

From New York to Vienna, Kardiner and Freud: A Close Encounter

During the 1920s, Vienna endured the hardship of a post-war reality and inaugurated a social democratic municipal government. As had been the case previously under the Habsburg empire, the city remained a significant attraction for those who wanted to train in psychoanalysis: this was true for many Americans from New York. The experience of Abram Kardiner who came to Vienna to enter into analysis with Sigmund Freud in the early 1920s is discussed here, revealing the closeness of the two men, in terms of family history, perception of their Jewishness, and their theoretical endeavors, notwithstanding some discrepancies. The educational project that Anna Freud formed in Vienna with Dorothy Burlingham, also from New York, is subsequently outlined. Using oral history archives from Columbia University, this anthropological approach seeks to highlight the urban, social and political contexts that shaped – more or less consciously – the history of psychoanalysis and its expansion beyond Vienna.

“Fin-de-siècle Vienna” has become, thanks to numerous and excellent critical works, a point of reference for the understanding of European cultural history. American historian Carl E. Schorske, one of its advocates, praised the city’s astonishing innovative power at the turn of the 20th century: “The Viennese intelligentsia had invented almost simultaneously in all fields new movements that had emerged in all the cultural spheres of Europe under the name of ‘Vienna schools’, particularly in psychology, art history or music.”¹ This article focuses on a later but equally singular period, that of the 1920s, particularly

1 Carl E. Schorske: Vienne fin de siècle. Politique et culture. Aus dem Deutschen von Yves Thoraval und Eric Vigne, Vorwort Jacques Le Rider. Paris 2017 [1961], p. 34–35.

the profoundly ambivalent relationships that developed at that time between the Freuds – father and daughter – and Americans flocking to the city to undergo “analysis with Freud”.

Unlike the end of the 19th century, the peak of imperial Vienna, the “Vienna of the 1920s” did not generate pioneers but rather a new generation of psychoanalytic men and women, benefiting from direct transmission from the founding father, and seeking to chart their own course in very different historical conditions. After the First World War, young doctors came from the United States ready to follow didactic analyses, as did people wishing to experience the therapeutic effect of psychoanalysis. It is worth remembering that Freud was invited in 1909 by Stanley Hall of Clark University (Massachusetts) to travel to America with Jung and Ferenczi; his lectures had a real impact and were immediately published and translated.²

This article focuses on two New York personalities who came to Vienna during this decade. First, the American psychiatrist Abram Kardiner, analysing with Sigmund Freud post-WW1; then Dorothy Burlingham, who settled in Vienna where, whilst analysing with Sigmund Freud, she contributed to the educational projects of Anna Freud, which were being supported by so-called Red Vienna.

Through these individual life experiences, I intend to formulate a historical approach to psychoanalysis in relation to the urban contexts that saw the birth and development of this new therapeutic practice. The attractiveness of both cities, Vienna and New York, at the end of the 19th century prompted important migrations particularly from Eastern Europe. The aim here is to highlight the significance of the environment, both material and social, in forming the psychic personality. If this focus on urban spaces presents a novel interdisciplinary approach, drawing on as it does on urban anthropology and the history of psychoanalysis, it follows the path developed by Abram Kardiner ever since the 1930s. Within the framework of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, of which he was a founding member, Kardiner called for a sustained dialogue with

2 Freud's lectures, *Five Lessons on Psychoanalysis*, were first published in English in 1910 in the *American Journal of Psychology*, and in German under the title, *Über Psychoanalysis: Fünf Vorlesungen*, Wien, Deuticke; they were translated into French in 1921.

anthropologists so as to integrate cultural and social variables into the theoretical conception of the psyche.³ This connection between the social sciences and psychoanalysis is currently a trending concern shared by several fields of research, including history: Hervé Mazurel, for instance, emphasizes the “historicity of the unconscious”, meaning that “the social-historical context subterraneously toils the subject [...] at the most obscure of itself.”⁴

Vienna, a City Converting to Psychoanalysis

If the political situation in Austria, stripped of its Empire in 1918, did not engage the interest of the American doctors who came to train in Vienna, its economic turmoil could not be ignored. Coming from a victorious nation with a flourishing economy, they discovered a country devastated by inflation, and quickly realized that the American dollar was a powerful asset in Europe. Among them, a shocked Abram Kardiner wrote, “I was a millionaire with a few hundred dollars in my pocket.”⁵

Kardiner was among the first Americans to embark on the adventure of psychoanalysis (which was still nascent in New York, where there were only a handful of practitioners at the time). Arriving in Vienna in 1921, an unknown young psychiatrist coming from a country that had financially benefited from the war, Kardiner seemed to be part of a world quite foreign to that of the former capital of the Empire – a fallen city, but nevertheless with its own strong psychoanalytic institutions, with Freud as its world-renowned patriarch. Kardiner’s analysis allowed him to reveal his own history, his psychogenesis, in the intimacy of PROF. Dr. FREUD’s office, as read his professional brass plate.

