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Ferenczi in Our Time and a Renaissance of Psychoanalysis - Florence International Sándor Ferenczi Conference

Introduction:

Koritar, E. (Issue Editor) (2019). **Second Florence Ferenczi Issue**. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 443–452.

Birthing New Ideas: The 13th International Ferenczi Conference, held in Florence, Italy, was a forum where scholars from different disciplines: psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, counselors, academics, psycho-historians, artists, writers—representing different orientations: classical, interpersonal, relational, object-relations, the Frankfurt School, and social sciences perspectives—connected in dialogues that bridged ideological gaps often resulting in the birth of new ideas and ways of thinking about and working with clinical phenomena. The impressive caesura of birth was experienced in the various discussion groups penetrated and impregnated with papers which had incubated in the minds of authors over three years since the last such meeting in Toronto in 2015. (For a selection of previously published papers of the Florence conference, see Koritar, [2018a](#), [b](#)) Authors representing different viewpoints joined in a whirlwind of bipartisan discourse in the caesura between often polar opposite perspectives. The joining of thesis and antithesis gives birth to synthesis. The conceptual mingled with the empirical gives rise to transcendental thought. Various polarities intermingled: Freud/Ferenczi, intrapsychic/interpersonal, Darwin/Lamarck, phylogenetic/environmental, past/present, life/death, being/nothingness, virtual/analogical, experiential/conceptual, this-or-that/this-and-that. Binaries that are entrenched in their positions attempt to elide their counterpart. It is only in the turbulence of the caesura, the gap between the polarities, that compromise and bipartisan resolution is possible.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-019-09228-9>

Borgogno, F. (2019). Sándor Ferenczi, **A Classical and Contemporary Psychoanalyst (with Particular Reference to Transference and Countertransference)**. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 453–467.

Abstract: The article intends to show how Ferenczi is a genuine precursor for many of the themes which lie at the center of the current psychoanalytic debate and, for this reason, how he is the classical and the contemporary psychoanalyst par excellence, especially by the way he has progressively understood and learnt to operate with the patients focusing on working-through the mutual feelings engendered by the therapeutic process.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-019-09222-1>

Coelho Junior, N. E. (2019). **From Ogden to Ferenczi. The Constitution of a Contemporary Clinical Thought.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 468–483.

Abstract: This paper, in its first part, offers historical and clinical research that aims to establish, in a new frame, forms of organizing psychoanalytic theories on psychopathology and its accompanying healing strategies. This new frame is based in two matrices (“Freudo–Kleinian” and “Ferenczian”) and it organizes the wide knowledge established by different authors of the psychoanalytic field. Therefore, it recognizes the innovative proposals of the last three decades as transmatricial ones, in which the Freudo–Kleinian lineage and Ferenczian lineage are recognized as supplementary dimensions. In the second part, the paper describes some possible origins of one of the most relevant transmatricial thoughts in contemporary psychoanalysis, namely, Thomas Ogden’s work. To the question of what would be the path that leads back from Ogden’s conception of “dreaming the analytic session” to Ferenczi’s final clinical intersubjective proposals, the hypothesis offered is that it passes, retroactively, through the works of Robert Langs, Harold Searles, Willy and Madeleine Baranger and Wilfred Bion.

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Kelley-Lainé, K. (2019). **Constructing Intimate Space Through Narration: Ferenczi’s Clinical Diary.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 484–493.

Abstract: Psychoanalysis is a narrative activity of a very special kind. One could even say that the method of free association is a subversive activity since its purpose is to cut through layers of previous conditioning in the effort to open new spaces in the psyche. The hypercathexis of neurotic functioning can only be transformed if new, unknown dynamics are able to emerge, and can then be invested by the subject. This process necessitates economic change—investing novel psychic functioning. Aided by personal analytic experience, the psychoanalyst’s role is to help initiate and support this subversive activity in the patient by initiating him/her into the method of free association. Difficulties arise when neither the patient, nor the analyst are comfortable with the symbolic and metaphorical dynamics of free association. Reacting to Freud’s lack of interest in an emotional analytic process with the patient, Ferenczi considered the analytical space as a mutual frame, to be transformed in and by the intimate psychoanalytical process. The author explores Ferenczi’s Clinical Diary as the construction of an intimate space through narration, attempting to discover Ferenczi’s techniques in this subversive activity.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-019-09221-2>

Koritar, E. (2019). **Working Out Phantoms in Trans-Generational Transmission of Trauma.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 494–506.

