

Louis Kronberg,
Sitting Girl, Paris 1913

Exhibiting Freud

Reflections on the New Permanent Exhibition at the Sigmund Freud Museum

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In the archive of the Sigmund Freud Museum, there is a pastel drawing of a seated young woman engrossed in her knitting. It is signed «Louis Kronberg / Paris 1913» on the left lower edge, and on its lower right corner bears the dedication «To Professor / Sigmund Freud / 1919.» The year could also be read as «1914.» A March 20, 1920 letter from Freud to Kronberg, an artist who lived in Boston, which has recently sold at auction, renders a 1919 date for the dedication more plausible: «Vienna 16 March 20 / Dear Mr. Kronberg / your exquisite shipment has arrived in good condition. / All my family wish to thank you warmly for this token / of your warm sentiment. / Yours sincerely / Freud.»

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In retrospect, it is impossible to determine how and when this drawing found its way back to Berggasse 19. Nor do we know where in his rooms Freud once showcased the drawing we presume to have been that «exquisite shipment.» Again, we are left with conjecture: the fact that the artist is thanked by «all [his] family,» i.e. all members of the family living in Freud's household at Berggasse 19 in 1920—Freud, his wife Martha, their youngest daughter Anna, and Martha's sister Minna Bernays—contradicts the initial theory that the drawing hung in the bedrooms, which went undocumented by Edmund Engelman. Is it possible, then, that the drawing was hung, at least temporarily, in the former smoking room, which, according to another theory, was transformed into an additional retreat for Freud, who was by that point suffering from cancer of the jaw, in the course of the 1920s or even as late as the 1930s? And why exactly was it that this drawing was returned to Vienna from the Freud Museum in London? Who handed it over, and when?

It is questions like these that arose again and again in the course of the redesign of the Sigmund Freud Museum and that of the new permanent exhibition on Freud's work and life; often there are no clear answers. Only one thing is indisputable: all of the objects of art and daily life originating from the family estate now on view at Berggasse 19 meant something to Freud, they were part of his world of things.¹ Be it the torso of a dancing satyr, a suitcase, a letter opener,

or a napkin ring: these objects, with their valuable materials and workmanship, clearly belie a quest for durability; they are signifiers, they trigger ideas, associations, and narratives.

When Sigmund Freud had to leave Vienna forever in June 1938, it was already clear that all his possessions would follow their owner into exile in London: an exceptional circumstance at the time.² The Freuds finally received their possessions in September, shortly after moving into their own home at 20 Maresfield Gardens. «Our things have actually arrived, down to the last little piece [...]. Furniture, books, antiquities, everything is in prime condition,» Anna Freud rejoiced in a letter to Max Eitingon.³ Most of these «things» can still be visited at this address, now home to the Freud Museum London. When the Viennese museum was opened in 1971, Maresfield Gardens was still the home of Anna Freud, her partner Dorothy Burlingham, and their housekeeper Paula Fichtl, two who had both emigrated with the Freud family. To Hans Lobner, curator and librarian of the Sigmund Freud-Gesellschaft, which was responsible for establishing and directing the museum, the Freuds' London home must have seemed like a treasury; the few objects in Vienna, on the contrary, a hotchpotch.⁴ While Paula Fichtl and Anna Freud had given a few objects from Freud's estate

to the Vienna museum around the time of its opening, there was a considerable growth in its inventory of memorabilia in 1974.⁵ Upon an invitation from Anna Freud, Lobner went to London to discuss additional furnishings for the museum. His visit proved a resounding success, not least of all thanks to the support of the members of the Freud family; the itemized list of objects chosen for the Viennese museum includes several dozen antiques, Freud's cabin trunk, his reading glasses, the four copper engravings from the waiting room, and numerous smaller pieces of furniture and books from Freud's estate. Fichtl was reported to have jokingly referred to this undertaking as a «foraging campaign;» or was it a raid?⁶

Loot, gifts, and relics—such objects, or rather concepts, that Krzysztof Pomian brings forward in his book *Collectors and Curiosities: Origins of the Museum*, could easily apply to Vienna's Sigmund Freud Museum and its collection.⁷ In the same sense that Pomian cites the real function of collections as the creation of relationships between the visible and the invisible, these objects would allow us to once more link the «legacies» of the founder of psychoanalysis and the task of mounting a new permanent exhibition in the renovated building of Berggasse 19.⁸ Monika Pessler describes the basic conceptual approach thus: «The architecture of the late nineteenth-century building not only determines new positionings in terms of space, it also correlates with their content.» From the outset we were well aware of the challenge: we needed to present these contents in a vivid and accessible way in order to bring the past into dialogue with the present. In order to fulfill this task, we attempted to visualize the spaces of thought that Freud revealed, and his insights which influence our everyday lives and so many