No one was supposed to know what was said there, but Kardiner later divulged his experiences scrupulously and extensively, as part of a research program that collected the life stories of pioneers

3 Anne Raulin: *Les traces psychiques de la domination. Essai sur Kardiner.* Lormont 2016.

4 Hervé Mazurel: *L'inconscient ou l'oubli de l'histoire.* Paris 2021, p. 11, p. 23, translation Anne Raulin.

5 Abram Kardiner: *My analysis with Freud. Reminiscences.* New York 1977, p. 72.

of psychoanalysis in the United States. Between 1963 and 1982 Bluma Swerdloff, psychoanalyst and friend of Kardiner, conducted an oral history of the beginnings of psychoanalysis, drawing on representatives from its various currents: among them, Michael Balint, Heinz Hartmann, Rudolph Loewenstein, Margaret Mahler, Sandor Rado, Raymond de Saussure, René Spitz and Abram Kardiner. These interviews were conducted from the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University. The practice of oral history dates to the 1930s in the United States, though it was not a university discipline until the late 1940s; it remains a vibrant field to this day. According to Mary Marshall Clark, one of its current exponents, oral history is „generally defined as the narration, representation and interpretation of history through recorded interviews with eyewitnesses.“⁶ Its purpose is to capture different experiences and individual viewpoints, integrating them into collective history and helping to understand its conflicting dynamics. This oral material is a combination of autobiography, biography and cultural history.

The interviews conducted by Bluma Swerdloff thus favoured the expression of subjective contents by the pioneers of psychoanalysis. Each transcription of these interviews amounted to an average of 100 pages, but Kardiner's narrative filled more than 700 pages, thanks to his astonishing talent as a 'raconteur'. His interviews were recorded in about 15 sessions between December 1962 and March 1963, at a rate of one per week. *The Reminiscences of Abram Kardiner* was the initial raw material by which Kardiner, at the insistence of his wife Edie and his daughter Ellin, (who deemed them worthy of diffusion to the general public) conceived the book centred on his analysis with Freud. *My analysis with Freud* (1977) was published about 15 years later; it was a small but dense book that was immediately translated into French, then into German.⁷ This "candid" testimony, with its sincere and distanced perspective on the psychoanalytic scene in Vienna in the early

6 Mary Marshall Clark: Oral History, Art and Praxis. In: Arlene Goldbard, Don Adams (eds.): Community, Culture and Globalization. New York 2002, pp. 87–105, p. 89.

7 Abram Kardiner: My Analysis with Freud. Reminiscences. New York 1977; Mon analyse avec Freud, trad. fr. Andrée Lyotard-May, préface Mikel Dufrenne. Paris 1978; Meine Analyse bei Freud. Aus dem Amerikanischen von Gudrun Theusner-Stampa. München 1979.

1920s, triggered great interest; it has remained a classic in psychoanalytic literature, mainly because it documents the Freudian narrative.

These pioneering oral history works, which are housed at Columbia University, constitute the basis for the following research and for my own argument. This article draws particularly on the original document, *The Reminiscences of Abram Kardiner*, to explore an interesting moment in psychoanalytic history, as enacted by the encounter between these two men, Freud and Kardiner, in regard to their specific personal stories, and by recontextualizing the urban scenes where they unfolded.

Kardiner's Psychogenesis in New York⁸

Far from the national stereotype of American wealth and confidence, Kardiner appears in these *Reminiscences* in a dramatic light, with he and his family having been subjected to several ordeals during his childhood. Born on American soil to a recently immigrated family, he was raised in an urban environment of street violence and discrimination. Yet his experience was also animated by a rich Yiddish cultural heritage. The quest for social ascension and assimilation leads to a renunciation of certain vocations and values, and it nourishes sentimental attraction towards icons of the American dream and the dominant society.

The *Reminiscences* open, contrary to expectation, with the musical passion that accompanied Kardiner throughout his life. From a very young age, his musical ability impressed his parents and his neighborhood: his voice and his capacity for memorizing were remarkable. However, his father's reluctance to encourage his musical gifts was due to the hope that his son would become a medical doctor and acquire a high social and professional status.

The family came from the region of Volodymir (Vladimir), between Jitomir and Berdichev, then under Russian rule⁹. His father's

8 The following biographical details summarize my previously published work in French: Anne Raulin: *Les traces psychiques de la domination. Essai sur Kardiner*. Lormont 2016.

9 Kardiner talks about its Russian origins because the region was then under Russian rule – it is now in Ukraine. According to *My Analysis with Freud*, Isaac left his country in 1884 and he arrived at Ellis Island with the ship Columbia (!).

naturalization papers, dated 1901, refer to him as Isaac Kardiner, a name he changed to Kardiner. Born in 1863, he left his country in 1886, after a long military service in replacement of his brothers, and married Mildred Schlock against his will in 1884 to satisfy his mother. He sailed from Hamburg on the S.S. Lincoln, transited through Grimsby and Liverpool, and arrived in Philadelphia; Mildred and their Russian-born daughter joined him there some time later.

Abraham Kardiner was born in Manhattan on 17 August 1891, at Rivington Street on the Lower East Side. Amidst the economic depression of the Grover Cleveland government, work was scarce: Isaac peddled and Mildred contracted tuberculosis. Kardiner's childhood memories are of a miserable life, with an irascible father, who was furious at not being able to feed his own family, and a mother who was exhausted by illness. On American soil she twice gave birth to twins that subsequently died; only Abraham survived. She herself died in 1894, in the presence of three-and-a-half-year-old Abraham: the terror of masks, of faces without expression, will forever remind Kardiner of this first shock in his life – according to Freud's interpretation. The immediate consequences of this death were terrible: Abraham and his sister found themselves abandoned and in a state of "abject misery". They were hungry, filthy and without clothes until their father provided a new home, thanks to a new spouse.

