

# Understanding Salomo Friedlaender's Creative Indifference: A Psychotherapy Case-Study

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## Abstract

Salomo Friedlaender's Creative Indifference, or *Schöpferische Indifferenz*, first published in 1918, is a founding philosophy of Gestalt therapy that has invaluable implications in the process of psychopathology in the psychotherapeutic process. This article features a psychotherapy case study of a client who has been diagnosed with Major Depression and Atypical Anorexia Nervosa. The case story is written by the therapist using Therapeutic Autoethnography, a method of inquiry into the psychotherapeutic process. Writing this case study in an evocative aesthetic form, the understanding of Creative Indifference is fleshed out and enriched. Story and theory are inter-woven reflexively to illuminate how aspects and meanings of Friedlaender's philosophy of Creative Indifference, the centering in the here-and-now, the fertile void and zero point, apply to the real-life, naturalistic situation of psychotherapy practice. Though the case study details but a portion of the client's work, one can grasp the atmosphere from which the client's pathos is made visible. Creative Indifference facilitates this process of psychopathology in a powerful way, expanding our understanding of suffering beyond the traditional attitude of clinical diagnosis.

*Keywords:* Salomo Friedlaender, Creative Indifference, Psychopathology, Psychotherapy case study, Gestalt therapy

## Introduction

In his book *Schöpferische Indifferenz*, philosopher Salomo Friedlaender (1918/2013) opens with<sup>1&2</sup>:

Creative Indifference, individual: please don't immediately misunderstand that first word! It does not mean an individual human being, [...], nothing individual at all, but the whole,

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<sup>1</sup>“Schöpferische Indifferenz, Individuum — bitte nicht sofort ein Mißverständnis bei diesem ersten Wort! Es ist kein einzelner Mensch gemeint, auch nicht die aus solchen Einzelheiten bestehende Menschheit, überhaupt nichts Einzelnes, sondern das Ganze, aber nicht objektiv, sondern subjektiv, ein schöpferisches Pathos, der Wille, der Entschluß, Freiheit, Exemption des „Innern“ von aller Isolation, aller Dividualität — als diese Freiheit erst befähigt zur Regierung alles Vereinzelteten, schöpferisch lebendige Identität. Allerdings, dieses kann man sich nur selber geben — aber man ist sonst nur illusorisch ein Selbst.” (Friedländer, 1918/2013, p. 89)

<sup>2</sup>At this point of writing this article, I am not aware of an English translation of the book, *Schöpferische Indifferenz*, the quotations I present here are my translated version.

but not objectively, but subjectively, a creative pathos, the will, the decision, freedom, exemption of the 'inside' from utter isolation, of all dividuality — when only this freedom enables everything isolated to be governed, a creatively living identity. [...] (O)ne can only give this to oneself — but otherwise one is only an illusory self. (Friedlaender, 1918/2013, p. 89)

In these first words, the philosopher encapsulates the essence, the meaning of, and what it means to embody Creative Indifference, incorporating philosophical concepts of 1) holism (Smuts, 1926), in “being whole”, 2) inter- subjectivity, 3) intentionality, with “the creative”, “the will” and “the decision”, 4) nondualism, with “exemption from [...] isolation”. These concepts are the foundational values behind of humanistic schools of psychotherapy like Gestalt therapy. The words, “creative pathos” hints at the link between Creative Indifference and psychopathology.

In this article, a psychotherapy case study story entitled “Stuck”, derived from a research method, Therapeutic Autoethnography, is used to provide an aesthetic medium to flesh out this otherwise abstract concept of Creative Indifference. This heuristic method (Moustakas, 1990) of research inter-weaves story and theory, harnessing the power of aesthetics to transfer information that is otherwise ungraspable with the written word alone. Through this writing, the process of psychotherapy in a naturalistic psychotherapeutic setting unravels, shedding light on the concept of Creative Indifference to the process.