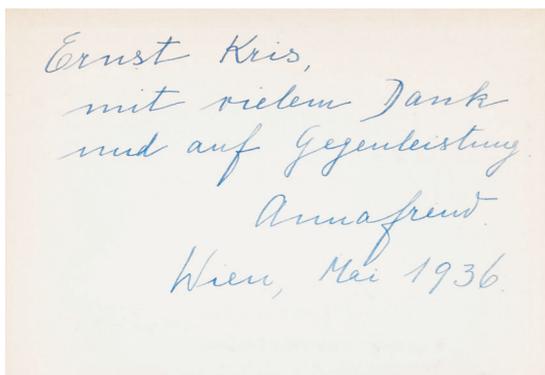
cultural spheres, and therewith to convey some of the complexity—as well as the occasional inconsistency—of his teachings.

The aim to make Berggasse 19 a «vivid image of the psychoanalytic present»⁹ dates back to Anna Freud: From the start, the project of the Sigmund Freud Gesellschaft, established in 1968 «to recognize and promote [her] father’s world-encompassing oeuvre appropriately, also at its place of origin,»¹⁰ was bound to the written word.¹¹ This is the reason that books too—in their quality as three-dimensional objects as well as, for the knowledge they contain, as «epistemic things»¹²—also have an prominent part to play in the new permanent exhibition. Some pieces in the exhibition bear the marks of use and ownership by their previous owners, many other books contain personal dedications, from Sigmund and Anna Freud, as well as from people like Arthur Schnitzler, Stefan Zweig, René Char, and Ernst H. Gombrich.

Hand-written dedications in books not only constitute highly personal acts and messages, but are also important sources for research, as they reflect wide networks of academic and artistic friendships and collaborations. «Ernst Kris with many thanks, and hoping for the favor to be returned,» we can read in a copy of Anna Freud’s *Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*. The dedication of the copy she presented to her father on his 80th birthday in May 1936, on the other hand, succinctly reads: «The writing of books as the highest means of defence against the dangers from inside and out.» Psychoanalysis, which Freud created as a «bond between cure and research,»¹³ has always included both: the development of new ways of thinking that are willing to engage and reflect the non-rational, and the development of a therapeutic method that aims at enabling people to create autonomous ways of living and working: «a state of things in which life will become tolerable for everyone and civilization no longer oppressive to anyone.»¹⁴

Such a task could only be achieved through decades of collaborative work with others. The dedications and notes of ownership in the exhibited books and reprints, these traces of appreciation between colleagues and of active academic exchange, also allow us to shed a light on all those who developed the

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Anna Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen* (*The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*), Vienna 1936 (detail)

new science of the unconscious with and beside Freud—which leads us to another curatorial desideratum: to show Freud in the context of academic and socio-political discourses of his time, to avoid—in spite of indisputable periods of «theoretical solitude»¹⁵—presenting him as a lone fighter in «splendid isolation,»¹⁶ and rather to show the historical conditions of his oeuvre and his (by no means conflict-free) exchange with others working in Vienna and around the globe.¹⁷ The many books in other languages in the new permanent exhibition that accompany some of the German-language first editions serve as eloquent testimony to the international dimension of the psychoanalytical movement, and in passing also allow one to draw some conclusions regarding cultural specificities. With regard to the delayed British English translation of Freud's seminal work of 1905, for instance, Arkadi Blatow has observed that, «the fact that the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* were only translated with a delay of 44 years in Britain speaks volumes on the attitude towards sexuality prevailing there.»¹⁸ In Moscow, on the other hand, the work was published in its second edition as early as 1912.

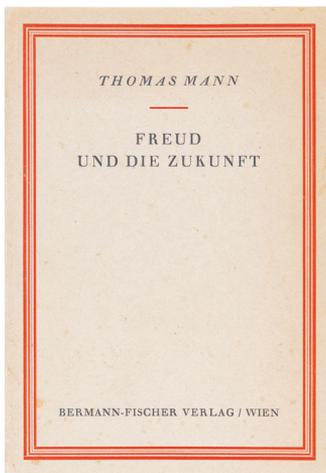
A manuscript goes through many stages before it can be presented between the covers of a book; a printed work that is to be made available in translation requires countless additional practices with regard to content, design, organization, and funding. «Paratextual» elements, such as blurbs, additional information on the cover, forewords and postscripts, all of which influence the book's reception, thus provide insight into the culture of the respective countries of publication.¹⁹ Sometimes, these can be attributed to decisions made by individual stakeholders. The title of Marie Bonaparte's French translation of Freud's *Selbstdarstellung—An Autobiographical Study*, for instance, *Ma vie et la psychanalyse* [my life and psychoanalysis], carries a great deal more meaning than the German original.