According to Kardiner's account, Rachel behaved like a fairy establishing order and cleanliness in the house, preparing cakes and food, embodying beauty with her full and lively appearance – she remained a model of femininity for Kardiner – as well as by her ritual fervour: the moment of the Shabbat prayer, when she appeared sublimated by the light of the candlesticks, soothed the young boy. Unable to have children herself, Rachel adopted those of her husband, favouring the son Abraham and denigrating the daughter Bertha. But both had to learn social contempt, as their mother-in-law took every opportunity to assert the superiority of her social origins. Born in Iassy (Romania), she migrated to the United States in 1892 at the age of about 25 and considered herself to have come from a "better milieu".

The young Abraham was first educated at the *chedar*, the "parish" Jewish school, to use Kardiner's term: his memories of it remain nightmarish, with an endless recitation of texts that remained quite hermetic to him. The local Catholic school to which he was soon sent

on the advice of a neighbour (who had spotted his intellectual precocity) was a short-lived experience: their methods were also brutal and the teachers fairly incompetent, although Abraham was not insensitive to their charm and their thoughtfulness. He was quickly expelled along with those who had been asked to self-identify as Jews, without any other explanation.

He lived at 175 Orchard Street, not far from the current Tenement Museum, which showcases the living conditions of the population in the early 20th century. The neighbourhood, “at the time the city ghetto”, was culturally very rich. This urban area corresponded to the “transition zone” described by the Chicago School of sociology: areas of first settlement for migrants from Europe who, in a second stage, moved away from the city centre, then joining the more affluent and assimilated suburbs of American metropolises. These transition districts were described as places of degeneration as well as cultural and moral regeneration¹⁰: “Although the population was predominantly Jewish and Catholic, the prevailing culture was Jewish and of a high order. There were two daily Yiddish newspapers of opposing political views covering not only local, but also national and international affairs. There were two Yiddish repertory companies presenting the classics, Yiddish, English, and Russian, as well as the living Yiddish playwrights.”¹¹ Abraham prided himself on having discovered Hamlet in Yiddish!

The intensity of the neighbourhood also showed in the vitality of its youth, the street culture that Kardiner participated in, its relatively transgressive games, exploits and fears... Endemic violence between youth groups and gangs was part of the scene: “I also had a great fear of Italians. There were several reasons for this. One was the reputation they had for fiery tempers and the easy use of the stiletto. The reputation became a matter of fact when several such murders due to gambling quarrels took place in the very block on which I lived. Another reason was that it was dangerous for Jewish boys to go to the Italian section. [...] It is interesting to note that while each neighborhood had its bands of youth, they never seriously fought

10 Cf. Anne Raulin: *Utopies locales et laboratoire social*. In: *L'Année sociologique* 1 (58), 2008, pp. 47–70.

11 Kardiner 1977 (as in *fnnt.* 7), p. 31.

each other, but rather it was the Irish against the Italian and Jews, the Italians against the Irish and Jews, and so on, down the line.”¹² This violence, which permeated the daily life of street kids, remained part of Kardiner’s dream life.

On the other hand, public and private libraries, such as Carnegie’s, became places of refuge for him: Kardiner always remembered his card numbers, which enabled him to access the Bond Street libraries, Rivington Street and later 135th Street. It was in a Harlem then predominantly Jewish that Abraham’s father took up residence on 137th Street, his women’s clothing business and his talent as a salesman enabling him to achieve real wealth. The public library constituted an environment distinct from the cultural and religious life of the ghetto and its transmission of traditionally Yiddish cultural works¹³, and defined a space of ‘universal’ intellectual assimilation. It met Kardiner’s taste for secularized study, and his individual emancipation project. In 1912, at the age of 21, Abraham unsurprisingly falls in love with a librarian – a sentimental relationship whose failure would disturb him deeply and lastingly.

Kardiner then decided to abandon his medical studies for anthropology studies at Columbia University, where he followed the courses of Boas and Goldenweiser, which certainly contributed to his later openness as a psychoanalyst towards the social sciences. He eventually went back to medicine, specialized in psychiatry and, during his internship, discovered psychoanalysis thanks to Horace Frink, who then encouraged him to go to Vienna, where Frink himself was heading to undergo analysis with Freud. Frink warmly recommended Kardiner to Freud.

12 Id., p. 36. The film *West Side Story* was originally going to be called *East Side Story* and takes place on the Lower East Side, portraying the rivalries between youth groups in these neighbourhoods. But the project was slow to come to fruition: filmed after the war, it gave a central role to the Puerto Rican minority who at the time resided on the West Side.

13 On the importance of Yiddish libraries to the Jewish diaspora coming from Eastern Europe, cf. Jean-Pierre Hassoun: *A Yiddish Library in Paris*. In: Philippe Ollé-Laprune (ed.): *Paris, Mexico, Capitals of Exile*. Mexico City 2014, pp. 424–427. The sociology of reading and bibliographies on the social role of libraries have been abundantly studied and compiled.

The Meeting with Freud: A „Disturbing Familiarity“?

