

On Freud's 'The future prospects of psycho-analytic therapy'

Dear Guests, dear Colleagues

I would like to give my warm thanks to the Madrid Psychoanalytic Association and its President Luis Martín Cabré, who have invited me to say a few words on this wonderful occasion.

The reason for today's event is the hundred-year existence of the International Psychoanalytical Association, which was constituted on 31 March 1910 in Nuremberg, Germany, through the adoption of by-laws drafted by Sándor Ferenczi at the 'second private congress of psychoanalysts'. Under the last item, number 11, on the Congress agenda, Ferenczi first gave a lecture entitled, 'On the necessity for closer integration of the followers of Freud's theories and some proposals for founding a permanent international organisation'. In the meeting minutes[1] (reporter Otto Rank, Vienna), it states: 'In the following discussion the proposal is ratified in principle by the majority, the draft by-laws are accepted with a few modifications, and the International Psychoanalytical Association is constituted. Elected as President is the lecturer Dr. C. G. Jung (Zurich-Küsnacht), who nominates Dr Frank Riklen (Zurich) as Secretary'.

Agenda items 1–10 were all devoted to scientific papers, beginning with Freud's opening lecture 'The future of psycho-analytic therapy' and further contributions by Dr. Marcinowsky, Holstein, Dr. Alfred Adler, Vienna, and Dr. Wilhelm Stekel, Vienna, among others. So a single day included eleven lectures, the founding of an 'international committee for collective research in the field of symbolism in dreams and neuroses' and the constitution of the IPA. Psychoanalysts have obviously always worked very hard. The varied range of lecture themes is impressive. Every participant felt like an explorer in undiscovered regions, such as infantile sexuality, psychoanalysis and other treatment methods in neurological practice, paranoid delusion formation and dream symbolism. It is surprising and irritating to read agenda item 7, a lecture by Dr. C. G. Jung entitled 'Report from America'. Otto Rank summarised: 'The lecturer sees in the psychological uniqueness of the American some traits that point to the repression of sexual energy. The reasons for this are primarily to be sought in his coexistence with the Negro, which operates a suggestive effect on the laboriously tamed instincts of the white race. This therefore necessitates strongly apparent defensive measures that emerge in the characteristics of Americanism'.[2]

In the prelude to the 'Nuremberg Congress', there had been a lively correspondence between the key protagonists concerning the selection of lectures and the constitution of the IPA. Binswanger's lecture was evidently not accepted. On account of a further trip to America, there was a risk that Jung would not return in time for the Congress.

On 5.2.1910, Ferenczi wrote to Freud: 'I do not think that the $\Psi\alpha$ worldview leads to democratic egalitarianism; the intellectual elite of humanity should maintain its hegemony; I believe Plato desired something similar'.[3] On 8.2.1910, Freud replied as follows: 'You should not be surprised if in my Nuremberg lecture [The future prospects of psycho-analytic therapy] you again hear your thoughts and even some of your formulations ... I have a decidedly obliging intellect and I am very much inclined toward plagiarism. I myself, meanwhile, have surely already made the analogy with the Platonic rule of

philosophers'.[4] He writes further on 13.2.1910: 'It is storming and raging again in some corner of Jung, erotically and religiously, and he is writing me with visible displeasure, and when he does that, as today, it sounds as though it is coming from afar. He is working for the Congress, and today he enclosed the list of those to be invited'.[5]

On 25.2.1910, Freud wrote to Ferenczi: 'Jung is writing more freely again, and the Congress is gradually taking shape. So far he has had twenty-two applications; ten to fifteen will be added from Vienna. I don't think we will be numerous, and we don't need to be'.[6] On 3.3.1910, also to Ferenczi, he writes: 'Jung has again emerged from his personal perplexities, and I was quickly reconciled with him, for I was not angry, only concerned. I am now awaiting his suggestions about the details of the Congress. I am continuing to scuffle with my ill-mannered boys in Vienna and am expending much educational work on them, probably in vain'.[7]