Abstract: The concept of Trans-Generational Transmission of Trauma (TTT) is explored through a clinical presentation of a young man in search of a history buried by negation, disavowal, and foreclosure of the ravages of traumatic beginnings of unwelcome children. Transmitted down the generations as phantoms buried in crypts of the psyche, they emerge generations later as holes in the self manifested as a sense of meaninglessness, alienation, and feeling outcast. Historicization of the buried past can bring symbolic representation to phantoms and disperse their influence. Social consequences of unwelcome children are discussed as some may choose violence against others as a solution to their excessive death drive.

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Ciacci, A. (2019). **The Hidden Voices: Emotional Experience and Unconscious Communication in the Analytic Space.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 507–516.

Abstract: In a previous work I tried to show how a parent's traumatic experiences can weigh on the following generations, approaching these phenomena in terms of introjection and incorporation. Traumatized patients who inherited such burdens suffered a block of their vital abilities, and are then challenged to later acquire the ability to symbolize what had remained unelaborated by previous generations. Accidental impressions, foreign to the patient's story, possibly a result of a certain pre-understanding of the patient's unconscious communications, emerge in countertransference and may reveal hitherto unexpressed dimensions, dissociated psychic areas of the patient.

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Hristeva, G. (2019). **“Primordial Chant”. Sándor Ferenczi as an Orphic Poet.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 517–539.

Abstract: Ferenczi's deviations from Freudian thinking have caused enormous controversy. This paper re-examines Ferenczi's theoretical and technical innovations through the lens of Orpha—one of his most characteristic and valuable contributions, the culmination point of his thought, and the leitmotif of his work. So far research on Ferenczi's Orpha concept has been relatively sparse and there is still much obscurity about this term that he adopted from or co-created with his “evil genius” Elizabeth Severn. The following paper will attempt to shed more light on the origin, evolution, functions, and the philosophical foundations of the Orpha concept. Along with the theoretical, therapeutic and philosophical aspects, this point of view will enable a better understanding of the poetic value and the lyricism of Ferenczi's work. Orphic harmony—the fusion of Dionysian ecstasy and Apollonian clarity into the “principal instinct of tranquility” proclaimed by Ferenczi in 1930 and into the “primordial chant of cosmic unity” (Herder), emerges as the essence of the Ferenczian work and worldview.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-019-09219-w>

Mucci, C. (2019). **Traumatization through Human Agency: “Embodied Witnessing” is Essential in the Treatment of Survivors.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 540–554.

Abstract: The importance of human relations in understanding and treating trauma is evident not only from the severity of traumatization inflicted by human agency and the dissociation that ensues from traumatic interpersonal relations, but also from the analyst’s affective participation which is essential to the reparation of the serious psychopathologies that originate in traumatization. Developing Ferenczi’s theorizations, on the identification with the aggressor, I propose that after the abuse the traumatized subject identifies partly with the persecutor and partly with the victim, which sometimes is represented by the body itself, becoming the object of the destructiveness. Such unconscious identifications are accompanied by the dynamics of experiencing complex feelings of guilt and shame (the victim side) and the aggressiveness and anger, (the persecutor/persecuting side). It was Ferenczi who first described the potential for a therapist, acting benevolently and supportively as sole witness, to create the preconditions for the patient to re-contact long-dissociated parts, thanks to the implicit non-verbal and corporal exchange, a concept which is here explained as embodied testimony/witnessing and enactment, and unconscious communication of the right hemispheres of therapist and patient.

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Juhos, C. & Mészáros, J. (2019). **Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy and its Supervision via Videoconference: Experience, Questions and Dilemmas.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 555–576.

Abstract: The patient lives in Berlin, the therapist in Lisbon and the supervisor in Budapest. Not long ago, continuous psychotherapy and supervision would have been impossible in such a setting. Nowadays, modern communication technologies via the Internet create new possibilities for patients, therapists, and supervisors. However, when we engage in psychoanalytic practice via modern means of telecommunication, we need to examine if the fundamental tenets of the psychoanalytic process are preserved. We need to think about initial assessment, about how we arrange the setting, how we work with transference and countertransference, what kinds of new forms of resistance we are facing and, indeed, how we can recognize new phenomena and handle inevitable problems. In this clinical paper, we tackle these questions in the context of three-times-a-week psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

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Ritter, A. (2019). **Escape from Traumas: Emigration and Hungarian Jewish Identity after the Holocaust.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 577–593.