From the outset Kardiner acknowledged the benefits of his psychoanalysis with Freud: it allowed him to re-appropriate his early childhood, which had been obliterated by his mother's death and his father's remarriage. There is a more general reason for this oblivion, which was, as Freud put it: "this psychological paradox not only for the psychoanalytic conception, namely that it is precisely these impressions of the utmost importance which are not preserved in the memory of the later years."¹⁴

Kardiner was, however, more critical of his talents as a therapist, for the cure seemed to be responding to "routine" explanations such as the Oedipus complex or unconscious homosexuality. When Kardiner asked him "how he sees himself as an analyst," Freud replied: "I'm glad you ask, because, frankly, I have no great interest in therapeutic problems. I am much too impatient now. I have several handicaps that disqualify me as a great analyst. One of them is that I am too much the father. Second, I am much too much occupied with theoretical problems all the time, so that whenever I get occasion, I am working on my own theoretical problems, rather than paying attention to the therapeutic problems. Third, I have no patience in keeping people for a long time. I tire of them, and I want to spread my influence."¹⁵

Many biographies of Freud quote these words: they reveal a climate of trust between the two men and speak of a genuine encounter between them. Kardiner was proud to have regular conversations with his analyst, a fact which intrigued British analysts to the extent that they invited him to explain the reasons for this favour. For their part, James Strachey and John Rickman only knew a silent Freud, and felt jealous. The American analysts, however – and Kardiner in particular – resented the British because Freud agreed to keep them in analysis for much longer (sometimes for years) and held them in high esteem.

Both British and Americans benefited from Freud's language skills (he translated from French to German *Les mardis de Charcot*)

14 Sigmund Freud: *L'intérêt de la psychanalyse*. Presentation, translation and commentaries by Paul-Laurent Assoun. Paris [1913] 1980, p. 84. *Das Interesse an der Psychoanalyse* was published simultaneously in German and French in the journal *Scientia* in Bologna, 1913.

15 Kardiner (as in ftnt. 7), p. 69.

and in particular his competent English, a language he revered. He agreed to see six patients from across the Channel and the Atlantic, five times a week (rather than five patients six times a week, following the advice of his daughter Anna) to satisfy the many requests, which were more numerous than expected. It was understood that the Americans had to pay in dollars, and that none of them were willing to see another analyst. So Freud listened each day to different accents, which strained him and left him exhausted at night.

How can we explain this different treatment, which made Kardiner an intimate interlocuter for Freud? When he met the great man for the first time at the Vienna train station, Kardiner found him rather small. Throughout the cure, there remained this difficulty of matching the two Freuds, the famous author and the man he met every day. Kardiner opened up to Freud, who replied in English: “This is where familiarity breeds contempt.” So how did this feeling of familiarity, which threatened respectful distance and an idealized image, become reciprocal? Was it physical proximity and daily frequency that induced it? Yet the British analysts were as regular as Kardiner. We need to consider in depth their respective life paths, similar experiences, and ancestral lineages.

The geographical origins of the Kardiner family are not far removed from those of Freud, who describes them as such, though this remains hypothetical: “From my paternal family, I understand that they spent a long time in the Rhine countries (in Cologne), that following a persecution against the Jews in the 14th or 15th century, they fled to the East and that in the course of the 19th century, they returned from Lithuania, through Galicia, towards a German country, Austria.”¹⁶ Freud’s paternal family came from Buczacz and Tysmenitz in Galicia – at the time under Austrian rule after being part of the Kingdom of Poland, and now in Ukraine. This city was both a high place of Hassidism and of Haskala, the Jewish Enlightenment movement; Jakob Freud, Sigmund’s father, was certainly exposed to these two contradictory mid-nineteenth century currents, one mystical, the

16 Marianne Krüll: Sigmund, fils de Jacob, un lien non dénoué. Paris 1983. (Übersetzung in von Marielène Weber; Original: Freud und sein Vater: Die Entstehung der Psychoanalyse und Freuds ungelöste Vaterbindung. München, Gießen [1979] 2004, p. 134.)

other rational, before moving to a more western and less traditional horizon. Jakob's first home, with Sally Kanner, was in Tysmenitz, but it is in Freiberg, Moravia (now Příbor in the Czech Republic) that he made a family with his second wife (or third, a doubt remains), Amalia, Sigmund's future mother. Also born in Galicia, in Brody, she had lived part of her childhood in Odessa, and her own mother died there in her son's home, an uncle whom Freud, as a child, greatly admired. Many of his mother-side relatives, the Nathansohn family, were born in Russia at the time.

In short, the families of Freud and Kardiner originated from central Europe where national borders have continually changed, from cities and shtetls caught between several imperial powers. Those families kept migrating, locally from Galicia, then from Moravia to Vienna; and beyond the Atlantic, from Ukraine to the United States. In both cases, they ended up in the "ghettos" of large metropolises, where they lived in relative poverty.¹⁷ The Freud family moved to Leopoldstadt in 1860 (after trying to settle in Leipzig where they did not gain permission from the municipality, probably because of the conviction of Jakob's brother for counterfeiting¹⁸), where part of Amalia's family had settled.

The Kardiners settled in Manhattan around 1890. Leopoldstadt in Vienna can be compared to the Lower East Side in New York City, where there was remarkable development fuelled by very diverse Jewish people from Russia, Hungary, Moldova, Galicia and Lithuania at the end of the 19th century. The two authors shared the intimacy of these environments, their schools, their cultural tastes, though less of their synagogues: both defined themselves as secular

- 17 Freud is said to have embellished his father's situation somewhat: "Jakob Freud was poor and remained so all his life". Peter Gay: *Freud. Une vie*. Translation by Tina Jolas, preface by Catherine David. Paris 1991, p. 12. But the situation seems to have improved, partly thanks to his older sons who migrated to Manchester where they were successful in the textile industry. Kardiner's father, a tailor by trade and peddler when he arrived in New York, managed to stabilize his income by working in a fashionable clothing company and lent a considerable sum to his son for his stay in Vienna.
- 18 See Christfried Tögel: *Sigmund Freud's Path to Psychoanalysis. A Biographical Sketch*. In: Monika Pessler, Daniela Finzi (eds.): *Freud, Berggasse 19. The Origin of Psychoanalysis*. Berlin 2020, p. 51, note 10.