### **Salomo Friedlaender and Mynona**

Friedlaender, born in 1871 in Golans, which is now Poland, was a German-Jewish philosopher and satirist who lived in Berlin where he found himself immersed in expressionist bohemian circles among artists and intellectuals. His dissertations focused on Schopenhauer and Kant. Friedlaender’s creative life shows his embodiment of Creative Indifference. The philosopher Friedlaender lived, through his writings, his alter ego, whom he named Mynona, which is the German term for anonymous (*anonym*) written backwards, who wrote grotesque and popular, avant-garde poetry and prose, with a good measure of humour. Frambach (2015) writes, “considered ‘a true polarist, he baptized himself as Mynona and made the world of the Philistines unsafe with his fried owl eggs’ (Udo Rusker)”, his famous grotesques in which he had virtuously done, for it is said that “no German-speaking author before or after him has developed the form of the grotesque to such mastery level and handled it as sovereignly as Mynona” (H. Geerken). He proves to be a “virtually circus artist” as a playful word juggler and creative letter anarchist who shakes solidified and rigid patterns of speech and thought in order to make room for new possibilities of expression to accomplish. He turns things upside down and twists perspectives in [Friedlaender’s 1922 writing] “Carnival as Logic / Fasching als Logik” (Exner, 1996). In “Trappist Strike / Trappistenstreik” (Friedlaender, 1922) for example, the strictly ascetic order of silence turns into a bawling carousing pack, where someone is “pushed back into the second dimension by overly tempestuous admirers, literally flattened”. Or “there was a silence that only two dead people can bring about with combined forces” [Friedlaender/Mynona article in *Der Sturm* 1919] in which marriage is a “wedding ring match”. His jests are satiric. In the days of pre-World War

II, Mynona warned sharp-sightedly of the emerging “swastika greenhorns” and their anti-Semitic monstrosity, prophetic of his own demise in 1946 (Frambach, 2015, p. 52).

### **Creative Indifference and Gestalt therapy**

Creative Indifference is a foundational principle in Gestalt therapy (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951). The Bohème of Friedlaender’s world, the extremely creative mixture of art, literature, humor, philosophy, politics, social criticism, science, utopia, etc., is an essential spiritual source of Gestalt therapy. This colorful, culturally diverse milieu has remained in the soul of Gestalt therapy till today (Spagnolo Lobb & Amendt-Lyon, 2003). This approach has a strong affinity with the aesthetics (Francesetti, 2019) and is in creative interaction with it, demonstrating over and again the clinical significance of aesthetics in clinical practice (Frambach, 2015, p. 51). Direct referencing of Creative Indifference in Gestalt therapy theory is, nevertheless, thin in English language circles since his books are, to date, not yet translated from German. In its place is a body of concepts like the here-and-now, the fertile void, polarities, the figure and ground, the field theory, holism, and phenomenology (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951). These are the parts that make up Creative Indifference, which is the whole that is more than these theoretical parts.

Friedlaender’s concepts of polarity and freedom in nondualism is also integral in the spiritual fields. Taoism, for instance, uses the term, *wu wei* (無為), to describe “effortless action”, Zen gives us the symbol of the *yin* and *yang*, and in Christianity is the mention of polarities in the beatitudes.

### **Method**

The case study presented in this paper is written using Therapeutic Autoethnography. Autoethnography is an already established method of qualitative inquiry (Denzin, 2013; Ellis, 2004; Poulos, 2021). In Therapeutic Autoethnography, the therapist practitioner is positioned as the Autoethnographer. The ‘field’ is defined as the therapy situation of the client in the therapeutic encounter. The field notes are the therapist’s session notes. Data comes from the field notes and the therapist’s recollection of their lived experience of the therapeutic encounter. The case study is written evocatively and reflexively in the form of an aesthetic, a story, which is an alternative to reporting of ‘objective’ facts and analyses of the situation in the therapy process, pointing towards a constructivist approach to inquiry.

This method of inquiry does not assume the promise of providing explanation of medically classified psychopathological diagnoses but offers instead a heuristic approach to 1) a “way of seeing”, of understanding, and 2) the “way of sharing” the process of uncovering, the suffering that is encased in the client’s symptoms. This process of uncovering is the process of psychopathology. Through the writing, we may appreciate the theory behind Friedlaender’s Creative Indifference, and its value in the therapeutic process.

