



## Introduction

Edith Kurzweil

**A** great deal is being written about the early days of psychoanalysis, about the cultural and intellectual forces that both boycotted Freud's ideas and, ultimately, in a number of countries, helped to institutionalize psychoanalysis. The people who were attracted to Freud's thought were highly intelligent; they had open and speculative minds. Among them Sándor Ferenczi stood out. According to Freud's disciple and official biographer, Ernest Jones (1955),

Freud was early attracted by Ferenczi's enthusiasm and lively speculative turn of mind, qualities which had previously fascinated him in his great friend Fliess. This time, however, his emotions were less involved in the friendship, though he always took a fatherly interest in Ferenczi's private life and difficulties. Between 1908 and 1933 they exchanged more than 1000 letters [p. 55].

Ferenczi was a member of Freud's Wednesday Society. He seldom attended meetings, but neither did other members who lived outside Vienna. Jones (1955) reported that he preferred to come on Sundays for private talks with Freud. As is well known, Jones's account of the relationship between Freud and Ferenczi was somewhat skewed by his own rivalry with Ferenczi; he reported that Ferenczi was upset at not having been made President of the International Psycho-Analytical Association (p. 149); that in 1930 Ferenczi thought Freud should have been kinder to him on a trip to Sicily 20 years before; and that when

Ferenczi was being analyzed by Freud for three weeks, in 1916, while on a furlough from the army, Freud should have addressed his repressed hostility. But, as Jones also reported, they resolved these difficulties and agreed, for instance, that Ferenczi's later isolation (or occasional withdrawal) was due to concentration rather than pathology. I would add that Jones played down the intensity of the two men's involvement, which I assume the letters will demonstrate.

But rather than get into these issues, I want to stress that Freud and his disciples were learning about psychoanalysis in close interaction with one another and that they made a point of prying into personal motives. For instance, it was *de rigueur* to be totally honest on Wednesday evenings—and in all other meetings and correspondence—if only because psychoanalytic theory would be enriched with the help of these interactions, which, in turn, would be the road to the disciples' unconscious. In the process, of course, personal rivalries—first for Freud's recognition and approval and, second, for getting credit for their own contributions to the “new science”—were not always analyzed away. And neither were the cultural biases to which nearly *all* the budding analysts were prone. Here we can recall Freud's early Austrian patriotism during World War I, Wittels's (Nunberg and Federn, 1967, p. 468) comparison between the neuroses of the Viennese and Zürichers, or the methodical way the Berliners, in the 1920s, went about constructing a curriculum for candidates' training in contrast to the rather laid-back Viennese. Still, the “rivals” for the most part cooperated and stood together against the many enemies of psychoanalysis. Thus Jones (1955) would recall that “Ferenczi well remarked that if the opponents denied Freud's theories, they certainly dreamed of them” (p. 107).

It was Ferenczi who already, in 1910, at the meetings in Nuernberg, had brought up “The Need for a Closer Cooperation among the Followers of Freudian Thought and Suggestions for the Formation of an Ongoing International Organization.” This is an organization that has accepted some analysts for membership and has refused admission to others. As I have explained elsewhere (Kurzweil, 1989), for the most part questions of accreditation that often were outside the control of psychoanalysts were responsible for many of the original difficulties and the ensuing repercussions.

In any event, psychoanalytic knowledge *always* was derived from clinical observations by Freud or his disciples. He then would synthesize and would construct a succession of theories and practices that, however, had to be attuned to practical, institutional contexts and adapted to specific, immediate milieus. At the same time, local theoretical and clinical practices would have to be accepted by the international movement. When we recall the universalist aims of psychoanalysis—the

utopian promise of a liberated humanity and of the end to psychic repression—we realize that trying to harness these ideals flew in the face of the very organizations that would enable the movement to take hold. Yet the fact that the disciples kept finding more and more evidence of the manifestations, as well as the vicissitudes, of unconscious thought, and were devising means of healing analysts by turning “id into ego,” kept them going. André Haynal (1989) notes that even Ernest Jones was aware of the *quasi-religious* fervor of the “movement,” a word he placed in quotation marks:

Our would-be scientific activities . . . partook rather of the nature of a religious ‘movement,’ and amusing parallels were drawn. Freud was of course the Pope of the new sect, if not a still higher Personage, to whom all owed obeisance; his writings were the sacred text, credence in which was obligatory on the supposed infallibilists who had undergone the necessary conversion, and there were not lacking the heretics who were expelled from the church. It was a pretty obvious caricature to make, but the minute element of truth in it was made to serve in place of the reality, which was far from different.

