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WHAT IS THIS PROFESSOR FREUD LIKE?

A Diary of an Analysis with Historical Comments

Edited by

Anna Koellreuter

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SERIES EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Anna Koellreuter does not know that back in 2007 she cured me of a very frightening anxiety attack!

In the middle of a transatlantic crossing, the airplane on which I travelled encountered tremendous turbulence. The plane began to bump up and down, quite frighteningly—so much so that the cabin crew had to strap themselves into their seats. A number of passengers made increasingly audible noises, some crying out, "Oh, God ... Oh, God!" As we jolted in our seats, I had to entertain the possibility that we might well crash.

Sitting alone in the back row, I decided that I could either subject myself to every nuance of the turbulence, or, I could reach into my carry-on luggage and choose something interesting to read in the hope of distracting myself. Happily, I had brought with me a copy of the newly published issue of the journal *Psychoanalysis and History*; and, intrigued to know that a psychoanalyst in Switzerland had just published a paper about her grandmother's analysis with Sigmund Freud, I began to read Dr Koellreuter's publication.

Within minutes, I found myself creatively transported to Vienna, 1921, and I proceeded to read with increasing interest Anna Koellreuter's account about how her grandmother, described in that article solely

by the initial "G.", had travelled from Switzerland to undertake approximately four months of six-times weekly sessions—roughly eighty in all—with the father of psychoanalysis. Before long, the jerky movements of my British Airways flight no longer troubled me, and I became enraptured by Dr Anna Koellreuter's accomplished prose (rendered beautifully into English by Dr Ernst Falzeder), and by the privileged opportunity to hear Freud speak in such a vivid manner.

So, I owe Dr Koellreuter a huge debt of thanks for helping me to navigate a rather terrifying experience!

Not long after the publication of her journal article, Koellreuter produced a full-length book about her grandmother's diary, which appeared first in German (Koellreuter, 2009) and then in French (Anna G., 2010), each of which I read with fascination, never suspecting that only a few years' hence, we would have the opportunity to publish an English-language version of her wonderful contribution to psychoanalytical scholarship.

As historians will know only too well, many of Freud's former patients have written book-length memoirs about their experiences in analysis, which include the charming and engaging autobiography by the American psychoanalyst Dr Abram Kardiner (1977), *My Analysis with Freud: Reminiscences*, as well as the more sceptical tribute by the American psychiatrist Professor Joseph Wortis (1954), *Fragments of an Analysis with Freud*, and many others to boot (e.g., H.D. [Hilda Doolittle], 1956; Dorsey, 1976; Pohlen, 2006), not to mention the shorter accounts provided by Professor Paul Roazen (1995) in his book *How Freud Worked: First-Hand Accounts of Patients*. But in spite of the tremendous value afforded by these publications, many composed decades afterwards, few accounts have the immediacy of the diaries of Anna Koellreuter's grandmother, whose name can now be revealed in full as Dr Anna Guggenbühl.

Reading through Dr Guggenbühl's diary, one senses that, like many a dedicated analysand, she attended each of her sessions and then, afterwards, might have popped into a local *Kaffeehaus* in order to jot down some of her thoughts, her free associations, her dreams and, of most importance, Freud's words, in as much detail as she could remember. Thus, this extraordinary book grants us the rare opportunity to hear Freud speaking to a patient directly, offering us one of the best glimpses into how he actually talked, how he formulated interpretations, and how he worked in the transference.

Throughout the diary, we obtain a rich glimpse into the nature of psychoanalytical conversations in the early 1920s and into the range of techniques which Freud employed. Certainly, we know that Dr Guggenbühl spoke extensively about her dreams, and shared many intimate details with Freud; we also come to learn that both Freud and Guggenbühl discussed sexuality and bodily functions with great frankness, covering such topics as masturbation, genitalia, urine, faeces, and semen. One cannot quite imagine any other setting in which a young female physician could speak about these matters in such a direct fashion with a much older man.

In terms of technical interventions, Freud certainly privileged the interpretation, sharing both genetic interpretations about the meaning of past events in the patient's life, as well as transference interpretations, explaining her material in terms of the psychoanalytical relationship. But he also asked the patient direct questions; he analysed her dreams; he interpreted resistance; he forged links between sessions, cross-referencing material; he formulated constructions and reconstructions; he made clarificatory comments and provided explanations; and he offered didactic instruction in the symbolism of dreams, *inter alia*. One might assume that Freud also utilised silence—the very bedrock of clinical practice, both then and now—although in the diary, we cannot, of course, hear Freud's silences as palpably as his words. Thus, we form a picture of Freud as an accomplished conversationalist who covered a broad range of topics in a wide variety of styles, eliciting compelling free associative material, dream material, sexual material, and early memories, in a fluid fashion.

Above all, we have the opportunity to observe Freud making "classical" connections, interpreting lovers in adult life as reincarnations of the patient's father and brothers. Clearly, the interpretation of oedipal material takes pride of place.

Modern readers of this nearly century-old diary may enjoy the experience of watching Freud making a host of astute interconnections, but from the comforts of our chairs nearly one hundred years later, we can, from time to time, assume the role of posthumous supervisor, and wonder whether Freud missed out on the meaning of certain pieces of the patient's material. For instance, in extract 20, Dr Guggenbühl made a reference to "an elderly gentleman", of whom she wrote, "it was as if he knew about everything". Although referring, ostensibly, to a man acquainted with her boyfriend, one wonders whether this remark might

represent a piece of transference to Freud, the elderly, omniscient man, who understands it all. Indeed, this diary entry precedes the patient's declaration of love for Freud's genius not long thereafter. Perhaps Freud did make such a transference interpretation, although the diary does not provide evidence one way or the other.