Below is a case study entitled, *Stuck*. The actors in this case story include 1) the client, Min, 29, who is the daughter of Vietnamese immigrants who had brought her up in Russia. 2) The therapist, 42, Singaporean, and is the author of this paper. My therapeutic modality is

Gestalt Therapy. The story is told from the therapist reflexive point of view. The therapy sessions took place in Vienna where both therapist and client worked at that time.

### Case Study: “Stuck”

The leather armchair seems massive as she slumps into it. Min looks almost childlike, dangling her chunky Dr. Martens covered feet. “I just feel hopeless and devastated,” she says. “It’s my birthday today, and I thought I bought myself a gift.” That “gift”, she explains is the “gift of therapy”. I would have mistaken her for another cosplay preteen, wearing a head of neon green dreadlocks had she not revealed that today she turns 29.

“What do you do here in Vienna?”

“I work at a Konditorei<sup>3</sup>.”

“Are you studying here as well?”

“Not any more. I actually moved to Vienna for study at a university. The exams were too hard and I got stuck.” Min explains that she’s been living in Vienna for three years, shares an apartment with 3 Russian-speaking housemates and has few friends here.

This is our first moments together and I find myself mesmerized by the girl looking back at me. The small body, the square shaped face, the big head that tilts to the left as she smiles reminds me of someone familiar. Very familiar.

I ask her if there is anything that she needs to know about therapy at this point.

“Uh. This is my very first time doing therapy, and I don't know what I want.”

“How did you choose to contact me?”

“Oh... I saw in your profile that you are social, with group therapy and all... and that you were doing something cultural.”

She tells me that she is born to parents who are Vietnamese immigrants in Russia. Her parents are Vietnam-born and have moved to Russia during the Vietnam war. She tells me of how father worked “dangerous jobs” and could not be at home when she was a child. At the age of 3 to 6 years old, she was left in foster care because mother was sent back to Vietnam due to issues with her Russian visa. During those years, mother would send over cassettes with tape-recordings of herself reading, so that her daughter would not forget the sound of her voice.

“I had to think for myself,” she says, “but now, as an adult, I feel dependent.”

I am impacted by her story, captivated by her looks, and deeply curious about the way she talks; matter-of-factly, the way a precocious child would.

I become aware of the atmosphere in the room. There is a distant sound of someone practicing the piano upstairs. The gas-fired heater makes a hissing sound. I’m in this room with this girl who I have just met, and she appears oddly familiar. I decide that it is because we’re both ethnically Southeast Asian, and that we’re both foreigners in this land. As the first hour unfolds, feelings of doubt begin to creep in the room. As she sits slumped in the chair, I feel a listlessness, a boringness. I began to feel responsible for getting us out of this. I begin to doubt. I doubt about her returning for subsequent sessions or staying for long in therapy.

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<sup>3</sup> A Konditorei is a café that sells predominantly pastry in Austria.

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## The Creative Pathos

At the beginning of the story, one may have a feel how the actors entering the therapy session show up for each other, in a way of almost acting out their “roles” for the situation. The client was childlike, the therapist begins to self-doubt, assuming responsibility for the client’s listlessness. The self in roles can be interpreted as what Friedlaender calls in his opening quote, the “illusory self”. The illusory self is a self in isolation. At this point of the session, one can sense little emotional contact, though there is a yearning for it. The pre-contact describes the uneasy first moments of that therapy session.

Holding space, the therapist writes of being subjected to, a feeling of familiarity. The therapist gets in touch with something mysterious, ungraspable. She becomes aware of being in a foreign city. She feels self-doubt, lost. This is the pathos in the atmosphere that is felt as a result of this therapeutic contact. The pathos that is felt in the pre-contact, is “a creative pathos”. The “creative pathos” emerges at a point where individuals who were erstwhile strangers emerge and become real, first for themselves, then for each other.

