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Love Stood Between Him and Freud Review of Izette de Forest *The Leaven of Love*

Erich Fromm
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Review „I. de Forest *The Leaven of Love*“: Love Stood Between Him and Freud, in: New York Times (07 August 1955).

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Sigmund Freud had the tragic fate of seeing some of his most gifted pupils (Adler, Jung and Rank) leave him and become the leaders of rival schools. These men may have been the most ambitious of his followers, those most eager not to stand in Freud's shadow any longer; they were also original and active thinkers who saw some of the weaknesses of Freud's system and pointed to new roads in theory and therapy.

Only one of Freud's early collaborators did not leave the master, though he criticized and deviated essentially: he was Sandor Ferenczi. Since he is not the leader of a new school he is also much less known than the other three dissenters, which is regrettable, since Ferenczi, especially in the last years of his life, made one of the most significant contributions to the development of psychoanalytic therapy. We warmly welcome, therefore, the present volume by Izette de Forest, one of Ferenczi's students, who gives a picture of Ferenczi's ideas in the last period of his life. Ferenczi himself never did record these ideas systematically. The central issue in Ferenczi's deviation from Freud is the relationship between analyst and patient. In Freud's view this relationship had to be absolutely neutral and impersonal. The analyst had to be like a mirror, showing himself as little as possible to the patient: his relationship to a patient had to be one of scientific detachment, devoid of any kind of emotional participation. Freud believed that only under these conditions could the reaction of the patient to the analyst clearly show those earlier, irrational expectations, fears and desires which the patient „transfers“ upon the analyst. If the analyst was a reality rather than a blank mirror, so Freud reasoned, how could one ever recognize the patient's unconscious in his transference relationship to the analyst?

Whatever the merits of Freud's ideas were, Ferenczi became more and more convinced that Freud's view was wrong in this respect. He came to believe that the indispensable healing power in the therapeutic gift is love. In personal discussions with Mrs. de Forest, Ferenczi formulated his new principle in this way: „Psychoanalytic 'cure' is in direct proportion to the cherishing love given by the psychoanalyst to the patient: the love which the psychoneurotic patient *needs*, not necessarily the love which he thinks he needs and therefore demands.“

The implication in this formulation is a concept of love that differs from Freud's.



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For Freud love was essentially a more or less direct outcome of the sexual instinct; for Ferenczi love in this context is akin to tenderness and motherly love.

Since the time Ferenczi arrived at his new insight a number of other psychoanalysts have arrived at similar results. Harry Stack Sullivan in his definition of the analyst's role as a „participant observer“ took a decisive step beyond Freud. Others came to see that Freud's neutrality often amounted to indifference and a lack of relatedness to the patient. This blinded the analyst in his insight into the patient's problems rather than helping him to see more clearly.

The author of „The Leaven of Love“ does more than describe Ferenczi's new principle of therapy. She herself has developed it further and presents us with sensitively grasped and clearly written clinical material centering around the patient-analyst relationship. And she describes the role of love, anger and fear in the unfolding of this relationship. Her book is a significant contribution to psychoanalytic literature, but beyond that, of significance to anyone concerned with the power of love in human relations.