Many of the books we present in the exhibition are nearly or more than a century old. Once everyday objects, they are now treated as museum pieces nearly exempt from economic activity.²⁰ Still, this does not make them silent messengers from the past: with their coloring, clarity, and the expressive power of their covers and dust jackets, we might compare these objects to small-format posters or prints, and they contain texts the titles of which many visitors will recognize from later editions and new translations, or which they perhaps already own and have read—or may one day read. It is here that the invisible «interchange of words» finds its visible, material basis—and yet leaves room for the fantasies of the viewers, the readers.²¹ One need not have any previous knowledge to be inspired by blue letters on yellow linen, and to begin to muse about what the *Future of an Illusion* might be—on the contrary.

Visitors will be confronted with titles printed in blue Cochin Antiqua on a yellow cover in more than one display case: these are the publications of the Internationale Psychoanalytische Verlag. After years of working with the Vienna-based publishers Franz Deuticke and Hugo Heller, Freud was finally able to

fulfill his long-cherished wish to have his own publishing house, and thus an effective means of communication, in 1919. Thereafter, this publishing house also undertook the publication of the two psychoanalytical periodicals, *Imago. Zeitschrift für die Anwendung der Psychoanalyse auf die Geisteswissenschaften* (journal for the application of psychoanalysis to the humanities), established in 1912, and *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* (or *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*), in publication since 1913. The *Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik* (journal of psychoanalytic pedagogy), later edited by Anna Freud, was added in 1927, and *Die psychoanalytische Bewegung* (the psychoanalytic movement) in 1929.

Regardless of what copy one may chose from the mass of individual publication media, an act which in itself invariably confers a special value upon the same: each piece demonstrates the extent to which the printed work reflects its historical era and its enduring presence; what's more, the book in its materiality is a conspicuous sign of the interdisciplinary orientation of psychoanalysis, a networking science par excellence. The very first issue of the journal *Die psychoanalytische Bewegung* for instance, which was edited by A. J. Storfer, was published in spring 1929. Thomas Mann, author of the contribution «The Position of Freud in Modern Contemporary History» which received prominence of place on the title page, was to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature half a year later. In 1936, the Akademischer Verein für medizinische Psychologie [academic association of medical psychology], invited Mann to present the laudatio for Freud's 80th birthday, which was held at the Wiener Konzerthaus. Mann's lecture was initially published as a preprint in *Imago*, and rereleased later that same year by the newly established Bermann-Fischer Verlag in Vienna.²² Mann's remarks on, amongst others, Freud's sense of truth and his appreciation of illness as a means of acquiring knowledge, are preceded by a title that is a statement as much as it is an appeal: The museum's visitors encounter it in narrow capital letters on the pale original paperback binding: *Freud and the Future* (*Freud und die Zukunft*). In spite of the fact that the gaze of psychoanalysis is turned towards the past, into childhood, he said, the «concept of the future



Thomas Mann,
Freud und die Zukunft
(*Freud and the Future*),
Vienna 1936

[was] the one [he] associated most easily and most spontaneously with the name of Freud.»²³ In this, we follow Thomas Mann. Our new permanent exhibition, which does without virtual reality or immersive media, also employs the concept of the future in the sense of «untimeliness»: «contrary to our time, and yet with an influence on it for the benefit, it may be hoped, of a future time.»²⁴