## The meaning of Creative (*Schöpferisch*)

The German word for *creative*, that Friedlaender used as adjective for the term *Creative Indifference*, *creative pathos*, and *creatively living identity*, is *schöpferisch*. *Schöpferisch* means that which is created (in the way God creates), out of being fertile and productive. This meaning needs to be differentiated from another German word, *kreativ*, that is also translated in English as *creative*, which connotes making something up that is phantasy.

Friedlaender’s use of the term *creative pathos* describes a phenomenon that emerges. We may interpret this as an emergence of self-awareness, of being touched by that abstract “something” that is present in the therapy situation. The pathos described and felt by the therapist in the story has a dimension of what Freud (1919) describes as “the uncanny”. It is something that just happens, and it feels familiar and strange because it belongs to the inter-subjective atmosphere of the encounter. Individuals that come together in this field are subjected to this creative pathos, which is perceptible when the practitioner is intentionally attuned to it. When we can sense the pathos, we can study it, opening the possibility to approach psychopathology in the way Jaspers describes. This is an aesthetic approach to studying the pathos that belongs to the therapeutic field. While at this point, the pathos, the feeling of disquiet, seems to belong to the therapist in isolation, we are also aware that this pathos is created because of her encountering the client.

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This is to be session number 2. I clear my desk, re-filled the glass carafe with water. I look through my session notes again, as if to pick out new insights of our first session. I look up at the clock and it’s ten past the hour. She has not sent me a message to say that she would be late. With other clients, I would have called to check five minutes ago. Her no-show seemed to validate my earlier doubts. I put the session notes aside and turn on the Nespresso machine.

Half past the hour, with the second cup of espresso in hand, I send her a text message: “Hi Min, we have a session today at 4pm, and you have not shown up. I hope you are alright. Do drop me a reply.”

I take out my session notes again and prepare myself to meet the next client.

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## The Fertile Void

The center point of a circle unveils, when one looks deeper into it, the infinite center of its own, a non-place, in Greek, *ou topos*, utopia. The center is a pivot of the relationship between polar differences or extremes: of space, time, and of our emotions. This center is also termed, in Gestalt therapy, the “zero-point” and “fertile void” (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951). To have something be *fertile* is a promise of something coming to being, a creation, and as described above, not a phantasy. A *void* implies emptiness that has the potential of a vacuum to fill up. Friedlaender (1918/2013) uses the term, *das weltenschwangere Nichts* (p. 136), which literally means, “the nothingness that gives birth to worlds”, re-iterating the creative source of the center by applying it to a multitude of contexts, like: ego heliocentre, self, being, subject, individual identity, person, mind, soul, absoluteness, the  $\infty$ , will and freedom.

We can sense in this second session (which did not take place), there is a feeling of discomfort, of not knowing. The client had not shown up, which seems to have affirmed the therapist’s prejudice towards the client, that she was uninterested in therapy. This pre-judgment happens when we have nothing else, no past experiences in the relationship to draw from. We tend to make assumptions from the client’s being childlike and listless, to imagine her as being bored, uninterested, and non-committal. When such clients fail to show up for the session, their absence validates that prejudice. Prejudice, however, is a trap which causes us to get stuck in a polarity, a way of thinking, offering ourselves no other way of engaging with the situation.

Attuning to the phenomenon of the above scene, we can appreciate how the pathos is once again felt in the field, as a hopeless type of absence. The felt sense of the therapist whose client is not there, and there is no way, at that point, of making contact with her.

The therapist engages with the client by sending her a text message. In doing so, she offers the client the choice to act in a manner that is opposite of her current absence. The therapist’s presence presents the polarity of the client’s absence. In this case, absence and presence are meant literally. Somewhere pendulating between absence and presence is the zero point, the fertile void. Presence is offered to the client by the therapist in the form of a text message. The client is offered the choice to accept this invitation. The therapist’s words, “I hope you are alright” is a shift away from her previous prejudiced mindset in assuming that the client had deliberately not shown up. The therapist in turn allows herself an expansion of thought in this fertile void, a place where one stays in a state of not knowing of what will happen next. There is restless energy.

