

Book Reviews

Australian medicine and in the history of western medicine.

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Ernst Falzeder and Eva Brabant (eds), *The correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi, volume 2, 1914–1919*, transl. Peter T Hoffer, Cambridge, Mass., and London, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996, pp. xlvi, 397, £28.50 (0-674-17419-4).

The experience of World War I has long been understood as the truly definitive experience of that generation which took part in the war; what is clear from the second volume of the Freud-Ferenczi exchange is how greatly it impacted on the Father's generation. The experience of the Hungarian psychoanalyst Sándor Ferenczi as an almost combatant is well documented here; he was billeted as a physician all over the place to serve in the rear guard with all the boredom and stupidity of that sort of role. Freud, who had three sons and a son-in-law in uniform, is clearly of the Father's generation. His letters are of interest not only because they chronicle the scholarly exchanges, but because they reveal the anxiety of daily life and its small ameliorations.

From a scholarly point of view, the correspondence is rich in its discussions of the major anthropological texts which Freud worked on during the war as well as pragmatic questions of technique. Ferenczi's discussion of his own analytic work is such that this volume serves as a natural parallel to the published clinical diaries. And the deviations from "orthodox" approaches are noted by Freud.

For me the most fascinating part of the correspondence was its tone. Only in Freud's letters with Karl Abraham, who was very much more of his own generation, does one get the bantering quality which marks an exchange between equals, equals clearly not in their position in the psychoanalytic establishment, though Ferenczi during this time was obviously the "crown prince", but in a sense of

familiarity based on trust and a common experience. Given the differences and competitions between Budapest and Vienna, given the complex and subtle shifts in Ferenczi's life course, many of which Freud too greatly opposed or too strongly advocated, this banter turns around their Jewish experience. Over and over again in this volume, the Jewishness of both men is the space which they can occupy as equals.

Here "Jewishness" certainly has nothing to do with religion or politics (i.e., Zionism) but with what one can truly describe as a hyper-ethnicity. It is a hyper-ethnicity because it is determined in this setting by a set of parallels which are in point usually taken as absolute marks of ethnic difference. Both men speak different national languages, neither one a "Jewish" language such as Yiddish. Freud speaks German; Ferenczi, Hungarian. But their Jewish experience is that of a highly acculturated, secular minority in a society which clearly had doubts about their acculturation. Ferenczi thinks about himself as a Hungarian, a Jew, and a physician (according to his own account). When one of these identities shifts, as in the collapse of the pre-war Hungarian identity in 1919, he can (he states) rely on the others. This function of an ethnic identity which spans the generation of the Father and the Sons during World War I is an important insight provided by this correspondence.

As with the first volume, this volume is the final result of a project begun by Michael Balint in the 1950s. The editing and notes are impeccable and the translation fluid. It is imperative that we continue to get such exchanges to clarify and document Freud's life and world. They will also have a wide range of other readers. When is volume three going to appear?

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