Jews or lay people, defying all religions. They both chose medical science at random to get out of their social situations and maintained throughout their lives an attachment – not without ambivalence – to their adopted or birth metropolis. Freud simply “crossed the bridge” since he settled in the Berggasse, a street on the other side of the bridge spanning the Danube Canal, which separates Leopoldstadt from the historic centre of Vienna. “Settling down as master on the other side” is the expression chosen by Marthe Robert¹⁹ to designate Freud’s ambition to conquer the non-Jewish world, which seemed at the end of the century a realistic desire.²⁰

However, this change of district was not only specific to Freud, but rather followed a movement common to many Jewish families who came from Moravia or Bohemia from the 1860s onwards²¹, settling first in Leopoldstadt and later leaving it for other districts of Vienna, closer to the “Ring” or ring road. Freud moved from the 2nd to the 9th district, where many Jews lived – especially in the neighbourhood around Berggasse (Porzellangasse, Servitengasse, Pramergasse, Müllnergasse, where the Müllner Temple existed until 1938), and not least in No. 19 Berggasse itself. Most Jewish residents belonged to the middle class: employees, tradesmen, shopkeepers, academics and intelligentsia. Another decisive factor for Freud was the proximity to the university and to medical institutions.

No. 19 Berggasse, newly built when Freud moved there in 1891²², was erected on land belonging to the family of Viktor Adler,

19 Marthe Robert: *D’Edipe à Moïse. Freud et la conscience juive*. Paris 1974, p. 170.

20 On the historical process of leaving the ghetto in Europe, see Jakob Katz: *Out of the Ghetto. The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation (1770–1870)*, Cambridge 1973.

21 “The constitution of 1867 fully integrated the Jews into Austrian society; it gave them access to politics, and to the social, cultural, and economic life of Vienna – and provided incentives for many Jews from various regions of the monarchy to move to the capital. The Jewish community grew quickly: in 1860, the community consisted of 6,200 Jewish Viennese, in 1870, there were 40,200 and, at the turn of the century, 147,000 Jews were seeking their fortunes in the imperial city.” In: *Jewish Vienna, Heritage and Mission*, Vienna, s.d., p. 8.

22 Prior to this address, Freud settled briefly on Rathausstrasse and Maria-Theresien-Strasse.

who had once lived there in a house with a garden, and where his medical office was open to the needy. He was a classmate of Freud during their medical studies, and “Freud remembered challenging Adler, to whom he had strong feelings of rivalry and envy, in a German nationalist student organization, to which they both belonged in the 1870s.”²³ The future leader of the Austrian Social Democratic Workers’ Party (which he had founded in 1898) was himself a member of a family of textile entrepreneurs, having left Moravia for Vienna just as Freud’s family had done. It is also worth mentioning Ida Bauer, who was the sister of Otto Bauer, theoretician and secretary of the same party, and whose family also resided in the Berggasse, at number 32. Ida entered the history of psychoanalysis as the “Dora case”, a ‘hysterical’ girl who terminated of her own will her analysis with Freud after eleven weeks, at the end of 1900 (Freud’s interpretations of Dora subsequently provoked many controversies²⁴). This geographical and social proximity was not, however, coupled with an ideological convergence with these politicians, and Sigmund Freud adopted as of the 1900s a quite conservative posture.²⁵

As for Kardiner, he lodged during his stay in Vienna at the Frankel family not far away, on Esslinggasse. He soon discovered that Mr. Frankel was a member of the B’nai B’rith, a Jewish mutual society conceived on the model of Masonic lodges, founded in New York in 1843. Freud had also been a member of this society since 1897, and it was there that he presented his draft of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). This first audience was a circle of mostly atheist Jews, and they attempted to explain their strong feelings of belonging to the Jewish people as a “post-religious” stand (to use a modern term). Freud never denied his Jewish descent, and Kardiner altogether rejected religion; both men were committed to the expansion of scientific knowledge and a rational understanding of humankind.

Thus there were obvious reasons why these two men, separated by a 35-year age gap, who did not belong to the same continent,

23 Schorske (as in fnnt. 1), p. 264.

24 This case prompted many psychoanalytic and literary critiques, cf. Sylvie Sesé-Léger: *Freud et le féminin, Dora, Sidonie, Hilda et les autres*. Paris 2021.

25 Marie-Louise Testenoire: *Freud et Vienne en 1900*. In: *Critique* (339–340), 1975, pp. 819–883.

nation, or language but who understood each other easily (Kardiner also spoke and read German) felt some closeness²⁶. Was there some “Unheimliche”, i.e. “strange familiar” (François Roustang’s translation) revealed by the analysis itself? How did Freud perceive it? Did he recognize himself somewhat in this young American psychiatrist? Did he feel some fraternal sympathy or/and some fraternal contempt? What did Kardiner grasp of these shared realities – given the asymmetry of knowledge in the cure? In any case, after six months of analysis (a period that had been fixed from the outset in his first letter to Kardiner), Freud ended the sessions, wishing him a good marriage, and predicting that he would become a rich man. Kardiner was very taken aback by these words: he could not understand how such deep psychoanalysis could be concluded in such a banal if benevolent manner. Freud sent him home with his blessing.