Abstract: Unlike other European countries, at the turn of the 20th century, Hungary ensured complete legal and religious equality for Jews living in the country. As a result, they became strongly assimilated and identified themselves as Hungarian. Leading up to and during WWII, there was a gradual and steady deterioration of those legal and religious conditions, and the “betrayal” and persecution of Jews caused unspeakable trauma all over the world. After the defeat of the Nazis, only a small number of Holocaust survivors returned to their home country; the majority emigrated. This study provides a psychoanalytical analysis of the changes in Hungarian survivors’ psychic realities and the construction of their new identities, depending on the survival strategy they chose. The hypothesis is that the rebuilding of the demolished identity and the level of trauma elaboration depend on whether this process was done at the place of the trauma or in a different society. The study uses psychoanalytic and social psychology literature to follow the impacts of the emigration process, to draw conclusions and apply them to trauma elaboration after the Holocaust.

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Vamos, J. (2019). **A Primal Environment for a 21st Century’s “Naissance”.** *Thoughts on the Language of Tenderness in Ferenczi’s Footsteps.* *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 594–600.

Abstract: In a progressive maternity clinic in Paris, “Les Bluets”, the team and the psychoanalyst work to create a supportive atmosphere, so that the newborn infant and the new parents can receive a respectful welcome with a holding environment. The main participants around the newborn are the parents, midwives, and nurses, and the team members share their observations about how to answer the infant’s needs, and adjust and satisfy his/her comfort. This meets what Ferenczi describes as tenderness. Specific, detailed feedback is given so the experience of mother-father-baby cooperation can start to take place from the very beginning. In case the baby is left for adoption, he/she is treated with even more attentive caregiving where all the details are very important.

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Gandesha, S. (2019). **The “Authoritarian Personality” Reconsidered: The Phantom of “Left Fascism.”** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 601–624.

Abstract: This article explores the question of “Left fascism,” which emerged in relation to discussions around the Student Movement in the German Federal Republic in the crucial decade between 1967–1977. The term was originally coined by Jürgen Habermas in a lecture entitled “The Phantom Revolution and its Children” in which he suggests that the extreme voluntarism of the students could not but be characterized as “Left fascist.” Such a characterization becomes the basis for a vitally important exchange of letters between Herbert Marcuse and Theodor W. Adorno from January to August of 1969 on the relation between theory and praxis. After first sketching Adorno’s conception of the “authoritarian personality,” with the help of Sándor Ferenczi’s concept of the “identification with the aggressor,” the article proceeds to examine the exchange of the

letters between Adorno and Marcuse, illustrating Adorno's changed orientation: that "fascism" or "authoritarianism" maybe either left or right. Finally, some conclusions are drawn about the authoritarian tendencies of the contemporary Left.

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Book Reviews:

Brennan, B. W. (2019). **Book Review: *The Discovery of the Self: A Study in Psychological Cure***, by Elizabeth Severn, edited by Peter L. Rudnytsky, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2017, 149 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 625–628.

Why would the Routledge Relational Series decide to reissue a book that was originally printed in 1933 by a seemingly obscure lay analyst? The republication of *The Discovery of the Self* by Elizabeth Severn was the brain child of Peter Rudnytsky, Ferenczi scholar and historian of psychoanalysis, who has written a new introduction for the book. If the name Elizabeth Severn is unfamiliar to you, Severn was an American patient of Sándor Ferenczi, who persuaded him to experiment with mutual analysis, and appears in *The Clinical Diary of Sándor Ferenczi* (Ferenczi, 1932) as patient "R.N." Severn had already written two other books (Severn, 1913b, 1917) outlining her ideas on psychotherapy and the psychology of human behavior. Unlike her other books which had several printings, *The Discovery of the Self*, had only a single printing by Rider in 1933. In her interview with Kurt Eissler, on 20th December 1952, Severn relates how after the bombing of London in 1941, the plates for the book were destroyed, and hence there were no further printings. When I started researching Ferenczi and his patients over a decade ago, I scoured second-hand book stores for quite some time before I was lucky enough to find a copy, and with the burgeoning interest in Ferenczi and the transmission of his ideas, it is understandable that there would be interest in reissuing Severn's last publication.

