

# An Interview With Henry A. Murray on His Meeting With Sigmund Freud

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In an interview that took place in 1975, Henry A. Murray described his meeting in early 1938 with Sigmund Freud. Topics that are covered include Murray's observation of Freud's personality, his comparison of Freud and Carl G. Jung, and his remarks on psychologist Gordon Allport's description of Allport's own visit with Freud. Information about Freud that emerged from the meeting, according to Murray, includes Freud's fondness for the novel, *Moby-Dick*, and the author, Mark Twain; his lack of interest in experimental studies of psychoanalytic propositions; and his tendency to make Oedipal interpretations that seemed simplistic to Murray.

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A meeting with Sigmund Freud takes on added significance for psychoanalytic psychologists when the person who encountered him was Henry A. Murray.

Beginning his career as a psychology faculty member at Harvard University in 1927, Murray sought to find a place in academic psychology for psychoanalysis during an era in which that discipline was radically excluded, as seen in the virtual absence of psychoanalysis from the leading psychology journals (Anderson, 1990). One of the founders of the Boston Psychoanalytic Society, Murray completed full psychoanalytic training that included a training analysis with Franz Alexander and supervision with Hanns Sachs (Anderson, 1988). Murray continued as a champion of psychoanalytic psychology until his retirement from Harvard in 1962 and beyond.

Murray was unambiguous in asserting that psychoanalysis had advantages over the academic psychology of the day. Murray (1967/1981) criticized university psychologists for limiting themselves to "measuring the lawful relationships of narrowly restricted forms of animal behavior, of physiological processes in general, and of the simplest sensory and sensorimotor processes of human beings in particular" (p. 60). Their research, he concluded, amounted to "a mountain of ritual bringing forth a mouse of fact more dead than alive" (p. 305). By contrast, Murray (1935/1981, p. 341) argued, "the technic of research, many of the revealed facts, and a few of the theories advanced by psychoanalysts represent the weightiest contribution ever made within a short space of time to an understanding of human nature."

In his own work, he tried to infuse psychoanalysis into academic psychology. His best-known achievement, the Thematic Apperception Test (created with Christiana Morgan), is aimed to elicit stories, stemming from the subject's inner world, that can be

analyzed and interpreted (Anderson, 1999). In the classic, *Explorations in Personality* (Murray et al., 1938), Murray and his coworkers studied a group of approximately 50 subjects in depth and used a variety of approaches including many that made use of psychoanalytic psychology. Murray devised a theory of personality, which embraced core psychoanalytic concepts such as the unconscious and repression; his theory was important enough to be included in the major textbook from the 1950s to 1970s on personality theories (Hall & Lindzey, 1957).

I first met Murray in 1973 while I was a master's student at Harvard. I interviewed him for a course paper I was doing on the development of the TAT. I kept in touch with him from time to time, and he invited me to work with him as a research assistant during the summer of 1975, the summer after my second year as a doctoral student in the Department of Behavioral Sciences (as the Psychology Department was called then) at the University of Chicago. I had become interested in psychoanalysis in 1971 and was still in the white heat of my early fascination with the discipline. The topic he proposed, and we agreed to work on, was the basics of development, integrating contributions from psychologists such as Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and Robert W. White. It was a grandiose topic that we could not possibly finish. I tape-recorded many of our discussions and made sure to write a manuscript of our summer's work, but it was nowhere close to publishable, as neither of us had the mastery necessary of that huge body of knowledge. I later learned that it was characteristic of Murray to undertake, and not complete, unfinishable projects.

But I had no complaints, as I was engaged for many thrilling hours that summer with a brilliant and wise professor who seemed to me to be the living embodiment of the history of psychology and psychoanalysis. Justly considered a master conversationalist, Murray loved to tell stories, and I do not doubt that he found in me just the kind of entranced listener who inspired him to dig into his memories. I just mentioned Piaget, Erikson, and White, whom any historian of psychology would recognize as major contributors to developmental theory. It is characteristic of our discussions that Murray had something personal to say about many psychologists such as these three. He had a story about meeting Piaget in Switzerland. As the person who had hired Erikson soon after his immigration to the United States and who employed him at the

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Harvard Psychological Clinic, Murray could talk intimately about Erikson. And he had been White's teacher, mentor, and boss at Harvard. In a paper I wrote some years after that summer (Anderson, 1988), I related some of Murray's observations about prominent people he had known.

### The Interview, Part 1

One afternoon,<sup>1</sup> as the tape recorder was running, we were talking about our research project regarding theoretical approaches to personality development. Murray said, "Oh yes, I think that Freud ought to be in here. Let's see who was it, it was Fromm who said . . . that psychologists must start with Freud, they must know Freud, although every single thing he said was wrong."<sup>2</sup>

A short time later, seeing my opportunity, I said, "I've been wanting for some time to ask you about the time you met Freud. I know you were in Vienna once and you had a chance to. I think nobody would care if we took a couple minutes and talked about that. Are you in a mood to reminisce?"

