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Edited by Tihamér Bakó, Antal Bókay, Ferenc Erős (editor-in-chief), György Péter Hárs, György Hidas, Robert Kramer, Judit Mészáros, Júlia Vajda.

THALASSA is the journal of the Sándor Ferenczi Society, Budapest.

THALASSA is the title of Sándor Ferenczi's classical work.

THALASSA symbolically refers to the sea, the womb, the origin, the source.

THALASSA is an interdisciplinary journal devoted to free investigations in psychoanalysis, culture and society.

THALASSA has roots in the historical traditions of Hungarian psychoanalysis, but is not committed to any particular school or authority.

THALASSA welcomes all original contributions, historical, theoretical, or critical, dealing with the common problems of psychoanalysis and the humanities.

#### *DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT ISSUE (1999/2–3)*

#### **MAJOR ARTICLES**

##### **IVÁN LUST: Desire and Power. The necessity of a psychoanalytic critique of culture**

The three main questions of psychoanalytic cultural criticism are as follows: How does “bad” society become man’s inner nature? What in man’s inner nature adds to the building of the “bad” or even the “good” society? How do subjects and society construe each other? The author emphasizes the central role of power in the formation and deformation of subjectivity. He follows the historical process of changing roles and functions of power, surveillance and control in the life of feudal monarchies and nation states, and highlights a new form of power characteristic of modern and postmodern age, the *mutant authority*. Starting from character analysis, he constructs the concept of *identity prosthesis*, which mediates between the damaged subjectivity and the politico-economic order and consumer society. The main task of psychoanalytic cultural criticism is the critical study of the production of subjects by hidden individual, group dynamic, socio-economic and political processes. Psychoanalytic method could resist the magical practices of power in the therapeutic field as well as in other discourses. Therefore, it could deconstruct power-based political and scientific discourse, too. The author stresses the role of psychoanalysis as a technique of freedom and stresses the necessity of integration of the results of “academic” and clinical psychoanalysis.

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**JANINE CHASSEGUET-SMIRGEL: The loss of symbolic activity in Nazi thinking**

The author starts out from a current observation according to which, on many fields of contemporary culture, the border between fiction and reality is vanishing; that is, even the most cruel fantasies can be realized, and, therefore, the symbolic activity of the human psyche is lost. Afterwards, she examines the symptoms of the loss of symbolic activity in Nazi thinking, and demonstrates it through the example of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. She shows that the fantasies behind Nazi ideology are centered around body and blood. According to psychoanalysis, the body and its parts are the basis of symbolic activity. In Nazi propaganda, however, discourses on body and blood are used indirectly, without the mediation of symbols. The final consequence of the loss of symbolic activity is racism, murder and genocide.

**JULIET MITCHELL: Trauma, recognition and the place of language**

The author suggests that when an accident, event or trauma breaches the protective shield of a human being, the person is cast back on old responses to unmanageable difficulties, ones that otherwise may never see the light of day. These will be behavioral and bodily, but also linguistic – a language of imitation but also of primary process construction. Dreams work not with the logic of secondary process but by what Freud called condensation, displacement, and symbolization, and what Lacan, deploying linguistics, renamed metaphor, metonyms, and symbolization. Traumatic language, according to the author, is a verbal version of the visual language of dreams. Words are metaphors, similes, and symbolic equations. They become expressions of feeling rather than meaning.

**MARTIN WEIMER: Sándor Ferenczi's significance for a pastoral psychology**

The author argues that, in Ferenczi's work, the meeting point of psychoanalysis and religion can be found not in metaphysical heights but in psychoanalytic practice. The key concept here is mutuality which makes it possible to read Ferenczi from the point of view of a (mainly Lutheran) Christology. According to the author, Ferenczi was the first psychoanalyst who identified, as a therapist, with the role of the "pastor" who has to save the stray lamb. The author demonstrates – through fragments of case histories – the significance of Ferenczi's stance for a modern pastoral psychology.

**TEN YEARS OF THALASSA**

In this section we publish articles that have been commissioned on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the founding of our journal.