Anna Guggenbühl's text has also furnished us with other snippets of fascinating information. For instance, we encounter a reference to "Leporello", the character from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*, provided by the ostensibly non-musical Freud. Additionally, we learn that Freud did not have an entirely soundproof office; and in extract 35, dated 26th April, 1921, Guggenbühl reported that while sitting in Freud's waiting-room at the Berggasse, she could hear a patient, then in session, talking about chorophyll! It would be hugely tempting to identify this chorophyll-speaking patient as Arthur Tansley, the English botanist; but it seems that he did not begin his analysis with Freud until some months after Guggenbühl had completed her own treatment (e.g., Cameron and Forrester, 1999, 2000).

Above all, we learn yet again how closely Freud paid attention to his patient's discourse, relishing the detail of Dr Guggenbühl's communications. Thus, the precancerous Freud who emerges from this diary might be described as a very alert, very awake, and very alive Sigmund Freud. Indeed, sharing yet another family memory, the editor and granddaughter Anna Koellreuter has written: "My mother remembers a remark of my grandmother that it was Freud's presence, his being in the same room, above all, that had been effective; words were only of secondary importance". Perhaps Freud might be considered a relational psychoanalyst after all, who used his presence and his personality, as well as his extraordinary capacity for metaphor, symbolism, and interpretation, to forge meaningful communication with his patients.

We sense that the analysis proved helpful to Dr Guggenbühl and that as it neared its ending, she began to dread the termination of what we would now regard as a relatively short duration of treatment. In one of the last extracts, Dr Guggenbühl reported a dream, of which she wrote: "Fr. has stolen something". Might this be a reference to the patient's thought that Freud had taken away something very precious from Guggenbühl, having previously arranged to end her treatment entirely just prior to his summer holiday?

Not only does Anna Koellreuter's edition of her grandmother's diary contain a carefully translated, edited, and annotated text along

with beautiful photographs of her family, as well as a reproduction of one of Freud's letters; but, also, we have the benefit of Koellreuter's own reminiscences and contextualisations. Koellreuter writes as both a loving granddaughter and as an experienced psychoanalyst, offering her own understanding of Freud's clinical technique. I particularly valued Koellreuter's classification of Freud's approach to the formulation of interpretations: "First, they are suggestive and leading; second, they are symbolic; and third, they are reductive". Modern practitioners might approach the formulation of an interpretation with more delicacy and diplomacy and, perhaps, with less certitude; but one suspects that without Freud's pioneering approach to the rendering of the interpretation, our contemporary psychoanalytical discourse would be much poorer indeed.

As a welcome bonus, Koellreuter has commissioned three excellent chapters which complete the book, each written by intellectually robust and historically rigorous Continental psychoanalytical scholars: Professor Karl Fallend, Dr Ernst Falzeder (who had translated Koellreuter's original paper into English), and Professeur André Haynal.

First of all, Karl Fallend offers us a detailed contextualisation of the social and political climate at the time of Freud's analysis of Guggenbühl. Through his deft chapter, we learn of Freud's reliance on the fees of foreign patients who paid in Swiss francs or American dollars, which helped Freud to feed his family in the wake of the *Weltkrieg*. We also learn how Guggenbühl arrived in a post-war Vienna full of possibility, at a time when the feminist movement had begun to flourish, and when psychoanalysis became increasingly professionalised, institutionalised, and internationalised.

Ernst Falzeder has written a characteristically elegant chapter which surveys Freud's approach to clinical technique. Underscoring that Freud never succeeded in writing a comprehensive textbook of clinical rules, diaries such as Guggenbühl's assume a great importance in helping us to reconstruct his technical approach. Astutely, Falzeder underscores that this diary holds an important place as it constitutes one of the only detailed sources of Freud's working method prior to the onset of his cancer in 1923, which resulted in audiological problems for the founder of psychoanalysis. Reviewing Freud's many technical deviations (ranging from serving food to the "Rat Man", to offering money to Bruno Goetz, to walking round the Ringstraße with Dr Max Eitingon), Falzeder reminds us that for Freud, "It almost seems as if with him,

these aberrations were not the exception, but the rule". Yet in spite of Freud's propensity for stretching his own rules, the Guggenbühl diary does, however, by contrast, provide us a glimpse of the more classical Freud who simply sat in his chair, "like an old owl in a tree" (H.D. [Hilda Doolittle], 1945, p. 85), rendering interpretations of dreams.

The book concludes with a helpful essay by André Haynal, a veritable *doyen* of Freud history, who has written a detailed study of the texture of Freud's work with Guggenbühl, underscoring how he helped his patient to feel understood and how he assisted Guggenbühl in broadening the focus of her analysis from her initial concerns to more characterologically-orientated issues.

It gives me great delight that English-speaking students of Freud and psychoanalysis now have the opportunity to enjoy this important primary document, presented in such a scholarly fashion; and it brings me much pleasure that we can include this volume in our "History of Psychoanalysis Series". Dr Anna Koellreuter could well have kept this private family diary under wraps for decades to come, but thanks to her generosity of spirit, those of us who still wish to learn from Sigmund Freud can now do so even more fully.

Professor Brett Kahr.
Series Co-Editor.
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