Henry A. Murray: Yes, I'll tell it for the 37th time. Because that was interesting because [Freud] wanted to see me, I found out. Of course, I went there to see him. But before I had a chance to put in my oar I got an invitation to see him, and I couldn't make out what this was. I didn't see any sense in it, until I got there and then he said right away, "Why didn't I get an honorary degree at the Harvard Tercentenary and Jung got one?"

James William Anderson: 1936 must have been the Tercentenary. When were you in Vienna then?

Murray: 1937–1938 Christmas, right, partly in 37 and 38; that was about three weeks before the *Anschluss*, a tense time, although the people that I saw there were not talking of a near invasion.<sup>3</sup> They thought there would be one eventually, but they didn't expect it so soon.

Well, I can tell you this very briefly. The rule was that every department could choose three of the best men they could think of in the whole world to come [to Harvard to receive an honorary degree at the Tercentenary celebration]—and that if one refused then that vacant slot, as it were, went to the central committee and they could choose who would take his place. And psychology being a small department and not very popular with the faculty as a whole—the old historians and English people and the traditional topics that have gone for 200 years and so forth—they wouldn't choose a psychologist. They'd think there would be a more notable man in English who deserved the degree more than a psycholo-

gist. Psychology was a new topic. It had been started a few years before.

So we had a vote about, to make up a rank order for the first five. There were only four of us, five of us there. Boring, who was head of the department, of course. And Beebe-Center. Boring and Pratt, I better say, because they came from Titchener, they came from Worcester, they came here. They represented perception psychology. And then Beebe-Center came along, and he was in the same tradition. So there were three perception psychologists. And Beebe-Center had an added thing, he had a course on the psychology of feeling; so it was kind of the beginning of aesthetics. And then there was Lashley who had just arrived with a tremendous chip on his shoulder and distaste for anything to do with psychoanalysis. That's four of those. And then Allport and I, on the personality side. And Allport was just having nothing to do with the unconscious or Freud.<sup>4</sup>

And to my absolute amazement they were all on my side, as it were, against

<sup>1</sup> July 31, 1975, in Murray's office suite in William James Hall, Harvard University (tape-recorded).

<sup>2</sup> I wrote Erich Fromm to ask him whether he had said what Murray remembered him as saying. I noted I knew I was quoting Murray accurately because I had tape recorded him. Fromm seems to have thought I was saying that there was a tape recording of his statement. In a letter to me dated June 27, 1977, he replied:

As to my statement that Dr. Murray quoted, I do not remember it but certainly the tape recorder is right. Its meaning was precisely the one you give it in your letter, an exaggeration to make a point. In a book that I am writing now I try to explain what in Freud's system I believe is valid and what are errors that are rooted in social [this last word written in by hand, the rest of the letter is typed] Freud's conditions in which he lived and in his personality. I regret that I do not have the time to give a more detailed answer but this would lead to a very long letter and besides that, in this book I attempt precisely to answer the question in a very detailed form.

The book to which he is referring is Fromm (1980), *Greatness and Limitations of Freud's Thought*.

<sup>3</sup> Murray biographer, Forrest G. Robinson (1992, p. 229) writes that Murray's visit to Vienna took place after New Year's in 1938. The date of the *Anschluss*, Germany's takeover, under Adolf Hitler, of Austria, is March 11, 1938.

<sup>4</sup> Harvard psychology chair, Edwin G. Boring, received his PhD at Cornell University, where he was a student of experimental psychologist Edward B. Titchener. Carroll C. Pratt received his PhD at Clark University in Worcester, MA. Murray seems to have conflated Pratt and John Gilbert Beebe-Center, in that, in the *Announcement of the Courses of Instruction Offered by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences 1933–1934* (1933, pp. 148–152), Pratt is listed as teaching a half-course on "Aesthetics" and Beebe-Center is listed as teaching a half-course on "Emotion and Feeling." Karl S. Lashley, who was militantly anti-psychoanalytic, came from the University of Chicago to Harvard in 1935. Gordon Allport and Murray are two of the founders of the discipline of personality psychology.

themselves. They could see that Freud—they put him first. And Jung second. And, let's see, the one in Paris.