The 'ill-mannered boys in Vienna' were strongly opposed to Freud's plans to designate Jung as the first president of the planned association. Jones writes: 'After the scientific programme Ferenczi addressed the meeting on the future organization of analysts and their work. There was at once a storm of protest. In his speech he had made some very derogatory remarks about the quality of Viennese analysts and suggested that the Centre of the future administration could only be Zurich, with Jung as President [...] ... but the Viennese, especially Adler and Stekel, also angrily opposed the nomination of Swiss analysts to the positions of President and Secretary, their own long and faithful services being ignored'.[8] On account of the fierce and controversial discussions, it was decided to resume the meeting on the Sunday morning. To achieve his goals and to appease the 'leaders of the revolt',[9] Freud announced that he would stand down as President of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society and propose Adler as his successor. He further suggested the founding of a new journal with the title *Zentralblatt der Psychoanalyse*, which would be edited by Adler and Stekel. 'They then calmed down, agreed to his being Director of the new periodical and to Jung being made President of the Association...'[10] Jung further supposes that Freud nominated Jung not only because he wanted to strengthen the Zurich group, but because he anticipated that this would bring him greater influence at the university.[11]

Although one hundred years have passed since then, these few examples demonstrate how little has changed in the meantime. Injured feelings, quarrels about appointments, influence in the universities and even the question of the importance of democratic structures are with us no less dramatically to this day.

The minutes of the first meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society after the Nuremberg Congress state that after Freud opened the session with a review: 'Adler, in order to dispel certain misunderstandings, gives an account of the happenings at the Nuremberg Congress and of the ensuing conduct of the Vienna School; it was forced into a position of opposition ... Adler now criticizes the reasons for this entire action, which originated with Freud, and comes to the conclusion that some of these reasons were undoubtedly exaggerated; in this overestimation of perils, there lies a sort of self-underestimation'.[12] Adler then sets out the next objectives. As a Society this is to 'give up our seclusion and seek to bring suitable persons to our meetings and to let them take part in our work'.[13] He further calls for understanding with other groups (e.g. the Zurich group) and urges: 'Above all, we must strive to further precisely our scientific training and to lay main stress on it'.[14] At the next meeting, the 103rd, of the Vienna Society on 14 April 1910 they then come to the adoption, 'presentation of and deliberations on the draft of the by-laws'.[15] The question of the admission of new members is discussed controversially in relation to the written constitution.[16] The constitution states that: 'This society presents itself as an independent society affiliated with the scientific association: Internationale Psychoanalytische Vereinigung'. [17]

Questions about openness towards the world outside or protection from it, improvement of the therapeutic and scientific standard of members and the self-overvaluation versus self-undervaluation of psychoanalysts were already being fiercely debated at that time.

Freud's opening lecture is short and programmatic and it is entirely influenced by the constitution of the IPA in prospect. Actually it had also been published in the same year as the first paper in the newly established *Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse*. The lecture begins 'Gentlemen', implying that ladies were not yet in attendance at the Nuremberg Congress.

Freud anticipates that the improvement in the therapeutic prospects of psychoanalysis will be reinforced from three directions: '(1) from internal progress, (2) from increased authority, and (3) from the general effect of our work'. [18]

Concerning the point (1), Freud draws a distinction between 'advances (a) in our analytic knowledge, (b) in our technique'. [19] He emphasises that understanding the patient's unconscious is the prime focus, then briefly addresses questions of transference, interpretation and dream symbolism and considers whether it will be possible to capture the constants in the construction of all neuroses in a similar way to the 'construction of hysterical symptoms' in a 'succinct formula'. [20] substantially increasing the prognostic possibilities. With reference to technique, Freud describes the 'fundamental transformation' of the 'cathartic treatment' to 'finding out and overcoming the "resistances"'. [21]

