of support for a leader, and unwavering belief in the illusions he promotes, which persists despite confrontation with reality. Lonely passion is an oxymoron. It is passion because of the intensity of the supporters’ longing which is partially shaped by fear and loss. Their passion is lonely because they appear to be left empty with their love unrequited, having given their selves up and only having an illusion in return. It explores the effects of socio-economic disruption in creating or contributing to the development of a “social character” and threatening the integrity of the self. It explores the characteristics of the leader, including methods of manipulation, in eliciting passionate devotion. It uses Ferenczi’s *Confusion of Tongues* situation as a model for understanding the relationship between leader and follower. The idealization of the leader as a power to be feared and a savior from the imagined threats he has created, and the dynamics of identification, masochism and victimization are invoked. The only remedy for the toxicity of the situation is empathy, which is understood in a historical as well as psychological context.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9169-y>

Miller, I. S. (2018). Beyond Anti-Thinking: Psychoanalysis as Politics. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 463–477.

Abstract: This paper discusses the political nature of psychoanalytic audacity in an era of fake news and disinformation as receptive populations accustom themselves to societal and political misrepresentations of anti-thinking. Against the aggressive rise of anti-thinking that cauterizes individual and societal registration of precarity, the ideological foundation of psychoanalytic inquiry is in the freeing of that which emotionally and ideationally, has felt to be impenetrable, making such contents and expressions available for clarification within the consensual understandings between two very different individuals. Psychoanalysis, in its dyadic pairing, its regularity of meetings, and its continuous action of recognizing what is obscure or hidden, is the heir to the Enlightenment motto, “*aude sapere*” the ongoing act of daring to question (Kant, 1784). Operating against defensive foreclosure, psychoanalysis conditions the toleration of painful states of mind toward contingent consideration of the causes and effects from which productive future action might be considered. The dyadic engagement of psychoanalytic participants operates as a unitary political organization in witness of the human condition, from within which what was unthinkable becomes nameable, and what is named becomes spoken in clarification of anti-thinking’s foreclosures.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9170-5>

Hendelman, L. A. (2018). Political Divide in the Consulting Room. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 478–487.

Abstract: This paper addresses a treatment relationship that tests the analyst's capacity for empathy within an impinging political context. It involves a Ferenczian "relaxation of technique" within the analytic frame, while the analytic couple attempts to negotiate a polarized transference and countertransference. Specifically, within a long-term treatment imbued with positive transference, my patient becomes openly outraged by my insensitive anti-Trump remarks. Increasing confrontations around the expression of political views illuminate our otherness. He complains of psychic ostracism within a liberal cultural context, which tolerates no divergence from mainstream liberal ideas or discourse. I come to embody the oppressive other: the liberal "thought police", "silencing" him for his perspective. Empathic breaches between us take center stage: how I don't see the world as he does, and don't see or hear him.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9168-z>

Book Reviews

Cohen, M. (2018). Book Review. *Of Things Invisible to Mortal Sight: Celebrating the Work of James S. Grotstein*, edited by Annie Reiner, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2018, 304pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 488–490.

Abstract: The first time I heard a presentation by James Grotstein, I turned to a companion and asked, How does he keep all that mind in one brain! Grotstein had a command of psychoanalytic theory and was able to guide his listeners, students, and colleagues through the complexities of applying theories clinically. He brought from London Kleinian ideas of the working of the inner life of unconscious phantasy, including an expanded view of projective identification, to California, setting off conflicts and controversies. Later, his analytic work with Wilfred Bion sparked Grotstein's creativity, and his thinking became dominated by a side of psychoanalysis that might be considered more mystical than scientific.

Annie Reiner has edited a collection of essays in honor of Grotstein's work. The authors include Michael Eigen, Albert Mason, Thomas Ogden, and others whose work has been published in Portuguese, Hebrew, Spanish, Italian, or other languages, demonstrating the international influence of...

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9160-7>

Rendon, M. (2018). Book Review. *Capitalism and Desire: The Psychic Price of Free Markets*, by Todd McGowan, Columbia University Press, New York, 2016, 292pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 491–492.

Abstract: This book undertakes the exploration of capitalism from a psychoanalytical perspective, a most timely and urgent task. Its toolbox is expanded to a much wider cultural spectrum that includes Marxism, Postmodernism, and Lacanian psychoanalysis, adroitly using cultural phenomena and notably films, in its illustrations. The book is well written and pleasant, being particularly intriguing and adept in its handling of paradox.

The author explicitly endeavors to place psychoanalytic objectivity above critical theory. It avoids passing unnecessary judgments, and may even outline positive aspects of the capitalist phenomenon. Highly controversial issues such as exploitation, social class, alienation, etc. that in the past have been the ground of analysis and criticism, are for the most part skirted. The author originally chooses the structural similarity between capitalism and desire as his main perspective, the parameters of promise and future in particular. Arguably these are the main...

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9161-6>

Stern, W. L. (2018). Book Review. *Balint Matters: Psychosomatics and the Art of Assessment*, by Jonathan Sklar, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2018, 232pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 493–497.

Abstract: Michael Balint is known to most psychoanalysts for his work using therapeutic regression as explored in his famous book, *The Basic Fault* (1968). In *Balint Matters*, Jonathan Sklar fills a gap in the literature surrounding Balint's other contributions involving the study of psychosomatics and the related "art" (as Sklar aptly calls it) of effectively assessing patients' presenting problems. Sklar's psychoanalytic heritage and involvement in the British Independent Group tradition—in particular, Ferenczi's and Balint's legacy of thought—provide a deep foundation for such an endeavor. Added to his psychoanalytic lineage, which includes an analysis with Enid Balint and supervisions with Paula Heimann, Harold Stewart, and Pearl King, Sklar brings a wide-ranging experience of psychosomatic assessment to bear from his psychiatric training at Friern and Royal Free Hospitals, his psychotherapy training at the Tavistock Clinic, his positions as consultant and head of the psychotherapy department...

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9164-3>

Rothschild, L. (2018). Book Review. *The Cut and the Building of Psychoanalysis, Volume II: Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi*, by Carlo Bonomi, Routledge, London and New York, 2018, 285pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78(4), pp. 498–501.

Abstract: Following a session in which I had cried with a patient, I reflected on Irwin Hoffman's (2009) constructivist critique of clinical detachment on the part of a therapist. In that helpful paper, Hoffman considers the problem of normative detachment as stemming from a taboo on influence that is linked to the incest taboo. Hoffman adds that a fear based, avoidant detachment loses the generative possibilities found in a loving attitude and as such may foster a deadly collusion as opposed to inspiring the sort of change that allows dissociation and enactment to diminish (cf., Stern, 2010). The sense that a personal, uncertain, and heartfelt presence is central to the texture of treatment is also at the heart of Carlo Bonomi's *The Cut and the Building of Psychoanalysis, Volume II: Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi*. It is to Bonomi's credit that he weaves such clinical wisdom and technical consideration into a work that simultaneously stands on its own in advancing historical psychoanalytic...

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-018-9163-4>