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It’s the end of my final session for the day. My phone vibrates as I pack my backpack to leave the office.

Min’s message pops up: “oh no, [a sad faced emoji] I’m so sorry. I forgot about our appointment. Can I come same time next week?”

This was the only time Min would forget a session. She would, however, often arrive late. For the first 3 months, while waiting for her, I would still expect a no-show.

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Every couple of sessions finds Min wearing a fresh new hairdo. These usually include technicolored hair-extensions intricately braided over her scalp; a process that involves her spending hours at a salon. On her lithe 5-foot frame, the resulting voluminous head of hair gives her head a size, relative to the rest of her body, the proportion of a child's. Min comes to our sessions casually dressed. Her facial features are stereotypically Asian—small eyes, thin lipped, almost invisible bleached eyebrows—which she tastefully adorns with piercings.

“I have no interest in food” is how she describes her eating disorder.

“No interest?”

“I never had.” She explains, “I take two mouthfuls and I feel bored.”

“What do you know about being bored?”

“I don't know. It's like... dad is interesting. He cooks interesting food, like shark, and he mixes different ingredients and things. Mom is a terrible cook,” she pauses, “and I have to eat!”

This exchange sets off the thread of conversation between us connecting food, parents, and boredom, which is brought up intermittently during the months of her therapy. She recalls herself as a toddler being made to sit at the dinner table with her mother for hours because she refused to eat up and clean up her plate. “The food would turn cold and look gross, and I had to put it in my mouth.” She would then stuff the food in her cheeks and dread having to face the same experience the next day again. “But to me,” she adds, “mealtimes also meant that we're together as a family,” which wasn't her experience as a child. She recalls learning what a family having a meal together was like watching television and reading story books. “I imagine myself looking into the window of such a home and imagine myself being that child. Her memories drifts to the time when she was 3 years old. “My mother did not say goodbye when she left,” she tells me, “ she called a taxi and had some bags with her. It was raining. She did not look at me when she left. All I know is that I rushed out to follow her and my aunt stopped me.” Min would not see her mother again till she was 6. During these years she would receive cassette recordings of her mother's voice telling her stories in Vietnamese. Min would listen to these tapes over and over, till she memorized everything.

When Min's mother finally returned to Russia, her father changed jobs and moved back home as well. For a couple of years, Min's parents would socialize a lot, and would tag Min along with them to late night parties, during which the child learned to “sleep with my eyes open.” During those years, her parents suffered the emotional impact of having had several stillbirths. “At least my family was together.”

Min was 12 years old when text messages popped up on her PC. They were meant for her mother, sent to her by another man. The pre-teen replied to the messages, telling the stranger to go away. Her mother subsequently left with that man. She found herself once again, at home, bereft; this time feeling the weight of responsibility for her distraught father. “I still have these fantasies,” she says. “I am a child, and I am carrying a backpack. I'm leaving home. I find myself at the platform of a train station. I wait for the train. I don't have anywhere to go, and I can't go back.”

Lost.

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Friends naturally became a constant for Min. She preoccupies herself with helping her friends through their emotional setbacks. The lives of her friends are what she brings up most of the time at our sessions. She would start the sessions with long stories about Kalya, Konstantin, Aida, Elouise and Thomas and their partners. She would ask me what I thought about them, and her conclusion would almost always be a deflated, “no matter what I do, I cannot make the world happy.”

Oftentimes, my response to her query into her friends’ issues would sound like “I don’t know” and “I’m not sure”, and I’m aware of how this mirrors her answers to my questions about her own experiences. In these sessions with Min, I too fight feelings of being lost, doubtful and bored.

Stuck.

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**What it means to be Indifferent.** Friedlaender’s (1918/2013) meaning for Creative Indifference, from his quote featured in the beginning of this article, suggests “the will, the decision, freedom, exemption of the ‘inside’ from utter isolation, of all dividuality”, to emphasize the disidentification of that which one was “pseudo-identified” (p. 555). For the therapist in session, intentionality is often required in being indifferent. Indifference often does not happen spontaneously.