- Anderson: [Pierre] Janet? [Jean-Martin] Charcot?
- Murray: Janet third. Charcot? Oh, he was dead long ago.
- Anderson: These were people who had to be alive.
- Murray: Yes, that's right. It's hard to think of him dead.
- Anderson: I think of all those people together as ancient history, Freud and Charcot.
- Murray: They're ghosts now. Well, Janet was third, and [Jean] Piaget of all people was fourth. I'd just discovered him two or three years before. So then we were told by Homburger that Freud would never come. That he had cancer, and he was not really very well. And he had told several people that he would never leave Vienna.
- Anderson: Homburger. So that's Erik Erikson.
- Murray: Yeah, Erik Erikson. That's right. And um, he changed his name a little after that, two or three years after that.<sup>5</sup> So what happened was that Dr. Boring had forgotten or didn't see fit or thought as I did that, well, this was no great honor for Freud. Other things were much more important to him. He'd already been over to this country and gotten a degree from Brown and Clark and so forth.<sup>6</sup> What's the point? He wouldn't come. It turned out he cared a lot. But it was more that Jung got one and he didn't get one. The old rivalry. That kind of thing doesn't come up in Jung's mind at all. I haven't seen anything like that.<sup>7</sup> But the reason was I think that Jung left Freud and Freud didn't want him to go. And they'd begin to disagree and Freud had begun to get a little angry with him and also thinking that he was saying things that were not strictly Freudian on the outside. And he came to this country while he was still with Freud, but he deviated a little from the straight line, the straight Freudian line. At any rate, he left, and [Freud] had picked him as his successor and so forth. Well, I told [Freud] why: that he was first, of course, but we were told he'd never come; so we didn't invite him. And what did he care, a great man like that, and a little place in Cambridge, Mass.?

Along that line. I've just exaggerated a little bit, but it was along that line. And then he said, "Well, why not one of my band here?" And I said, "Who?" And he said, "Well, Ferenczi. And I said, "Well, I thought there was one time when you thought that Jung had a good deal more imagination?" He didn't answer that point. He looked down; he didn't answer that point. "Well, Ferenczi's a very good man."

- Anderson: Was Ferenczi still alive then? I thought he died earlier than '36.
- Murray: Well, he must have been alive. Maybe, he went out of his mind a little bit at the end. He must have been alive, or otherwise [Freud] wouldn't have [spoken of] him. Well, you look him up.<sup>8</sup> Well, it might have been that he said one of my well, one of my, he wouldn't use the word disciples, one of my loyal adherents or something like that. And I said, "Who was your best man?" I might have said something like that. And then he wouldn't think of the dates, perhaps. But I do not think it was like that. But Ferenczi wouldn't have made a hit at all. And Jung made a hit with a few people, like [Harvard President James Bryant] Conant. I'm talking about exceptional people. Conant hated psychoanalysis. He was a virulent opponent of it. His brother-in-law<sup>9</sup> committed suicide during his analysis in New York with a man named Kardiner.
- Anderson: Abram Kardiner?
- Murray: Yes. [Conant's brother-in-law] had been in the middle of his analysis and was

<sup>5</sup> Erik Homburger grew up in Karlsruhe, Germany, received psychoanalytic training in Vienna, and immigrated to the United States in 1933. Murray hired him in 1934 to work part-time at the Harvard Psychological Clinic, and Erik Homburger is one of 28 names listed as contributors to *Explorations in Personality* (Murray et al., 1938). In 1939 when he became a naturalized citizen, he changed his name to "Erik Homburger Erikson" and he used, as the author's name, in most of his books: "Erik H. Erikson" (Friedman, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> The only honorary degree Freud received in the United States was from Clark University in 1909.

<sup>7</sup> Murray knew Carl G. Jung. In 1925 Murray underwent an analysis lasting a few weeks with him. In later years, Murray had several visits with him and corresponded with him (Robinson, 1992). Murray was enchanted with Jung during the period of the analysis, but in later years he lost any idealization he might have had. By the time of my interview with him, he had become more critical of Jung than of Freud (Anderson, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Sandor Ferenczi died May 22, 1933.

<sup>9</sup> Billy Richards, who committed suicide, was the brother of Conant's wife (Robinson, 1992, p. 209).

very depressed. He started writing thrillers during his analysis, and he got worse and worse and he turned it on himself. So that was sad, and it was a very bad advertisement for psychoanalysis, particularly as he was Conant's brother-in-law. Very close brother to his wife. So Conant asked a couple of people to go down and interview Kardiner.  
Well, I guess that's 20 minutes on that.

