

## REMINISCENCES OF A PERSONAL CONTACT WITH FREUD

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My impressions of Freud, the person, do not come from those contacts an upright man makes with a colleague, as has been the privilege of others, or with a teacher in the usual sense, but they were gained from the position of an analysand. All know that in this position one is somewhat handicapped physically and emotionally in making an objective evaluation of the personality of his analyst. Bearing this in mind I shall give you a few candid camera shots of Freud the man. If they seem out of focus or lacking in perspective, remember the position from which they were taken.

My reasons for going to Freud for analysis did not include any special appreciation of his analytic contributions but rather a conscious respect for his neurological researches. I was vaguely aware of Freud's comparative anatomical studies on the medulla oblongata, and knew and prized his classical works on infantile cerebral palsies and on aphasia. I found that his interest in neurology was still alive and his questions concerning modern concepts were indicative of an excellent knowledge. A secretary at the Verlag died suddenly of a Landry's type of paralysis and he discussed it thoroughly and with great interest in the modern ideas of the syndrome. In fact, when my book appeared he pointed out the omission of several references to important classical research in neurology. Freud's biological and neurological orientation attracted me, but he several times pointed out that no knowledge of neurology could help in any understanding of practical psychoanalysis. As part of biological science psychoanalytic knowledge is, of course, intimately to be integrated with neurology as well as other fields.

I met Freud for the first time in the late summer of 1933 at his villa. He impressed me as extremely energetic, with long fingers and hands, constantly moving about. He appeared much younger than his actual age. His hair was white and sparse, beard short and well trimmed. Behind rather thick spectacles were eyes that were magnetic and gave a reassuring feeling of great kindness. Freud's manners were charming and immediately gave one a feeling of ease and security, yet his questions were direct and searching. One such meeting was sufficient to evoke a strong positive transference.

This Freud I never saw again. After two interviews and my first hour he developed an acute heart failure, pulmonary infarct and pneumonia. At his advanced age, and with this serious illness, Freud resumed analytic work in only a few weeks, but physical liveliness was gone. He walked very slowly and the abounding energy in his movements had disappeared. The next summer he moved only around the porch of his villa. Later, in discussing illness and age, he showed quite a fatalistic attitude. He indicated his hereditary longevity and sadly stated that he would have to bear the burden of living for quite a time yet. I felt that he was really tired of living and would gladly have given up.

He stated that he felt analytic progress would increase after his death and not be at all deterred. He also knew his name would be more revered after death and the psychoanalytic movement furthered, for the figure of his person as the originator of psychoanalysis would be unavailable for attack.

In Vienna, at 19 Berggasse, one saw on the ground floor a butcher shop, on the street wall of which was a simple sign "Prof. Dr. Freud." He lived on the first floor of this building for over forty years. One rarely saw his family, except Fraülein Anna who shared the same waiting room for her patients. After ringing the bell and waiting for a long time while dogs barked and growled, a polite maid ushered the analysand into a bare hallway and removed his wraps. A small waiting room, fitted with furniture apparently from the last century, was never well heated and the best of associations could be frozen in only a few minutes. On the table were ancient magazines replenished only by occasional gifts, while a small bookcase held gift volumes which the Professor found unsuitable for his own library.

Suddenly the door of the sanctum would open and Freud appeared. He first looked at his analysand and that of his daughter and then waved his hand in friendly greeting. He invariably grasped the outstretched hand only by the fingers and swept or pulled his analysand into the analytic chamber. This room always smelled musty, was well lighted by a modern indirect lamp and heated with a coal oven. On the wall were many Egyptian figures of priests. Directly through a wide opening without doors was the Professor's own study. The central attraction was the desk covered with ivory figures and relics. The walls were lined with shelves filled with reference books and sets of the Professor's works translated into numerous languages. The Professor sat in a comfortable armchair, with a footstool for his slippers feet.

His throat disease had resulted in the loss of part of his tongue so that his speech was very low. To emphasize his points in analysis he pounded the arms of his chair and often the head of the couch. When most intent and excited in an explanation he would lean forward, almost directly over the head of his patient, to whom his excitement was thus transmitted. He had a great zest for details in associations and dreams. When names of places were mentioned he would go into the library and ask to be shown the place on the map, which he would then study. He had to understand thoroughly locations and relationships of houses and rooms, frequently asking that diagrams be drawn. He opened and closed each hour with a few remarks such that the analytic situation blended imperceptibly into real life.

Into this household access by strangers was seldom obtained. No one could see the Professor without an appointment made through Fraülein Anna, after consultation with the Professor. John Gunther told me that he was unable to see Freud, although Mrs. Freud gave him an interview which he reported in *Cosmopolitan*. She reminded him of "old lace and lavender." The Professor's wife was rarely visible except with her companion.

There was no legitimate excuse for absence from hours even on the coldest days. During the socialistic uprising, when Vienna streets were barricaded with

barbed wire and patrolled by armed soldiers, some way had to be found to get to Freud's house. Vacations were infrequent, just the legal holidays and a few days at Christmas. Freud worked constantly from September to August and rarely took more than one day away from work.

The Professor was greatly concerned about the caliber of analysts, hoping that the oncoming generation of students would be interested not because of their own needs but because of the work itself. That wish has certainly been realized in this country. He believed that personal analysis was necessary as preparation for analytic work but indicated that rare, very normal individuals, like Abraham, could do without. He strongly urged, not fractional analysis, but a return for a renewed analysis after five year intervals.