Indifference is the opposite from being “uninterested”, or apathetic. In this context, indifference means to have no self-interest in the process so that phenomena can emerge from the field. In the above case study, the therapist is aware of her biases, and practiced on several occasions putting aside her own interest in having a certain type of outcome. She did not abandon the client on the second session despite her doubt, and in the following passage, we observe how the therapist forwent her impulse to get the client out of a state of impasse in the service of facilitating change.

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“I feel stuck,” Min says. She has been talking about her friends, and our conversations have not gone anywhere. “I’m still not getting anywhere.” Min looks at me, her bleached eyebrows in a frown, shoulders slumped.

I am struck by the contrast between her deflated posture, and her head of big dark brown curls. The look is endearing to me, like a rag doll with afro hair. It is now autumn, four months into our work together, and the air feels today, very still.

Stuck.

I know better now than to ask anything that would be answered with a shrug and an “I don’t know” and be silent. I’m stuck too.

“Yes,” I then say.

“It’s been a while since I came here. And I have seen many therapists,” she reveals.

I nod. In my silence, my doubts feel validated. I brace myself for something.

“I decided to see you because,” she says, her eyes turning moist for the first time since we met. She tilts her head down, perhaps in efforts to conceal her tears, “because you are the one who resembles my mother the most.”

“Oh, Min,” I say, feeling deeply touched.

The room falls silent.

I lean forward, bringing myself an inch closer to the deflated ragdoll. “Min, Min,” I say in a whisper.

She looks up.

“And I am not your mother,” I say.

She abruptly straightens up, as if startled at my words, “Oh!” She gasps.

As if we had suddenly remembered to breathe, we inhale deep breaths in unison.

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### **Centering in the Here-and-Now**

The above passage presents a thorny situation often encountered in therapy. It also demonstrates the power of centering in the here-and-now to the therapeutic process. The therapist reports of how she rigidly deflects from her own experiences through talking about the experiences of others. This ultimately led to an impasse, which is described as “being stuck”. The therapist, in holding this uncomfortable space, supports the impasse, allowing the client to find her own way out. Expressing her frustration, the client reveals how she resembles the client’s (twice abandoning) mother. This is a relevant point and considering that both therapist and client are ethnically Southeast Asian and living in Europe. This is also the real answer to the question that the therapist asked during their intake session, “How did you choose to contact me?”

The therapist brought the situation into the here-and-now by addressing the client, and firmly saying to her “And I am not your mother.”

To this, the “deflated” client eventually inhales, an approach towards a change process.

The here-and-now is the middle point between past and future. It is from this middle point of time that the relationship exists. Friedlaender refers us to the Greek pantheon of Gods, *Chronos*, being the sensing of time as linearly passing, and *Kairos*, which is the centering in the now. When we are in *Kairos*, “The full experience of the present liberates, so to speak, from the linear passage of time, which allows the open future to freeze into the past. When we are centered in the now, we experience freedom from time, [...]. This is the free time that we deeply long for, even if we are not usually aware of it: free time, guaranteed without stress and without boredom” (Frambach, 2015, p. 69).

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After the “stuck” session, Min says to me, “it is more fun to talk about my issues than about my friends, here”. She repeats about how she cannot remember having grown up, saying, “I feel that I never got to become a teenager”. That which we couldn’t work out with words—since the experience was forgotten, likely due to dissociation— we engaged with art. Through paintings and making electronic music (which I later discovered was a hobby of hers) she recreated for herself a narrative of her transition from a 12-year-old to the young woman she is today.

My stint in Vienna was up and I had to return to my home country, Singapore. Mindful of the impact of my leaving on Min’s process, we worked through our parting for 3 full months. Min seemed unperturbed till close to the final session, when she expressed regret, saying, “I cannot take you with me in my life. I mean, you are here, in this room, and I cannot show you to my friends. And sometimes I have to remind myself that you are real.”