The first of five short articles is entitled **Gleaning in Thalassa**, by ÁGNES HELLER. In it she analyzes the relation of writing, remembering and

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incorporation for the narcissistic narrator of Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, who, unable to have real affects, is overexcited in love or hate, but only for a few minutes. MIHÁLY VAJDA's **Fate or redemption** deals with the shock of contingency in Central and Eastern Europe as experienced from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Following Nietzsche, he says that the only acceptable answer to this shock is to accept life as it is. But is it a necessary consequence of this attitude to accept all the horrors belonging to human existence? The author says no. ANDRÁS KARDOS's article, **The Space of Homogeneity**, is on the struggle within Lukács's writing on consonance and dissonance, homogeneity and heterogeneity, a struggle that leads to the idea of culture concentrated into the microcosm of a piece of artwork. BÉLA BACSÓ's article bears the title **Ferenczi and Kafka**. On the basis of Ferenczi's concept of Thalassal regression, the article explores Kafka's inability, even in his love relation, to turn to the Other: that is, his fear of real devotion. Against Canetti, the author understands Kafka's problem as much deeper than merely a fear of impotence – it is an incapacity for real human feelings.

#### FERENC JÁDI: *Regressionszug in Thalassa*

Certain ideas of Ferenczi cannot be understood from the Hungarian version of his writings. Through rewording of Freud's text, Ferenczi invents several new concepts that can be understood only through a hermeneutic analysis of his statements. Taking a novel approach to human sexuality, Ferenczi's notion of "Thalassaler Regressionszug" is a forerunner of self-psychology. According to Ferenczi, if we consider Mother as the symbol of the sea, we arrive at an understanding of sexuality that is based on an encounter between two adult persons. In contrast to the traditional ego-psychological view, in which sexual intercourse is interpreted as a sale and purchase – a "psycho-economical" exchange of sorts – the approach of Ferenczi enables us to interpret mature love and sexual intercourse as "beyond morality" – in other words, as a gift.

#### NICHOLAS RAND: *Talking cure and psychoanalysis*

Talk therapy, foreshadowed in a prescient essay in 1857 by Jacob Bernays (the uncle of Freud's wife, Martha), was not invented by psychoanalysis – although Breuer and Freud created the modern idea of psychotherapy in *Studies in Hysteria* (1895). Today, talk therapy rests on the need to give a name, and thus the right to exist, to nameless desires, undisclosable secrets and wordless hurts. As Ferenczi observed, and Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok have elaborated, the analytic dialogue needs to be a collaboration, an interpersonal exchange, if real contact is to be made with the painful silences and unburied dead that continue to haunt patients.

We also publish here congratulatory letters from György Vikár, Judith Dupont, Livia Nemes, Nicholas Rand and Judith Valk.

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## HUNGARIAN PSYCHOANALYSTS IN NORTH AMERICA

We are starting a new series in this issue that deals with the life and work of eminent Hungarian psychoanalysts who emigrated to North America. We first present Robert C. Bak's life and work.

### **JUDIT MÉSZÁROS: He was born to become a world citizen... (Portrait of Robert C. Bak)**

Judit Mészáros presents Robert Bak's life and career from his birth in Budapest until his death in Washington DC, drawing on documents and interviews she made as a fellow at the WWC and the RSS of the Open Society Institute. Robert Bak is one of the well known representatives of the emigré generation of the Hungarian psychoanalysts who settled in the United States just before World War II began. The paper shows the history of Bak's family and reveals the psychic development of Robert, the third of the Bak brothers. The essay shows how Robert became a uniquely self-ironic, passionate, and romantic man – as well as a bon vivant, intellectual and citizen of the world. The author integrates Robert Bak's personality with his contribution to the theoretical questions of modern psychoanalysis, mainly the dynamics of aggression, psychosis and perversions.