So far as the caliber of analysts was concerned, Freud at least believed they were better than at the beginning of the movement. For Adler he had absolutely no use, explaining that he had to make the best of those co-workers available at the time. He had nothing but good to say about Rank—his imagination and brilliance—but simply stated “he was a naughty boy.” Bitterness regarding Jung was always apparent and extended from the person to his people. The details of Jung's defection are well known, but perhaps less well known is the fact that Freud remembers Jung telling him of a personal dream six months before his overt antagonism came to the surface. The Professor stated that he should have known from this dream what was to happen.

Freud did not forget or forgive easily. His attitude to Americans dated from his visit to this country with Putnam in 1909. He was successful in explaining analysis and convincing people of its importance, but was unhappy and sick here. “That's too bad” still rang in his ears twenty-five years later, for this expression and nothing more was all he received while suffering from intestinal cramps at Putnam's Adirondack camp. Probably Jung's letters from America to him several years later helped, for then Jung found that soft-pedaling sexuality helped him in disseminating interest in analysis. Freud could not tolerate this disguise, which Americans apparently needed then.

The black days of the socialist massacre were filled with uncertainty. Dolfuss at the behest of the Church had removed his only bulwark against the Nazis and no one could know what would happen to analysis. The Professor did not want to leave his home. A more jittery time was experienced when Dolfuss was assassinated. Freud then stated that if the Nazis came in he would go to Verona, Italy. He felt that the only liberal European countries were England, France and Italy. Italy, of course, he loved because there he went for many vacations. But nothing came of it and Freud stayed too long.

Freud's pleasures were numerous and his hobbies entrancing. His life was, as most of ours, pretty well laid down in pattern and custom. Saturday night card games with three old cronies who had played with him for decades were the rule. In fact, when Königstein, the ophthalmologist to whom Freud first suggested the use of cocaine for ocular anesthesia, died, his place in the card

game was taken by another Königstein. The hours I have spent at bridge didn't seem so wasted after hearing this. Freud believed the card game saved his life. For months he suffered from intractable headaches for which no cause could be found. Suddenly he discovered that the headaches were milder on Sunday than on any other day. Each night he worked in his study but Saturday night the card game was in session elsewhere. Freud surmised that the headaches came from the study. Subsequent investigation disclosed a small leak in a gas pipe in the study which had been giving him a chronic carbon monoxide poisoning.

Another technical device which the Professor used was the telling of stories so sharply pointed that they accentuated the value of his interpretations. I shall give you one example. Speaking of using substitute gratifications Freud told the following story. "A man took his little boy to hear a most marvelous instrument played, something he had never heard before. The most beautiful sounds would come out of this air blown instrument. The little boy went to hear the performance with his father, who exclaimed after the first notes: 'There, doesn't it sound just as if he were playing a violin?' The little boy said, 'But Papa, why don't we go and hear a real violin played?'" These stories seemed to be endless and stored each for a specific occasion.

The problem of lay analysis was brought into discussion by my reading his book. I was forced to admit that nothing I had known medically or neurologically had helped me in understanding at least the Vienna point of view. I think it has been pointed out adequately elsewhere that in this country such a statement would not hold. The swing of analysis is to fields of medicine and biology so certainly that lay analysts, with the exception of those working with children, would be left far behind.

The Professor commented on the problem of part-time analysts—those who can do only two or three cases at a time. His opinion was that such people can never really become analysts—that one must be constantly attuned to the unconscious and not have to focus back and forward, like a presbyopic person, from purely conscious problems to those of the unconscious.

He would never accept the belated half recognition in Viennese medical circles that Freud himself was a genius but that his followers went too far. He interpreted this only as a displaced resistance against analysis. I found it true that lay Viennese were much more Adlerian minded and knew less about psychoanalysis than individual psychology. To criticisms leveled at him for the death instinct theory, he pointed out it was definitely labeled as speculative and one that he was least pleased with. Yet he used it in his language.

My impressions of Freud are, of course, of the man in his life's last decade. They may not hold for his younger days. I was struck by his warm, gentle and kindly manner in personal contact, but as a contrast was his extreme intolerance for intellectual mediocrity.

Freud never overcame the trauma which antisemitism brought upon him. In reading "Moses and Monotheism," after hearing his personal views, I am con-

vinced that he unconsciously felt he was a new Moses come to lead the people out of another bondage. The actual realization of failure in Vienna and the world at large for this generation must have been a great disappointment to him.

His living presence among analysts resulted in a continued recapitulation of an attitude based on Freud's own experiences during the development of psychoanalysis, like a religious ritual the meaning of which has long been forgotten and the necessity for it long passed. The isolationistic tendencies of the Viennese analysts, while not entirely directed by Freud, was evidence of an inbred group about him. The supposed danger to analysis from opening its borders has been shown to be nonexistent. In fact, a free traffic in this country, especially in Chicago, has benefited psychoanalysis as well as medicine and biology.

One day after an analytic society meeting I described with great surprise how one of the distinguished members entered into a heated, quite emotional, argument. Freud answered, "Why be surprised? Analysts are still human and possess emotions." So I have tried to point out to you examples of Freud, the man, in life, and indicate certain facets of his personality which I believe detracted not one whit from him but serve only to bring him out of the range of the ambivalent awe of unapproachable genius into the place of a human, possessing one of the greatest minds and insight the world has ever known. Psychoanalytic science will be much more progressive and productive in the way Freud himself would have wished if we do not deify him and deny him the human privilege of error.