The picture I saw, on the contrary, was one of active discussion and disagreement that often enough deteriorated into controversy; and, as for ‘orthodoxy,’ it would be easy to find any psycho-analyst who did not hold a different opinion from Freud on some matter or other. Freud himself, it is true, was a man who disliked any form of fighting, and who deprecated so-called scientific controversy on the very good ground that nine-tenths of it is actuated by other motives than the search for truth [Jones, cited in Haynal, 1989, p. 137–138].

In the early days, and to a large extent now as well, psychoanalysts tended to look for unconscious motives fueling what François Roustang called the fights for succession among the brothers after they had killed the tribal father, that is, Freud. Leaving this question aside, I have observed that this tribal fight often is around professional turf, at least now that psychoanalysis has become a respectable discipline. So, whereas in Freud’s day psychoanalysis was fighting to be established at all, we now ask *which psychoanalysis* is to dominate; what is acceptable as psychoanalysis or psychotherapy; whether or not to treat couples or groups as well as individuals; and if doing so is practicing what Freud preached or loses what he called “the gold of psychoanalysis.” And we go on to argue about how to implement specific “scientific credos” through organizations that, in turn, are entrusted with the training of candidates and thus with the future of the discipline.

Most of the technical and clinical questions which relate closely to

organizational ones and which now are being debated seriously by dedicated psychoanalysts on a number of levels, were addressed by Ferenczi, especially after he became Freud's closest collaborator after the defections of Jung and Adler. (Whereas the former to some extent had turned toward mysticism, the latter was introducing a watered-down psychoanalysis into the Viennese school system which, however, played down the role of the unconscious.) In 1983, Manes Sperber, a celebrated Adlerian, told me that Adler thought Ferenczi was the most brilliant of Freud's disciples.

Ferenczi's untimely death in May 1933—after the coming to power of Hitler and the accompanying dangers to psychoanalysis and the lives of so many of its practitioners—delayed full discussion of his contributions. That the theoretical focus then was directed toward the importance of defenses in clinical practice, and that explorations by so-called American ego psychologists followed along these lines, contributed further to the neglect of Ferenczi's own emphasis on the emotional components that link the psychoanalytic dyad. On December 25, 1929, we learn from Judith Dupont's (1988) Introduction to the *Clinical Diary*, Ferenczi wrote to Freud:

[Rather than focusing on the political problems within the psychoanalytic movement], my interest is directed toward far more important matters. Actually, my true affinity is for research, and, freed from all personal ambition, I have become deeply immersed, with renewed curiosity, in the study of cases [p. xii].

And the first diary entry, dated January 7, 1932, begins with a critique of an analyst's greeting a patient by telling him to "tell everything" as "inadequate to the highly emotional character of the analysand's communications, often brought out only with the greatest difficulty" (p. 1). Ferenczi goes into the details of the patient's possible reaction to this greeting and into the need for the analyst to be critical of his own behavior and emotional attitudes, including "even the actual existence of fatigue, tedium, and boredom at times." This theme is explored also in "Confusion of Tongues Between Adults and the Child" (Ferenczi, 1933), where he states that

the analysis of the analyst is becoming more and more important. Do not let us forget that the deep-reaching analysis of a neurosis needs many years, while the average training analysis lasts only a few months, or at most, one to one and a half years. This may lead to an impossible situation, namely, that our patients gradually become better analysed than we ourselves are, which means that although they may show signs of such

superiority, they are unable to express it in words; indeed they deteriorate into an extreme submissiveness obviously because of this inability or because of a fear of occasioning displeasure in us by their criticism [p. 226].

In this introduction, I have selected, almost at random, a few items of concern to us. I could have chosen others, such as Ferenczi's criticism of Freud's lesser interest in the therapeutic aspects of psychoanalysis and of his sometimes low opinion of patients. Whatever the issues we choose to discuss, Ferenczi still speaks to us; his concerns with the pitfalls of clinical technique still are as relevant today as they were in his lifetime.

### REFERENCES

- Dupont, J. ed. (1988), Introduction. In: *The Clinical Diary of Sándor Ferenczi*, trans. M. Balint & N. Z. Jackson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ferenczi, S. (1933), Confusion of tongues between adults and the child. In: *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. M. Balint (trans. E. Mosbacher). London: Karnac Books, 1980, pp. 156–167.
- Haynal, A. (1989), *Controversies in Psychoanalytic Method*. New York: New York University Press.
- Jones, E. (1955), *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 2*. New York: Basic Books.
- Kurzweil, E. (1989), *The Freudians*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Nunberg, H. & Federn, E. (1967), *Minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, Vol. II: 1908–1910*, trans. M. Nunberg. New York: IUP.