Min still bleaches her eyebrows and has her piercings on. Her hair, however, is now worn long straight and black. She had ditched the hair-extensions and let her hair naturally grow out some weeks before. To that she says, “I wanted to see how I really look like for a change.”

I was thankful for the possibility to say goodbye, the way 6-year-old Min’s mother couldn’t. Our last session took place exactly one year after our first. It was also the week before Min’s 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. We ended a week earlier because her parents have planned to arrive together in Vienna to celebrate her birthday; together they will be a trio for the first time in 18 years.

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Wrapping up this article, my awareness shifts to something that I almost missed out; how impacted I really was by the familiarity of Min’s physical appearance. It was the resemblance to the image of my 5-year-old self in a black-and-white photograph that still sits in my mother’s photo album.

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## Conclusion

Diagnostic manuals serve to identify the psychopathology of the client, as an individual suffering in isolation, providing little else for the therapist to work on. Intentionally attuning to the phenomenon of the co-created field, with the attitude of creative indifference allows the therapist to move their gaze beyond the distraction of clinical diagnoses. Within the co-created field of the therapeutic encounter lies the creative pathos, the co-created suffering, which is perceivable in the therapeutic relationship. This sample of writing, presented in an aesthetic form, imbues with emotive, atmospheric information of this phenomenon, making the lived experience of the encounter with this pathos palpable. This type of information would otherwise not be transmittable through psychometrics, clinical diagnostics, and even qualitative psychological reports.

When we study the field in which we are of, we, as therapists can create movement. We become part of, and instrumental to the client’s therapeutic change process.

Friedlaender’s Creative Indifference makes explicit the “exemption of the ‘inside’ from utter isolation, of all dividuality”, bringing the process of psychotherapy to an elevated level, where the pathos is made graspable within the phenomenal field of the therapeutic encounter. Where there is inclusion, psychopathology in the field is part of the therapist’s subjective experience. Being actively indifferent, staying at the uneasy fertile void, the center of polarities and differences, in the here-and-now, allows for *something* to emerge. Intentional attunement to the phenomena allows suffering, which is absent, forgotten, dissociated, rejected, depressed, deflected to emerge and to be made palpable. Min’s story tells of how suffering belongs not only to the client in isolation but is integral to the therapeutic alliance. This sheds light on how Friedlaender’s concept of Creative Indifference provides for an invaluable resource, a philosophical framework that therapists can orientate themselves in.

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## Razumevanje Salomo **Friedlanderovog** koncepta kreativne indiferentnosti: psihoterapijska studija slučaja

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Afilijacija

### Apstrakt

Salomo Friedlaenderova (Friedlaender, 1918/2013) *Kreativna indiferentnost*, prvi put objavljena 1918, predstavlja osnovu geštalt terapije i ima nesamerljive implikacije na proces psihopatologije u psihoterapijskom procesu. Ovaj članak daje prikaz psihoterapijskog slučaja klijenta kome su dijagnostikovani major depresija i atipična anoreksija nervosa. Priča ovog slučaja je ispričana od strane terapeuta korišćenjem metoda terapijske autoetnografije, za istraživanje psihoterapijskog procesa. Pisanjem ove studije slučaja formom evokativne estetike,

obogaćeno je razumevanje kreativne indiferentnosti. Priča i teorija su isprepletani kako bi se osvetlio način na koji aspekti i značenja Friedlanderove filozofije kreativne indiferentnosti (Friedlander, 1918/2013) – centriranje u sada i ovde, plodna praznina, nulta tačka – primenjuju u setingu psihoterapijske prakse. Iako je u studiji slučaja prikazan samo deo rada sa klijentom, čitalac može da doživi atmosferu kroz koju klijentova patnja postaje vidljiva. Kreativna indiferentnost olakšava proces psihopatologije, šireći naše razumevanje patnje izvan tradicionalnog poimanja kliničke dijagnoze.

*Ključne reči:* Salomo Friedlaender, kreativna indiferentnost, psihopatologija, psihoterapijska studija slučaja, gestalt terapija