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Hristeva, G. (2019). **Book Review Essay [Yes]: *Elizabeth Severn: The "Evil Genius" of Psychoanalysis***, by Arnold William Rachman, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2018, 332 pp. and ***Confusion of Tongues: A Return to Sándor Ferenczi***, by Miguel Gutiérrez-Peláez, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2018, 186 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 629–632.

The current renaissance of interest in Ferenczi follows a period of a prolonged and painful silence about this pioneer of psychoanalysis. What is more, it was a silencing. In his new book, *Elizabeth Severn: The "Evil Genius" of Psychoanalysis*, Arnold William Rachman has dedicated many pages to the silencing of the innovative and original thinker Sándor Ferenczi. What Rachman calls a *Todschweigen*, the title of chapter 7, a death by silence (following the suggestion of Vienna trained psychoanalyst Esther Menaker), was a series of decade-long, brutal actions to suppress one of the most interesting voices in psychoanalysis.

Rachman takes us on a very personal journey through his own life. Starting with the laconic statement: “I did not come to psychoanalysis easily.” (p. 2), he presents his “difficult struggle to find a home in psychoanalysis” (p. 2). The motor of this struggle was the objective to discover “an analytic experience” based on “clinical empathy, responsiveness, flexibility, and creativity” (p. 6). On this path, Rachman was very often confronted with....

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Miller, I. S. (2019). **Book Review: *The Origins and Organization of Unconscious Conflict: The Selected Works of Martin S. Bergmann***, by Martin S. Bergmann, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2017, 203 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 633–636.

One approaches *The Origins and Organization of Unconscious Conflict*, the final collection of essays by the much beloved New York psychoanalyst and teacher, Martin Bergmann, with anticipatory pleasure. For readers who do not know Bergmann, a vibrant video recording of his 100th birthday celebration at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute is available online (<https://vimeo.com/66440579>).

This volume’s title extends far beyond a classical psychoanalytic depiction of individual functioning. Tremulous with the unconscious conflictual fault-lines of psychoanalytic development, both in its discrete historical moments and diachronically across time, Bergmann’s detailed scholarly observations chart the odyssey of psychoanalysis as organization and worldview. Bergmann writes modestly, which belies the gravity of what is written....

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Rachmani, V. (2019). **Book Review: *Psychoanalysis and Architecture: The Inside and the Outside***, by Cosimo Schinaia, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2018, 296 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 637–639.

“The architect,” declares Cosimo Schinaia, “transforms emotion into form whereas the psychoanalyst transforms emotion into language” (p. 31). Not to be confused with a previous edited volume by the same name, this author, a psychoanalyst in Genoa, Italy, delves wider and deeper into a fundamental rationale for comparing the ephemeral psychoanalysis project with the concrete, yet evocative, environments that humans construct. Their goals are similar, Schinaia maintains: to synthesize the relationship between the professional and his client and to create a newer, more expansive reality than was formerly imaginable.

Unlike the concept of “applied psychoanalysis” in the arts, which Schinaia calls reductive, his investigation seeks to find psychoanalysis “implied” in architecture rather than what is “applied” to it. To do so, he freely cites philosophy, architectural history and literature, as well as the analytic canon. Included are Bion’s and Bollas’s critiques of

Freud's Roman archeological metaphor, Jung's analogy between buildings and the psyche and Winnicott's spatial concepts of the maternal holding and transforming functions....

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Zickler, E. P. (2019). **Book Review: *Mothers: An Essay on Love and Cruelty***, by Jacqueline Rose, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2018, 237 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(4), pp. 640–643.

We live in outrageous times when intellectuals are called upon to speak truth to power. Jacqueline Rose has consistently stepped forward to speak and write as a brilliant reader of psychoanalysis and a concerned citizen of the world. She has written more than a dozen books, and spoken in public and academic forums about feminism, gender and sexuality, refugees, the question of Israel and Palestine, children's literature, and has been published in the London Review of Books, the Guardian, among others. Psychoanalysis gives to her writing a kind of plumb line that reaches from the quotidian to the individual psyche, advancing a psychoanalytic tradition that began with Freud's cultural writings, one that she picks up and rescues from the dustbin of second wave feminism where psychoanalysis languished, fairly or unfairly, as an artifact of patriarchal misogyny. In this intelligent and readable volume Rose enriches both psychoanalytic thinking and the argument for political and social action on behalf of mothers.

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