- Anderson: Did Freud have anything else to say?
- Murray: Oh yes. We changed the topic right away. And we had a lot of things to say, interests in common. He showed me all around his room. We talked about Egyptians. He's got a whole lot of little penises all over on top of his desk in the form of—
- Anderson: Figurines.
- Murray: Figurines. And he had some other things. His fans used to send him these things. When they went to Egypt they'd send him things. He had something of an antiquarian interest.
- Anderson: How were his health and spirit at the time?
- Murray: Oh, I couldn't tell because he was being with a guest, and he was very courteous and so forth. But he drooled out of the side of his mouth, but a lot of old people do that. And he'd been operated on. He said something about "I'm a little weak now"—made some little remark having to do with his age. But that's all. It didn't interfere. But he didn't—he wouldn't have liked to have gone out in public and stood up and made a speech on a platform, but he doesn't mind a personal [visit] unless it was some very forbidding person. And he said some other things. No, he was very nice, and we talked two hours and half and so forth. It was not the best I could conceive of because I didn't want to touch on anything where I'd have to tell him I thought he was all wrong on that.<sup>10</sup> I knew that he couldn't be budged. He had a little wooden sculpture about this high that was done by one of his patients. And it was a man a little bit bent over. It had this thing coming out over the top of its head that was like—it was like a shade. If you were going to speak under this—what do you call it in the pulpit?—something, the sounding board.<sup>11</sup> He said, "So you see that's the superego and this is the ego and there's the id." And so he was continually referring to something in his theory.

One of the strangest stories I ever heard, and I've tried five times to get a clear statement to solve it, was the story that Allport told all his life. He told it 25 times. I only heard him tell it three times, but he tells it to students and everybody. And he published it in his—he wrote his life in a series of lives.

- Anderson: I've read about when he visited Freud, and Allport made some comment about seeing a boy on the tram coming over [to Freud's office] who seemed to have an anal personality. And [Allport] made a comment about it. And Freud said to Allport something like, "And so you're that little boy." That's pretty much the story?
- Murray: God, what a memory you have, yes. But he said, "You aren't that little boy by any chance, are you?" Or something like that. He left it open. He put it in a question.<sup>12</sup> And Allport said afterward himself, "Well, that's a terribly stupid thing for a man to say. I can't believe in his theory

<sup>10</sup> Murray had great admiration for Freud but also many thoughtful criticisms. One of the most trenchant assessments of Freud is Murray's (1940/1981) paper, "What Should Psychologists Do about Psychoanalysis?" written not long after his meeting with Freud. In that paper, Murray declares that

I accept a large part (more than half) of the psychoanalytic scheme; and when I say "accept"; I mean, of course, that I am accustomed to employ as the best available hypotheses for research and therapy most of its concepts. (p. 292)

But he saw "no reason for going in blind and swallowing the whole indigestible bolus" (p. 296). He sought to accept what seemed convincing to him and to reject what seemed questionable. In the 1940 paper he makes a number of criticisms, for example, that Freud limits himself to just two drives, sex and aggression (p. 298); that the "ego is an elusive being which has not yet been caught in any conceptual corral" (p. 298; at the time ego psychology was in its infancy and it strove in time to give a detailed account of the workings of the ego); that Freud's motivational system was too limited, in that it "omitted thirst, excretion, repulsion, acquisition, the lust for power and approval, and several other tendencies" (p. 301); and that aggression should be not seen as a "positive appetite" but rather "most of the evidence is in favor of its being a reaction tendency, aroused by frustration, belittlement or attack" (p. 302). All of these criticisms anticipate future developments in psychoanalysis.

<sup>11</sup> I wrote Anna Freud to ask whether she had any memories of Murray's visit, and she replied she did not. I included some excerpts from the interview, and she had a comment about this sculpture. She wrote (letter dated March 21, 1977),

What he remembers about the symbolic wooden sculpture is also quite incorrect. This was a present brought back by somebody from the South Seas where he had seen a native actually carving it. The description he gives is quite erroneous.

<sup>12</sup> Allport (1968, pp. 383–384) described his meeting with Freud. In that account, Allport (1968, p. 383) wrote that Freud said, "And was that little boy you?" For an analysis of Allport's account of his meeting with Freud, see Elms, 1994, pp. 71–84.



after that.” He was done with Freud. Of course, he was done with Freud before he went there. He didn’t want to have anything to do with him. He knew enough to know what he didn’t want to know.

But I haven’t been able to make out yet surely what this is about. Why should he think that was a stupid thing to say? It was a very clever thing to say, because that’s just what Allport is. I mean, he is a very fastidious person, he is very clean himself. And everything is very nice and orderly. He isn’t compulsive, or he isn’t neurotic or anything like that. But he is just very strong on the side of gentility and being very clean and his desk was always perfect and so forth and so forth and all his correspondence [was orderly] and so forth. Freud just hit him right on the head, right on the nose.

And I asked his wife, Ada, twice about what the point is, what was it? It turns out, and I suppose this must be it, but it doesn’t seem to me very sensible—it turns out that it’s something like this. That [Freud] only saw patients, and he didn’t see other people; so he sort of absentmindedly thought that Allport was a patient. And he’s a kind-hearted old man and wanted to help him along, say something nice to him that would maybe cure an obsession or something. At any rate, he was making a patient out of Allport. And [Allport] didn’t see that anything [Freud] said was relevant to him. [Allport] just thought, “Well, the man’s asking me whether I have hallucinations or something, but you don’t ask a guest that. You ask that of a patient. The man can’t tell the difference between a patient and a guest. He must be rather dumb.”