Translated from the German by Brita Pohl, Vienna

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—— 1 —— Cf. also Lothar Müller, *Freuds Dinge. Der Diwan, die Apollokerzen und die Seele im technischen Zeitalter* (Berlin: Die Andere Bibliothek, 2019). —— 2 —— The Viennese family enterprise Bäuml, a transport business that specialized in shipping art and furniture, was commissioned to ship the complete former contents of Berggasse 19. The «objects [were] sent on their way loaded into three carriages [...]» read the confirmation of clerk Gerstenberger, sent on August 4, 1938 to Freud's first London address, 39 Elsworthy Road. Whether out of consideration or simply due to a lack of adequate terms, Gerstenberger writes of «removal goods.» By that time, Gerstenberger's former employer, Erich Emil Bäuml, was himself on his way into his American exile, the business had been Aryanized in June. —— 3 —— Cf. Anna Freud to Max Eitingon, September 26, 1938, in the Anna Freud Papers, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., box 24, folder 3. —— 4 —— Freud scholars dedicated to working with the written sources, however, the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. constitutes Eldorado. The Freud Archives, established in 1951 with a comprehensive mission to collect and provide a material base for a Freud hagiography, were initiated by psychoanalyst Kurt R. Eissler, who had emigrated from Vienna to New York, with Anna Freud's support. —— 5 —— Cf. Hans Lobner, 20th report («Trip of the Curator and Librarian to London, 8–24 May 1974»), 1, in: Archive of the Sigmund Freud Museum. —— 6 —— Ibid., 4. —— 7 —— Cf. Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Origins of the Museum* (London: Polity Press, 1990). —— 8 —— Peter Geimer held the lecture «Freud Has Not Been Here for a Long Time. On legacies» at the Sigmund Freud Museum on March 1, 2018; also cf. his book *Derrida ist nicht zu Hause. Begegnungen mit Abwesenden* (Hamburg: Philo Fine Arts, 2013). —— 9 —— Cf. the «open letter» to the members of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA) that Anna Freud drafted in October 1972 and published in German and English in 1974. Therein, she addressed the necessity of providing a library for Berggasse 19, and asked every member to donate a signed copy of their publications. Anna Freud Papers, box 40, folder 1, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. —— 10 —— Cf. Friedrich Hacker to Anna Freud, October 30, 1968, *ibid.* —— 11 —— Cf. Anna Freud to Friedrich Hacker, November 5, 1968, *ibid.* This and Hacker's previous letter are also printed in Johannes Reichmayer's essay ««Was soll das werden?» 25 Jahre Sigmund Freud-Gesellschaft in Wien. Eine weitere Jubiläumsbetrachtung,» *Werkblatt* 31 (1993): 104–121. —— 12 —— On this term cf. Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1997). —— 13 —— Sigmund Freud *The Question of Lay Analysis* [1926e], in *SE* 20, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1959) 179–258, 256. —— 14 —— Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, 1927c, 50. —— 15 —— Cf. Louis Althusser, «Freud and Lacan,» in *Writings on Psychoanalysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 52. —— 16 —— On this term, cf. Tilman Elliger, «Sigmund Freuds «splendid isolation.» Materialien zur Kritik der psychoanalytischen Geschichtsschreibung,» *Psyche* 44 (7) (1990): 612–627. —— 17 —— For an outstanding and more recent example of a historiography of psychoanalysis that contextualizes Freud within the discourses of his time, cf. Georges Makari, *Revolution in Mind. The Creation*

of *Psychoanalysis* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008). — 18 — Cf. Arkadi Blatow, «Vorläufiger Bericht zur Sichtung des Buchbestands des Archivs des Sigmund Freud Museums, Wien, Berggasse 19,» unpublished. Blatow, whose comprehensive expertise regarding the publication history of psychoanalysis also be gleaned from the following essay in this catalogue, has provided vital support in important curatorial reflections and in fine-tuning the choice of objects. — 19 — Cf. Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests. Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newmann and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997). — 20 — Cf. Pomian, *Collectors*, 1990, 16. — 21 — Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, (1916–17), 17. — 22 — Publisher Gottfried Bermann Fischer, previously the managing director of the Berlin-based S. Fischer Verlag, had decided upon this step in order to be able to continue publishing authors banned in Germany following the Nazi takeover, and leading up to this point had already sold portions of the Berlin publishing house. Bermann Fischer and his family then fled Vienna following the *Anschluss* of Austria; he was able to continue his work in Stockholm, where he cooperated with Bonnier publishers. Cf. Gottfried Bermann Fischer, *Bedroht—Bewahrt. Der Weg eines Verlegers* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982). — 23 — Thomas Mann, «Freud und die Zukunft,» *Imago* 22 (3) (1936): 257–274, 273. For Freud, a wish is repeated in future events. On Freud's scattered references and approaches regarding a psychoanalytic concept of the future see: Moritz Senarclens de Grancy, *Der heißeste Wunsch der Menschheit* (Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2020). — 24 — On this quote from Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations*, and for a discussion of psychoanalysis as a timely science, cf. Joachim Küchenhoff, *Die Achtung vor dem Anderen. Psychoanalyse und Kulturwissenschaften im Dialog* (Weilerswist: Velbrück, 2005), 9.

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