Freud’s Choice for Promoting Psychoanalysis in the United States

In the timeframe of a few decades, both would benefit from the exceptional conditions of social advancement that the Vienna of the liberal era at the end of the 19th century or the New York of the interwar period allowed. Not that the path was necessarily smooth. The Judeophobia that plagued Austria, which Freud suffered from during his medical studies, and which delayed his promotion²⁷, was not absent from American institutions, as Kardiner recalls in his *Reminiscences*. Vienna was also a place of unfortunate experiences for the young American. After a New Year’s Eve party, his encounter with a girl was foreshortened because of his Jewishness, which did not surprise him, convinced as he was of local anti-Semitism; however, he made no further comment on the political situation in Vienna.

Freud was determined to promote psychoanalysis as a universal science, and he talked about this with Kardiner: “Freud had a great fear about the future of psychoanalysis. He believed that

26 Perhaps there was some further identification: Freud had shortened his first name from Sigmund to Sigmund, and Abraham contracted his to Abram.

27 Schorske (as in *fnnt.* 1).

psychoanalysis would founder because it would go down in history as a 'Jewish' science. He hated this idea. He said this was a preoccupation with him and that he did not know what to do about it, because most of the people who were attracted to it were Jewish."²⁸ Thus Freud set his sights on Horace Frink, the physician who had recommended Kardiner to Freud, so that he could take the helm of the nascent New York Psychoanalytic Society. Frink's fate is well known, and it was severely contrary to Freud's expectations²⁹. It was during his second analysis in Vienna that Freud considered promoting Frink to the top of the NYPS, to the detriment of Brill, the first translator of his works in America. Frink was given preference because the quality of his publications³⁰, as well as his status as a non-Jew, which augured for a more open and prosperous development of psychoanalysis in the United States. However, Frink's highly compromised mental health did not allow him to accomplish this mission, and Brill returned to front of stage.

Much has been said and written about Freud's aversion to the United States, where he had travelled and met with William James. In addition to his perceptions, as amply described by Peter Gay in his biography of Freud, it is important to give Kardiner's feeling about this aversion:

"I never made any sense out of Freud's opposition to America. Maybe some of the things that I have to say about it will sound a little catty, but he didn't have that feeling about England, for example. He was indeed an Anglophile, and treated the British with great deference. Psychoanalysis in America was represented largely by Jews of Russian descent, and that may have been some of the origin for his contempt for America. But quite apart from that, he said that he had his first gastric disorders when he came to America to get his Doctor of Laws degree from Clark University. It was the first time he had gastric disturbances, and it stuck to him for the rest of his life. So he disliked America because the cooking was bad.

28 Kardiner (as in *ftnt.* 7), p. 70.

29 Cf. Paul Roazen: Frink, Horace Westlake. In: Alain de Mijolla (ed.): *Dictionnaire International de la Psychanalyse*. Paris 2002, pp. 701–702.

30 His book *Morbid Fears and Compulsions* (1918) strongly impressed Kardiner.

He never said anything rational about it. My personal theory was that while he received a L.L.D. from Clark University, Jung got the same. But two years later Alfred Adler also got one too. Freud never forgave America for that, nor Stanley Hall, then President of Clark University. Furthermore, he had the idea that America was a provincial little country, not likely to play any significant role, not only in the future of psychoanalysis, but in the world itself.”³¹

Thus Kardiner perceived Freud’s reluctance to entrust him with anything more than a secondary role in the redeployment of the NYPS, and his progressive disinterest, following Frink’s defection, towards the promotion of psychoanalysis in the United States. This reaction suggests how sensitive Freud could be to the ethnic and national divisions that crisscrossed the psychoanalytic movement of the time, as they related to his strategies. Freud wanted to emancipate psychoanalysis, to take it out of its initial geographical, social and cultural context, in order to give it the status of universal knowledge. This project seemed better served by its proliferation and future in the United Kingdom, which led Ernest Jones to say in his autobiography that “the reasons (for this Jewish recruitment) were purely due to the local situation in Austria and Germany, because, except for the United States, where the same phenomenon is weakly attested, it is a trait that is found nowhere else.”³² Jones himself was a “good example”, as was Jung, before the famous estrangement.

31 Kardiner 1977 (as in fnt. 7), p. 175. Freud’s exasperation towards the United States is noticeable in this remark that he made during the visit of an American psychoanalyst. Was it Kardiner? Kardiner visited him in his resort in Semmering in 1927, see id., p. 11: “Freiheitsstatue in Hafen von New York durch die eines Affen zu ersetzen, der eine Bibel hochhält” (“In place of the Statue of Liberty, one should have erected in the port of New York that of a monkey brandishing a bible.”), Tögel (as in fnt. 18), p. 65. In 1927 during this summer holiday Dorothy Burlingham began her analysis with Freud in Semmering.

32 Quoted by Gay (as in fnt. 17), p. 694.

From Vienna to New York: Post-First World War and the Concept of Trauma

Following his return from Vienna and his cure with Freud, Kardiner worked at the U.S. Veteran Hospital in New York from 1922 to 1925. This first professional experience as a psychiatrist with American veterans of the Great War (he had himself been mobilized in August 1918, but the end of hostilities in November had spared him the test of fire) fully illustrated to him the fact that the United States also experienced the effects and consequences of the world conflict.

Throughout the interwar period, Kardiner continued his theoretical research on this topic at the New York Society for Clinical Psychiatry. He could draw on the contributions of European psychoanalysis, of English psychiatrists, psychologists and psychoanalysts such as W.H.R. Rivers, William McDougall and Ernst Jones, but also from German speakers Sandor Ferenczi, Karl Abraham and Ernst Simmel. Freud's contribution on this subject was all the more significant for him since it constituted the starting point for his criticism of the notion of "instinct", which Kardiner considered too strictly biological, and poorly adapted to the understanding of war trauma and its inhibitory consequences.