Anderson: My memory of this incident is coming back as you talk about it. I remember Allport says something like: he went over there on the tram and he was sort of nervous going to see this great man and he was trying to think of something to say to get the conversation going. So he thought this would be a nice, sympathetic comment to make, to say: Yes, I observed a little boy on the tram who seemed to fit your description of how a certain kind of personality syndrome develops.

Murray: It isn’t quite like that because he expected that Freud would say something to make him feel at home.

Anderson: Oh, that’s it. Then [Allport] was casting around for something to say.

Murray: It just came blurring out because it was the last thing he had seen. And he hadn’t prepared anything. [He thought:] I’ve just come to see you, you’re a great man. But he didn’t have any questions. So it came out this way.

Anderson: And then—but isn’t this right?—then Allport says that instead of Freud seeing what was happening—that Allport had just introduced this topic because it might be interesting to Freud and he was trying to make conversation. Instead of seeing it that way, what Freud did was to put it into his own psychological system and reverse it onto Allport and make this interpretative remark. So it seems to me that’s what Allport’s arguing, no?

Murray: Well, yes, but he didn’t think that Freud was trying to say something that was true or appropriate or on the point to Allport. He didn’t think, “Well yes, I’m like that little boy” or anything like that. It just didn’t occur to him for 20 years that I’ve heard the story, it didn’t occur to him once, because he should have said, “Well, that’s a pretty smart thing to say, right off the bat, in the first sentence.”

Anderson: Cannot we assume that it bothered him because of that, because it was right on the mark? I mean, that’s sort of the assumption of what you’re saying.

Murray: Yes, yes. But I think as far as his adopting [Freud’s] system or anything like that, that was all done ahead of time because [Allport] doesn’t like anything to do with sex and so forth and so forth and the unconscious., He’s all for the consciousness. It’s interesting he thought of consciousness as large and the unconscious as a little bit of a thing down there, and Freud thought the consciousness was a little thing up there, the unconscious the iceberg down below.

But Freud thought that as you became psychoanalyzed and learned about yourself, then you, he put it: where id is now, ego will be later or finally or something like that. In other words, if all the unconscious amounts to something, it will come out in psychoanalysis and you’ll be aware of all that and it’ll all be conscious to you; so you’ll have a huge consciousness by that time. The consciousness of the average person who didn’t know Freud’s system was very small and the unconscious was huge.

[Murray commented on our getting back to our project.]

Anderson: Just one more little comment. There was an interesting exhibition I saw last year in New York of photographs of Freud's apartment.<sup>13</sup> You mentioned that he showed you around at that time. The photographs would be from just a few weeks later, because, between the *Anschluss* and the time Freud left, his friend called in a photographer who took pictures of every square inch of the room to record just what it looked like, particularly all the antiques. And they had an exhibition of these photographs last year. Now and then one sees individual photos that were reprinted, but that's the only time I saw all of them put together. And they also got a few of the figurines from England, that Anna Freud sent over to be part of the exhibition.

Murray: Yes, that must have been just what I saw. It couldn't have changed much in between. Anna Freud was in the room at the time. The first laboratory assistant I had in the Rockefeller Institute in biochemistry was a girl<sup>14</sup> who had been in the same class as Anna Freud in Austria. She wrote to Anna Freud about me; so, when I started shifting over toward psychoanalysis, that was communicated to Anna Freud. So she knew something about me. And then [Anna Freud] analyzed one of the [Harvard Psychological] Clinic staff, William Langer, and it was through him that she learned when I was coming to Vienna. And she passed that on to the old man, and then he passed back the message that he wanted to see me.

Anderson: What was her role in the discussion? Did she just kind of sit quietly?

Murray: She didn't talk at all. There might have been something where he didn't quite hear or I didn't quite understand, but I do not remember. Her function was to make him feel at home and if he didn't feel well or something then she'd take over. I guess it was just nice of her to be there because she was analyzing this fellow from the Clinic and persuading him that everything I'd taught him was wrong. And they spent the queerest analysis that I've ever heard about. They spent the first nine months just arguing about what he'd learned from me and what she was saying was the truth. [Murray added here that [Walter Langer \(1972\)](#) wrote a study of Hitler for the U.S. government that was not made public until years after the World War II.]

Anderson: So back to the main topic [of our project]. I really enjoy hearing these reminiscences; so it's pretty hard for me not to encourage you.

Murray: Yes, well, I'll give you some as they come along. Every seminar I've had there's always been a petition at the end to talk about the ghosts.

Anderson: It sort of puts me in touch with the tradition of the field I'm becoming part of.