He then states: 'Other innovations in technique relate to the physician himself. We have become aware of the "counter-transference" ... as a result of the patient's influence on his unconscious feelings, and we are almost inclined to insist that he shall recognize this counter-transference in himself and overcome it'. [22] Later Freud writes: 'we have noticed that no psycho-analyst goes further than his own complexes and internal resistances permit; and we consequently require that he shall begin his activity with a self-analysis and continually carry it deeper while he is making his observations on his patients. Anyone who fails to produce results in a self-analysis of this kind may at once give up any idea of being able to treat patients by analysis'. [23] As you know, Freud uses the term countertransference for the first time here and it was to prove to be a key concept in various ways in our considerations on treatment technique. Furthermore, as you also know, the concept is only used explicitly on two further occasions in Freud's works, both in the paper 'Observations on transference love'. [24] Moreover, this implicitly brings the training analysis into focus as a systematic part of the training.

I consider it interesting to conjecture that the time at which this term was first used not only related to advances in treatment technique in the narrower sense but specifically to the constitution of the IPA in prospect. As a process characterised by fixed organisational principles and democratic rules, this also meant that the personal influence of Freud and others would be substantially restricted. Obviously Freud felt it was important at this point, as concerned the internal progress, to incorporate a cautionary internal imperative. As you all know, this problem exists to this day and it seems almost uncanny that Freud should have formulated it so early and clear-sightedly at this point. Incidentally another work was published at the end of 1910 that among other things points in this direction, namely "'Wild" psycho-analysis'. It contains the remarkable sentence that can also easily be related to the countertransference: 'The pathological factor [in the patient, P.W.] is not his ignorance in itself, but the root of this ignorance in his inner resistances; it was they that first called this ignorance into being, and they still maintain it now'. [25]

Concerning (2) as the second point, Freud anticipates an increase in authority that will strengthen future analysis, although the suggestibility, 'craving for authority' and 'inner lack of resolution' of the masses has operated against the status of psychoanalysis. He writes: 'Nor was it really pleasant to carry out a psychical operation while the colleagues whose duty it should have been to assist took particular pleasure in spitting into the field of operation, and while at the first signs of blood or restlessness in the patient his relatives began threatening the operating surgeon'. [26] On the other hand, the waning influence of religions and the associated 'extraordinary proliferation of neuroses' has generated a new need. Freud notes the progress of the enlightenment, the power of the intellectual and a growing trust in psychoanalysis, but immediately qualifies this: 'since suggestion is supposed to be able to do anything, our successes would then be successes of suggestion and not of psycho-analysis'. [27] Once again he limits his hope because society

after all exists in resistance towards psychoanalytic authority, for 'we adopt a critical attitude towards it; we point out to it that it itself plays a great part in causing neuroses'.[28]

On (3). Finally, Freud considers it possible to hope for a positive effect, a shift in public opinion, from the general effect of our work. It is his hope that 'The success which the treatment can have with the individual must occur equally with the community'.[29] He argues that the secret resistances and gains from illness in neuroses are indeed kept secret and if 'everyone' knew about them, this secret could no longer possibly be kept: 'You know, of course, that the psychoneuroses are substitutive satisfactions of some instinct the presence of which one is obliged to deny to oneself and others'.[30] So again it is the idea of a general enlightenment and the power of the intellectual that leads him to take a positive view of the possibilities of psychoanalysis. Finally, he weighs up thoughtfully whether the battle against the neuroses, with the associated unhappiness, the sufferings and the loss of the gain from illness in the individual, does not come at too high a cost. Of course this expresses the very same doubts with regard to psychoanalysis that are also familiar enough to us today.

It should probably be acknowledged that the power of insight and knowledge is considerably less than we would wish it to be. At that time one hundred years ago, as today, we are confronted with the fact that while we have certainly made no small progress in psychoanalytic technique, people in the 'mass' are still more governed by drive-related, denied substitute gratifications than our intellectual advances encourage us to hope.