The Traumatic Neurosis of War was not published until 1941. When it came out, war had broken out again in Europe, including the bombing of civilian populations: the applied field of this research had to be enlarged. This book is considered one of the American sources of the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnosis, a prevalent social and psychological issue nowadays.³³

Anna's Generation: a Vienna-New York Alliance

It would be useful at this point to draw a prospective outline and show how the connection between Vienna and New York evolved throughout the Twenties. Psychoanalytic training continued to be a powerful draw for foreigners to come and settle for a while in the Austrian

33 See Didier Fassin, Richard Rechtman: *L'empire du traumatisme. Enquête sur la condition de victime*. Paris 2007.

capital city, but the attraction was now felt not only by male physicians but also by laywomen. This shift in gender soon necessitated a development in standpoints and in psychoanalytic theories. A keen awareness of what was involved in raising and training children, not only within a family but also at school and in an urban setting, was evolving in relation to the specific context of Vienna social-democratic policies.

The thirty-five-year age difference between Sigmund and Abram constituted a full generation gap. But Kardiner (born 1891) was only five years older than Anna Freud (born 1896), whose discreet presence was felt by the psychoanalytic circle in the early 1920s. Kardiner, a direct witness, remembers:

“His daughter Anna was unquestionably his favorite, and she was at that time teaching school. She came to the meetings of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, but never spoke or participated in any discussions. She was quite an attractive girl, and, as later events proved, a chip off the old block. [...]

All of the students surrounding Freud at the time were filled with all kinds of theories as to why Anna Freud was not married. Freud was aware that she was having difficulties choosing a husband, and when he once asked me, ‘Do you have any theory about why?’ my answer was, ‘Well, look at her father. This is an ideal that very few men could live up to, and it would surely be a comedown for her to attach herself to a lesser man.’”³⁴

This question – proof of the intimacy that the two men shared – also shows how much these family affairs had become public, how much the registers of personal and professional life were intertwined, Freud being the analyst of his own daughter – which she would later repeat with her companion’s children.

Although the 1920s in Vienna were still dominated by the aftermath of the war, they were also an exceptional political decade marked by the implementation of a highly innovative social policy under the aegis of the Social Democratic Workers’ Party. *Rotes Wien*, Red Vienna (given the name of the municipality of Vienna between 1918 and 1934), was governed, in association with the Social Christian

34 Kardiner (as in *fnnt.* 7), p. 77.

Party, by the Social Democratic Workers' Party, which derived from the theoretical current known as Austro-Marxism³⁵.

Above all concerned with the reform of health and education systems, one of Red Vienna's major achievements was the establishment of a social housing programme, in particular along the outer or belt boulevards (*Gürtel*), and along the Danube, like the famous Karl-Marx-Hof in Heiligenstadt. These "housing projects" (Hof) had an innovative design, with communal facilities (nurseries, laundries), inner gardens, monumental decor and ornamental frescoes. Each building displays in large letters the contracting authority, namely the municipality of Vienna (*Gemeinde Wien*) with the date of construction, a practice still in use. This municipal power significantly changed the face of the city, as the Habsburg Empire had done by transforming the former defensive enclosure into large boulevards (*Ring*).

This decade saw the rise of a whole new generation of analysts, especially women analysts. The presence of Anna Freud in the psychoanalytic movement was confirmed when she became general secretary of the International Association of Psychoanalysis in 1927. However, this assumption of responsibility was carried out in close association with an American personality that was newly introduced into the seraglio, and in a political climate that was largely open to educational experimentation.

In 1925, a person with a completely different profile than that of Kardiner arrived in Vienna from New York, also to undergo analysis, first with Theodor Reik and then with Sigmund Freud. Dorothy Burlingham was then the mother of four children, in the process of divorcing a husband who was described as manic-depressive, and an heiress of the Tiffany family. Dorothy sought to emancipate herself

35 Yvon Bourdet points out that the term Austromarxism is "unique in its kind" since "other Marxisms (Luxembourgism, Leninism, Trotskyism, Maoism, etc.), were coined after the name of a leader, not a place." Yvon Bourdet: *Actualité de l'austromarxisme*. In: *Critique* 339–340, 1975, pp. 980–992, p. 991. One of its specificities was to take into account (given the multinational and multicultural dimension of the Empire) the reality of ethnic diversity, diverging from the project of a culturally uniformed socialism. "In fact, Austro-Marxism appears in the early years of our [20th] century, as a *school of thought*; the social democracy as a *project* of transformation of society will really be part of History not until after the fall of the Empire, in 'Red Vienna'." Id., p. 980, translation Anne Raulin.

from the weight of her famous grandfather and father, respectively the jeweller Charles Lewis and the artist Louis Comfort Tiffany, painter and master glassmaker. Anna Freud had the same difficulty of positioning herself in relation to a famous father, and thereby perceived one of the reasons for their allied futures, as companions in life and professional vocation. Dorothy Burlingham soon moved with her children to No. 19 Berggasse, to an apartment above that of the Freuds, and Anna eventually became the analyst for Dorothy's children.