Murray: Most of them came over here. [Carl G.] Jung lunched with us and talked down at the [Harvard Psychological] Clinic to specially interested students. We had almost everyone. [Otto] Rank. All these people would come to lunch. We used to have 2-hour lunches on Wednesdays, and we'd invite some person passing through, and he'd come around for lunch. We had most of them. [Alfred North] Whitehead. All kinds of people. [Alfred] Korzybski. We've seen most of them. So as they're all dead, those in the seminars want to hear about them. And I try to give them an impartial view unless I'm already set in one way or another.

## The Interview, Part 2

Later in the summer I asked Murray if I might interview him further about his meeting with Freud, and he agreed.<sup>15</sup>

Anderson: What was your general impression of Freud?

Murray: He's interested in the person he's talking to, a great deal more than Jung is. In a different way, in a more natural way. He asked me what I was doing. So I mentioned Melville [Murray was working on a biography of Melville], and he went on and talked about Melville. He said *Moby-Dick* was his favorite American book. So we had a bond right away. I didn't want to ask his opinion

<sup>13</sup> These photographs by [Edmund Engelman \(1976\)](#) were published in the year after my interview with Murray.

<sup>14</sup> Her name was Alma Rosenthal. According to [Robinson \(1992, pp. 96–97\)](#), she worked with Murray at the Rockefeller Institute in the 1920s while Murray was doing biochemical research. They had an affair at the time and remained friends in later years. In a letter (March 21, 1977) to me, Anna Freud wrote,

He is quite right of course that my link with his person was via a young girl who had been a friend of mine in Vienna and who told me a lot about her work for him. It must have been this connection which prompted me to urge my father to make an exception and see him.

<sup>15</sup> August 29, 1975, at his house at 22 Francis Avenue in Cambridge. I took careful word-by-word notes during the interview. I can vouch for my account of his comments being substantially accurate.

of *Moby-Dick*, or I'd feel influenced by it. Then I'd spend the next 10 years, if I believed him, before I could develop my own ideas. Then we went on to Mark Twain. He was very keen on him. That finished American literature, I think.

Anderson: What did you mean in saying Freud was more interested in the person he was talking to than Jung was?

Murray: It's very hard to find words for this. This is an example of how difficult it is to transmit your ideas in psychology. I could use a word, and it would be taken the wrong way. They had a different manner of attention. Jung concentrates terrifically on the person in front of him and is apt to say something very good about him after an hour. Something very accurate about the person's personality. They both do the same thing. They assimilate you to the ideas they're interested in at the time.

This would have to do with treatment. I know someone who was treated by Freud just after he'd discovered the idea of castration. Every hour he would bring it up. They often say that Freud would sit back and listen. That isn't true. He said a great deal. He would try out his theories.

Anderson: Who was this patient who was analyzed by Freud?

Murray: I think this was—I knew several people who were analyzed by Freud. I think this was the one I especially knew. She belonged to the Boston Psychoanalytic Society. We agreed when we set it up that everyone had to be analyzed by someone. She is the one who married Putnam's son; Irma Putnam was her name.<sup>16</sup> [James Jackson] Putnam was one of the early people interested in Freud, and he stood by Freud. Freud liked him a great deal.

Freud was all booked up for the next three years or so. But when he heard she was Putnam's daughter-in-law, he said come right in. She came back afterward full of talk about what had happened. She said he talked all the time, especially on this topic and that. We saw later that he had written a couple papers on it at the time. We didn't see these papers until later after they were published and translated from the German.

If Freud knew you, he would ask you about your wife and children, where you were living, and so forth. Jung couldn't care less about the ordinary transactions of life. He was interested in your soul. His wife would ask these questions, and he'd sit around bored. They both [Jung and Freud] loved to talk, Jung more so. Jung was more of a monopolist<sup>17</sup> than Freud.

This was one of the things that made Jung think he was an introvert, Freud an extravert. Lewis Mum-

ford visited Zurich and wrote an article in the *New Yorker* in two issues.<sup>18</sup> He put both of them in the same category. From an American with an extraverted point of view—[Mumford] was interested in the environment, in architecture, in practical things—both seemed like dark deep introverts. When you're far away culturally they come together. Jung's types were based on the difference between him and his wife and between him and Freud. Freud was more interested in the regular details of life, the concrete facts. Jung wants to know your philosophical ideas. Freud wants to start at least with concrete facts.

Anderson: Did Freud ask you about these details of your life?

Murray: Well, he asked me about the Psychological Clinic.<sup>19</sup> I told him what some of the experiments were that we were working on. He said he was so sure of the validity of his concepts that he didn't need experiments—a very naïve thing to say. To call Freud naïve is preposterous in itself. He made a similar comment in a letter to Rosenzweig.<sup>20</sup> When I saw him he hadn't caught on to what Rosenzweig meant by experiments; he thought it had something to do with traditional perception experiments. He hadn't heard of other possibilities.