### **ROBERT C. BAK: Being in love and object loss**

The emotional state of being in love, according to Bak's formulation, is often preceded by separation or by an important object loss – real, imaginary or threatened – or by one of the numerous losses of object representations that lead to melancholia. In melancholia, however, the lost object may be regained by identification, or, as Freud put it, “love escapes extinction” by regressing to narcissism. On the other hand, writes Bak in this influential article, the person who suffers from “being in love” finds the substitute object: the loss is undone and the object is replaced or resurrected. Yet, in some instances, where the attempts to substitute another love object proves unsuccessful, love may turn once gain into acute melancholia and even suicide, as in the case of the great Hungarian poet, Attila József, whom Bak treated but who later committed suicide for unrequited love.

## WORKSHOP

### **GÁBOR KATONA: Psychoanalysis and the Age of Printing**

The paper focuses on insights that the communication-technology paradigm has to offer to psychoanalysis, and vice versa. The communication-technology paradigm is based on the assumption that means and methods of information storing, processing and transmitting have had a decisive influence on the cognitive, reflective structures and capacities of human agents. The communication-

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technology paradigm distinguishes four epochs in the history of communication: orality, literacy, the age of printing, and secondary orality; and it associates specific cognitive structures and self-reflective forms with each epoch. To each epoch belongs a given model of consciousness. The paper highlights features connected with the age of printing and their relation to the emergence of the unconscious.

## ARCHIVES

### ROBERT KRAMER: **Otto Rank and the “cause”**

Beginning in 1973, with the publication of Ernest Becker's *The Denial of Death*, a renewed interest has developed in understanding Otto Rank's dazzling post-Freudian writings, which served as the major inspiration for Becker's Pulitzer-prize winning book. Since then, previously unknown historical evidence has been published to show that Rank, who was for two decades Freud's "favorite son" and, in the early Twenties, Ferenczi's closest collaborator in advancing psychoanalytic practice, is the most important precursor of three major schools of modern psychotherapy: humanistic, existential and object-relational. But few students of psychoanalysis have recognized that Rank's post-Freudian writings on art, creativity, religion, quantum physics and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle – published between 1929 and his death in October 1939, one month after Freud's death – are astonishingly *postmodern* in text and subtext. This article provides a close reading of Rank's most uncanny postmodern writings on biology, the birth trauma, sexuality, God, femininity, spirituality and the unconscious. Kramer points to some remarkable affinities between Rank and Lacan, who commented favorably on the profound existential meaning of *The Trauma of Birth* in a 1938 article. Citing Rank's little-known *Beyond Psychology* (1941), as well as a previously unpublished note found in Rank's papers, Kramer also shows that underlying the manifest content of Freud's scientific materialism and militant atheism was a profound latent religious belief, which Freud perversely refused to analyze, just as he adamantly refused to analyze the painful anxieties and terrors in his own pre-Oedipal unconscious.

We accept contributions in Hungarian, English, German or French. Authors are requested to provide their papers with an English and/or Hungarian summary. Original articles, reviews, reflections, and suggestions should be sent to Dr. Ferenc Erős, Institute for Psychological Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Victor Hugo u. 18–22, H–1132 Budapest. Phone/fax: (36–1) 239–6043. E-mail address: thalassa@c3.hu and feros@mtapi.hu

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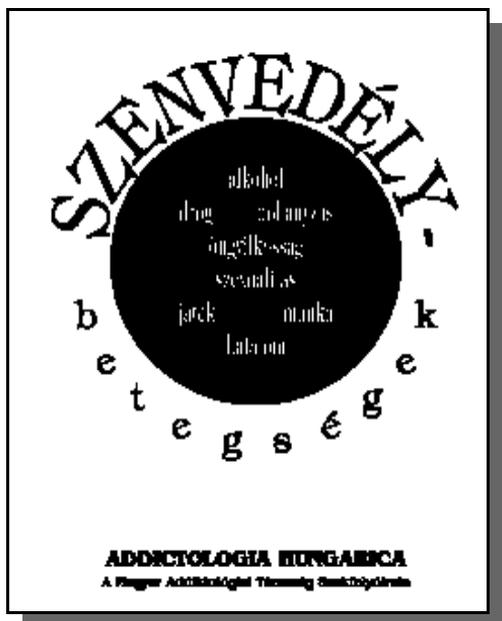
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