To identify just this one aspect by way of conclusion, it seems to me that an important key task of our future work consists in continuing to examine in various ways the complex processes involved in the origination of psychic disorders and to refine our complex treatment technique not only by investigating inwardly, but by inventing a language outwardly that represents our insights comprehensibly to the public. I do not believe that this happens as a matter of course and because we all regard it as necessary. I believe that we must undertake targeted efforts to educate interested colleagues in communicating our knowledge more comprehensibly. For this we need special seminars, further training and media representatives or professional journalists in and from whom we can learn to write about psychoanalysis or present ourselves appropriately in the media in a way that can be understood by many lay people. This also includes learning to value such efforts more highly and support them more strongly than we have previously done. By outreach I mean the improvement of our therapeutic standards—including the improvement of our training system—and the representation of our insights in a comprehensible way. Towards many other activities, I take a rather sceptical view.

If I may, I would like to observe that we could also now celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Residencia de Estudiantes in 1910, as the 'cultural centre of Madrid's liberal intellectual society' at the beginning of the 20th century. Freud's work became the subject of popular debate here earlier than in many other European centres. In Madrid, Freud was received by artists and literary people across all disciplines and Freud's works 'penetrated all strata and sectors' before psychoanalysis became a part of medicine. A central figure in this development was the influential Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, an 'unusual key figure' in the history of psychoanalysis because he 'was primarily interested in integrating Freud's theories into the Spanish intellectual domain'.[31]

I am in no doubt that psychoanalysis with its applications then as now is the method of choice for healing deep-seated psychic disorders. And so I would just like to conclude by quoting the last sentence from Freud's 'Future prospects...' because it is as true today as it was one hundred years ago: 'I should therefore like to let you go with an assurance that in treating your patients psycho-analytically you are doing your duty in more senses than one. You are not merely working in the service of science, by making use of the one and only opportunity for discovering the secrets of the neuroses; you are not only giving your patients the most efficacious remedy for their sufferings that is available to-day; you are contributing your share to the enlightenment of the community from which we expect to achieve the most radical prophylaxis against

- [1] Zentralblatt der Psychoanalyse, I, issue 1/12, 129–131, 1964 reprint, E. J. Bonset, Amsterdam.
- [2] Zentralblatt der Psychoanalyse, I, issue 1/12, 130, 1964 reprint, E. J. Bonset, Amsterdam.
- [3] Brabant, E., Falzeder, E., Giampieri-Deutsch, P. (Eds.) (1993). The Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi, Vol. 1., p. 130.
- [4] Ibid., p. 133.
- [5] Ibid., p. 137.
- [6] Ibid., pp. 145–6.
- [7] Ibid., p. 147.
- [8] Jones, E. (1955). The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 2: Years of Maturity, 1901–1919. London, Hogarth Press, p. 76.
- [9] Ibid., p. 77.
- [10] Ibid., p. 77.
- [11] Ibid.
- [12] Nunberg, H. & Federn, E. (Eds.) (1977). Minutes of the Vienna Psycho-Analytic Society, Vol. II. Trans. M. Nunberg. New York, International Universities Press, p. 464.
- [13] Ibid., p. 464.
- [14] Ibid., p. 465.
- [15] Ibid., p. 472.
- [16] Ibid., p. 473.
- [17] Ibid., p. 478, n. 3.
- [18] Freud, S. (1910). The future prospects of psycho-analytic therapy. S.E. 11, p. 141.
- [19] Ibid., p. 141.
- [20] Ibid., p. 144.
- [21] Ibid., p. 144.
- [22] Ibid., pp. 144–145.
- [23] Ibid., p. 145.
- [24] Freud, S. (1915). Observations on transference-love. S.E. 12.
- [25] Freud, S. (1910). 'Wild' psycho-analysis. S.E. 11, p. 225.
- [26] Freud, S. (1910). The future prospects of psycho-analytic therapy. S.E. 11, p. 146.
- [27] Ibid., p. 147.
- [28] Ibid., p. 147.
- [29] Ibid., p. 148.
- [30] Ibid., p. 148.
- [31] Knapp, H. (2010). Die frühe Rezeption der Psychoanalyse in Spanien [The early reception of psychoanalysis in Spain]. In: Jahrbuch der Psychoanalyse, 61, 125–150.
- [32] Freud, S. (1910). The future prospects of psycho-analytic therapy. S.E. 11, p. 151.