I told him about MacKinnon and his experiments on cheating.<sup>21</sup> He viewed the subjects through a screen. They had a chance to cheat. He found that half did. There was a folder left by the experimenter. Then he asked them what tasks they remembered. He hoped they'd forget the ones they cheated on. There was just a little of that. Those who were physically punished in their youth regarded cheating as a kind of victory over the experimenter.

Anderson: What did Freud think about this experiment?

<sup>16</sup> Paul Roazen (1995), who interviewed Irmara Putnam, notes that she was married to the nephew, not the son, of James Jackson Putnam.

<sup>17</sup> I trust my notes that Murray used the word *monopolist*. I think he meant it as a combination of *monopoly* and *monologue*, with the *-ist* ending; the meaning is "one who monopolizes a conversation and engages in a monologue."

<sup>18</sup> Murray is probably referring to a single-issue article in which Mumford (1964) argues for the similarity between Freud and Jung.

<sup>19</sup> Murray was Director of the Harvard Psychological Clinic, which, despite its name, was primarily a center for research rather than clinical work.

<sup>20</sup> Murray (1940/1981, p. 308) quotes Freud as writing to Saul Rosenzweig,

I have examined your experimental studies for the verification of the psychoanalytic assertions (*Behauptungen*) with interest, I cannot put much value on these activities because the wealth of reliable observations on which these assertions rest make them independent of experimental verification. Still, it can do no harm.

Rosenzweig (1985) published the full texts of his letters from Freud.

<sup>21</sup> See a description of the study written by Donald MacKinnon (1938).

Murray: One thing he said at the beginning—I didn't imagine he'd ever generalize this far, which is too absurd for words. He said it depended on whether they connected the experimenter with their father. I couldn't believe that anyone would think such a thing. If you forget something that you said, it gets hooked up with the Oedipus complex. As if there weren't any other reasons for forgetting.

I asked on the therapeutic side: While he was getting near the end of a patient's analysis, if he thought of a line of endeavor that would be beneficial to the patient, would he mention it? He said, "Not if I could help it. I never want to mix the pure gold of analysis with other considerations."

He said he was interested in gaining knowledge. Exploration was his overruling, overwhelming interest. Analysis, analysis, analysis. Naturally you have to come out with reduction, because analysis is reducing, that's what the word means, to analyze back to more and more basic things, earlier and earlier.

Then he showed me the figurines. There were a lot on the table. They looked like little penises standing up. He had a cabinet filled with them. Then he showed me the carving we talked about before.

Anderson: Did you have this discussion in English?

Murray: Oh yes. He talked in English. I do not think he liked to talk much, because of his cancer problem. He did a necessary amount of drooling out of the side of his mouth.

Anderson: Did you find him to be generally a comfortable person to be with, or someone who is stiff and formal?

Murray: He was not stiff and formal at all. There were some reasons. He connected me with a man I didn't even know, Putnam. Harvard is a good word for him on account of Putnam. That, and I told him he got our highest rating; we liked him the best. Then we agreed on *Moby-Dick*. I've heard of him being quite an authoritarian person. In fact, with his whole outfit he was a tyrant. He did it in a quiet way, though. He would stop talking to someone at meetings, stop publishing someone's papers.

He's a warm, cordial person. Underneath he's analyzing you himself. I think he's a person who has a lot of very human qualities, and they're very conscious to him. Feelings like jealousy, disappointment, hurt feelings, sensitiveness, everything. He had a good deal of narcissism in his way.

He didn't like Americans. I think when an American comes to see him he expects a pretty crude

person. Dr. Knight, who used to be the head of Austen Riggs, went and later wrote up an account.<sup>22</sup> What Knight says was so dull, banal, commonplace. Freud must have thought this patient was very unresponsive.

He gave me a sense we got along very well. I liked him very much, all the way through. There was something very natural—to expose to me this jealousy he had about Jung. It was years after they had broken up, since about 1914. This was 1938.

Anderson: Did you mention to him what part your interest in his work had played in your involvement in psychology?

Murray: No, I didn't, even though maybe he expected me to. I thought both in the case of Freud and Jung that they were so far along in their work, and got entirely accepted by a body of people who came to them as patients, they didn't want or need any support by anyone else. Need for recognition was very important for both of them, though. Freud would mention his, Jung wouldn't.