The New York-Vienna connection was now being consolidated by women and bore new fruit – without giving up a tendency towards anti-Americanism. By the end of the 1920s, the project for a school inspired by psychoanalytic conceptions, but also by the ideas of the Italian pedagogue Maria Montessori, the American pragmatist-philosopher John Dewey and his pedagogy of projects, began to germinate in the mind of Anna Freud. Anxious to broaden analytical practice beyond the cure, Anna was inspired by the psychoanalysis congress held in Budapest in 1918, where the establishment of free psychoanalysis dispensaries was envisaged.³⁶

The project received the enlightened support of Otto Glöckel, a member of the Social-Democratic Party, a reformer of the education system and minister of education from 1919 to 1920 under the First Austrian Republic³⁷. Its paradoxical nature, “progressive and elitist”³⁸, cannot be ignored. It met the personal needs of the children of families (most of them Anglo-American) that maintained close friendships with Anna Freud, who also registered at this school her nephew Ernst Halberstadt, the son of her recently deceased sister Sophie³⁹;

- 36 Elizabeth Danto, Alexandra Steiner-Strauss (eds.): *Freud/Tiffany. Anna Freud, Dorothy Tiffany Burlingham and the 'Best Possible School'*. London, New York 2018. Such free dispensaries were established in New York in the 1940s, destined for African Americans in Harlem, at the initiative of Frederick Wertheim, a psychiatrist of German origin influenced by Freud, and supported by the writer Richard Wright. Cf. Raulin (as in *ftnt.* 3), pp. 154–157.
- 37 As a plaque states on the building where he lived and died, located on these outer boulevards (Gaudenzdorfer Gürtel) where the municipality built many popular dwellings at the time.
- 38 Heller quoted by Florian Houssier: *Anna Freud et son école – Créativité et controverses*. Paris 2010, p. 115.
- 39 Michèle Halberstadt: *Née quelque part*. Paris 2021.

simultaneously, it showed a concern for the democratization of psychoanalysis through its pedagogical application. This private school was largely financed by the fortune of Dorothy Tiffany Burlingham. Built according to plans by Adolf Loos in the garden of Eva Rosenfeld in Hietzing, a residential area of Vienna close to Schönbrunn, the former imperial palace, it opened in 1927.

“The Hietzing school [...] was the offshoot of a female triumvirate (Anna Freud, Dorothy Burlingham and Eva Rosenfeld) with Anna Freud at its center,” Houssier says.⁴⁰ As a matter of fact, many pupils were in analysis with her (or later with Dorothy Burlingham). Their parents were often patients of Freud.⁴¹ No. 11 Wattmanngasse became a gathering place for a whole group of young pedagogues who were trained on the job, despite being always “in the shadow of No. 19 Berggasse”. Peter Blos and Erik (Homburger) Erikson, from Karlsruhe, were later trained in psychoanalysis; similarly, two American teachers working temporarily at the school, Marie Briehl and Esther Menaker, entered into analysis with Anna Freud.

This “experimental laboratory for an education enlightened by psychoanalysis”⁴² attracted the support of Red Vienna, but it did not survive its internal conflicts and the liquidation of the first Austrian Republic by Austro-Fascism in 1934. The 1930s forced all the artisans and supporters of this movement to leave the city and the country, and to head especially for England and the United States. This educational experience of integrating psychoanalytic knowledge would have descendants, first in Vienna and then in London where, in the bombed city, Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham founded the Hampstead War Nurseries in 1940, for children orphaned by war. This experience would in turn supply some of the material for Anna Freud’s major book *The Self and its Defense Mechanisms* first published in German in London in 1946. Among the exiles welcomed by the New York Psychoanalytic Society, there was Peter Blos, who ran the Hietzing school, and Margaret Mahler, close to Anna Freud in Vienna, who continued her career in the United States.

40 Houssier (as in fnnt. 38), p. 97.

41 Id., p. 111.

42 Id., p. 97.

Conclusion

In the field of psychoanalysis, the relationship between Vienna and New York extended along many fruitful paths during the 1920s and 1930s, either by choice or necessity. Focusing on the Freud family shows how this intimacy with North Americans was immersed in various deep and contradictory emotions, negative and positive, and this inevitably determined some professional projects. The main figures in this paper, Abram Kardiner and Sigmund Freud, had parallels in their respective pasts and future theoretical works – above and beyond their common interest in war neurosis. Freud published *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* in 1930, immediately translated into English by Joan Riviere that same year under the title *Civilisation and its Discontents*. The change of term, from culture to civilization was echoed by the French translations, first *Malaise dans la civilisation* in 1943, secondly *Le malaise dans la culture* in 1994. Indeed, the sociological aspect of Freud's theory, conceiving of individual drives being repressed by the social environment, was restricted to the Western world, at that time thought of as the culmination of human evolution and progress, hence the ambivalence between terms. Kardiner discussed Freud's statements in his own book *The Individual and his Society*, published in 1939. His book was the result of a cross-fertilization between psychoanalysts and anthropologists, which he pursued throughout the 1930s in his seminars at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute. It should be noted that Kardiner substituted both terms, "culture" or "civilization" for "society" so as to get away from Freud's evolutionary representation, and to introduce a pluralistic point of view. The repression of individual drives by social environments varies with the cultural contexts, which code them: "The circumstances under which this dynamism of repression is brought into play depends on sociological factors, i.e. upon cultural institutions. The consequences of repression are of a different order."⁴³ In this respect, perhaps we could rephrase Kardiner's title as *Cultures and their Discontents* or, in German, *Die Unbehagen in den Kulturen?*

43 Abram Kardiner: *The Individual and His Society*. New York 1939, p. 407.