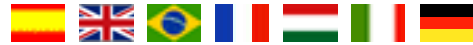


# EVIDENCIAS TESTIMONIALES.

## EVIDENCIA TESTIMONIAL. FREUD & FERENCZI.



By Axel Hoffer, Reply by Phyllis Grosskurth .  
In response to *The Lovable Analyst* (December 8, 1988)  
Volume 36, Number 13 · August 17, 1989 Letter

To the Editors:

Phyllis Grosskurth's informative review of *The Clinical Diary of Sandor Ferenczi* contains an unfortunate mistranslation of a letter from Sigmund Freud to Ferenczi at the beginning of Ernest Jones's analysis by Ferenczi. Her mistranslation is of pivotal importance because it sets the tone for her description of Jones and his relationships with Freud and Ferenczi. The complexity of the relationships between these three giants of psychoanalysis must be accurately depicted to avoid distortions in the reconstruction of the history of psychoanalysis and of the lives of its leading proponents. Since this mistranslation forms the basis of Grosskurth's portrayal of Jones, I believe it is important to call this point to the attention of your readers.

According to Grosskurth, charges that Ferenczi's mind deteriorated were:

...circulated mainly by Ernest Jones in his biography of Freud. Jones was fiercely jealous of the closeness of the relationship between Ferenczi and Freud. In 1913 Freud made it clear that he wanted Jones to be analyzed by Ferenczi. Not unnaturally Jones didn't welcome Ferenczi's becoming privy to the irregularities of his sexual life. These had caused Freud some alarm, particularly since he needed a gentile to replace Jung after the latter's defection and Jones was the only candidate available. "Put some stuffing in the clown," Freud advised Ferenczi, "so we can make him a king." When Jones was writing his life of Freud, he was given access to the Freud-Ferenczi correspondence and it must have come as a shock to him to learn how much Freud had distrusted him. Consequently he omitted passages from letters he quoted, thus creating a false impression about Ferenczi. [*italics added*]

Compare the disparaging quotation italicized above with Freud's actual letter to Ferenczi in German, which I assume is Grosskurth's source:

Wien am 8. Juni 1913

Lieber Freund

Es freut mich sehr, dass Jones gut einsetzt. Seien Sie streng und zartlich mit ihm. Er ist ein sehr guter Mensch. Futtern Sie die puppe, so dass eine konigin aus ihr werden kann....

Ihr

Freud

My translation reads as follows:

Vienna

8 June 1913

Dear Friend:

I am very pleased that Jones is starting out well. Be strict and tender with him. He is a very fine person. Feed the pupa (chrysalis) so that it can become a queen bee....

Yours,

Freud

Clearly, Grosskurth's translation significantly distorts the content and tone of Freud's communication to Ferenczi. The crucial word is "Puppe" which can mean "doll" but in this context clearly means "pupa" or "chrysalis," the larval stage of an insect. "Puppe" cannot be rendered as "clown." The word "Futter" as a noun means stuffing, but here "Futtern Sie" is clearly the imperative of the verb "to feed." Finally, "Konigin" (a feminine noun) can only mean "queen" which in context refers to the "queen bee." Forcing the word into the masculine "king" brings the mistranslation into sharp focus.

Thus, this letter does not support Grosskurth's assertion that Jones was angered by reading the Freud-Ferenczi correspondence. Indeed, comparing the unfolding, analytic process with the metamorphosis of a larval form to an adult insect is neither unusual nor in any sense demeaning. Jones would have been touched, not offended, by the loving concern Freud expressed here.

The mistranslation notwithstanding, Grosskurth does raise important questions. Did Jones, motivated by jealousy, malevolently try to prove that Ferenczi was crazy? What was Freud's actual role in this devaluing portrayal? Recent scholarship indicates that the bias against Ferenczi in Jones's biography of Freud cannot be simply written off as a product of Jones's jealousy. Rather, it is becoming increasingly clear that Freud's view of Ferenczi as suffering from mental "aberrations" played a larger role in Jones's negative portrayal of Ferenczi than had been appreciated. For example, Peter Gay [<sup>1\*</sup>] declares:

...what has remained largely a secret is that Jones's description of Ferenczi's mental state (which has been read as an expression of envious rivalry with an analyst who, he knew, stood closer to Freud than he did) is really an almost literal transcription of Freud's diagnosis.

Grosskurth is cognizant of this in her review and lets us know that she doesn't use Jones's jealousy alone to explain his anti-Ferenczi bias. She notes, "Freud, as he grew older, became increasingly intolerant of views differing from his own, and he did not hesitate to claim that such differences had pathological sources." With Grosskurth, I believe our deeper understanding of the multi-layered relationships between Freud and Ferenczi (1908–33) and between Freud and Jones (1908–39) through periods of intense personal, political and psychoanalytic upheaval will be greatly enhanced by the long-awaited publication of the Freud-Jones and Freud-Ferenczi correspondences. In the meantime, these fascinating and controversial issues should still be considered sub judice.

Axel Hoffer, M.D.

Co-translator (with Peter T. Hoffer) of: Freud, S., *A Phylogenetic Fantasy*. Ed: Gubrich-Simintis, I., Harvard University Press: Cambridge and London, 1987.

Brookline, Massachusetts

Phyllis Grosskurth replies:

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<sup>1\*</sup>.- Freud: A Life for our Time. Norton: New York, Fn. p. 586, 1988

The translation is not mine, but that of Elisabeth Young-Bruehl in her authorized biography of Anna Freud (Summit Books, 1988), page 62. In her “Acknowledgments and Notes on Sources” (page 11), Young-Bruehl states that “all translations from German papers are my own.” Ms. Young-Bruehl had easier access to some archival material than many other scholars.

It goes without saying that my view of the Freud-Jones relationship is not based on a single sentence but on the extensive history of their involvement with each other.

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PÁGINAS DEL PORTAL ALSF-CHILE

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Contacto: [alsfchile@alsf-chile.org](mailto:alsfchile@alsf-chile.org).