Jung told me about the two cases when Freud fainted. The idea was in both cases being superseded by Jung, of Jung killing the father. Jung said that [Freud biographer Ernest] Jones hadn't given the exact conversation. Jung told me that in the conversations they were talking about Akhnaton. He was the first Egyptian monarch who introduced the worship of one god. Akhnaton took it as the sun in the heavens and identified himself with the sun. He was the sun on earth and the son of god. He tore down the temples that his father had put up.<sup>23</sup>

Freud said to Jung he wished all the Jews in Vienna had one bottom so he could spank them at once. He was annoyed at them. He wished they would make a good representation of how Jews could be at their best.

Anderson: Did Jung talk to you about Freud?

Murray: Jung hardly talked about Freud and never in a disagreeable way. It may be that Jung was too narcissistic. But he took it much easier—their breakup. He didn't criticize Freud as a person. He thought he was the greatest man he ever met. He said he thought Freud was on his way to creating a religion out of love and sex, sexual love. But he had not proceeded far with it. One of the main differences. Jung admitted religion into his system, not one religion, but the processes that go into religion. Freud omitted that entirely. Jung was actually quite realistic about eroticism, an

<sup>22</sup> Robert P. Knight (1972) published an account of his visit with Freud.

<sup>23</sup> The implication is as follows: Jung believed Freud imagined that Jung wanted to supersede him as Akhnaton had superseded his father.



erotic religion he had there. Freud was not an optimist about anything, except maybe the development of the psychoanalytic society. He sent out all those people to colonize America.

Anderson: How did Freud end the interview?

Murray: I guess I did. I thought I'd bothered him enough. This was a little more than a year before he died. I was surprised he was willing to see me. He showed his age; I thought he was tired. Possibly I like to leave before I'm thrown out.

Anderson: How long did the interview last?

Murray: About two hours. Anna Freud was there the whole time. She said a few words now and then. I'd say that's a pretty good memory for 40 years later.

### Commentary

After the summer of 1975, I continued to have a close relationship with Murray. Two years later I spent another summer working with him as a research assistant, and I visited him often up until a short time before his death in 1988.

As I look back at the interview, I can see that Murray's attitude toward Freud there and in his writings influenced me. Murray recognized Freud's genius, but he also saw Freud as being mistaken in many ways, such as in dogmatically using the Oedipus complex to interpret the results of MacKinnon's experiment. Mindful of the Freud idolaters, Murray (1940/1981) warned against, as he put it in one of his writings, "going in blind and swallowing the whole indigestible bolus" (p. 298). Rereading the interview, I see myself imbibing Murray's position, of being ever ready to make an assessment of any psychoanalytic proposition, and I continue to see the value in such a stance.

Another effect on me of the interview (and of my continued involvement with Murray) was the enhancement of my emotional bond with psychoanalysis. Murray had had an in-depth talk with Freud; he had had an analysis with Alexander, the founder of my own institute, the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis; he had been involved in the founding of the Boston Psychoanalytic Society; he had met many key figures in psychoanalytic history, such as Otto Rank. My having an intimate relationship with Murray made me feel I had a special connection to psychoanalysis.

To some extent, I was under Murray's spell at the time of the interview. My reaction as he spoke about his meeting with Freud was primarily one of feeling enthralled and fascinated. I enjoyed his witty comments, such as his describing Freud's figurines as being like a bunch of phalluses, and I prized learning the little pieces of new information he revealed, such as his account of how Freud talked a great deal in his psychoanalysis of Putnam.

Now I can look back at the interview with a more discerning eye. I can see, in particular, that Murray brought a particular sensibility to all his observations. He delighted in piercing the facades of prominent people, of revealing their flaws. It is not that he is necessarily wrong in what he says, but just that he fails to provide a balanced picture. He brings up numerous shortcomings that he sees in Freud, such as Freud's jealous response toward Jung, his dismissal, and misunderstanding, of psychological re-

search, and his dislike of Americans. Similarly, he takes cuts at just about everyone else he mentions: Jung had little interest in the lives of other people but liked to talk; Allport was ridiculous for not realizing that Freud had him figured out; and Murray's colleagues at Harvard bitterly dismissed psychoanalysis yet, in voting initially to award an honorary degree to Freud, revealed that they considered him to be the greatest psychologist. My explanation is that Murray was driven to raise himself up by knocking other people down. I do not think he would have disagreed with my saying that. He recognized himself as being narcissistic; once he joked to me that he originally thought of entitling his autobiographical paper "Narcissism Re-Exhibited" (Anderson, 1988, p. 161).

Another quality of Murray comes through to me as I look back at the interview: his capacity for connection and warmth. As he spoke with me, I felt he was attached to me throughout, not just talking at me. And I could see too in what he said that he had formed an attachment like that with Freud, who became increasingly friendly with Murray as their meeting progressed. It occurs to me that the key to the effectiveness of an interview is often the feeling that grows up between the two people. As a result of a warm connection between the two, the interviewee becomes open and expansive; that happened between Freud and Murray, and I believe it happened between Murray and me.

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