

Interview with Mrs. Deri, by Dr. Kendelin *First Draft*

K: This is recording, February 3, 1963, for the History Committee, Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society. I am going to interview Mrs. Frances Deri at her home, 12415 Rochedale Lane, Los Angeles 49.

K: How do you do, Mrs. Deri?

D: Thank you, quite well.

K: I see you brought out certain notes, not that you need to use your notes---

D: Oh yes, I need them--~~(observed)~~--for my own history I do.

K: Very well, just tell me something about how did you happen to come to Los Angeles?

D: Oh, I'll tell you--I wanted to go to the United States, and I wrote that to Dr. Hans Sachs, who then was in Boston; and he wrote back, and he said, "I can give you the names of two cities. One is very ugly, but you can earn very quickly very much money--that is Detroit. And the other is very beautiful--you can't earn so much money so quickly, but you live at a beautiful spot. And so I chose--I chose Los Angeles, ~~me~~ of course; and I've never regretted it. I was busy--after one week my day was full ~~until now~~ and till now. But now, of course, since I'm over 82, I began gradually to--not to replace a finished patient, you know; and so gradually diminish my case load.

K: ~~A question I would have~~ would be ~~would be~~ In what way was Dr. Simmel involved in having you come to Los Angeles?

D: ~~Yes,~~ He helped me very much. He sent me an affidavit. He and--who was the other one?--David Brunswick, and that helped a lot because that was at a time when it was rather difficult, you know, to get a visa. I'm very sorry that I could not find a letter, long letter, six or eight pages, ~~xx~~ that ^{SIMMEL} he wrote me at that time describing the beginning of the group here, ~~you knew,~~ but it seems I don't have it any more. I knew Dr. Simmel a long time before, you know, ~~it's written up here--~~ I worked at his ~~x~~ sanitarium in Schloss-Tegel for almost two years,

K: ~~In Berlin--~~

6-10-63 - 1 hour (+15)
6-11-63 - 1 hour +15
6-12-63 - 1 hour

~~D: Yah, Tegel is a suburb of Berlin.~~

K: Who were the first people that you met here in Los Angeles among the analysts?

D: Well, There was Simmel and then there was Margrit Munk--I think they were the first ones. Simmel had already rented an apartment for me and fortunately it was quite close to Mrs. Munk's house so that we were together very much, which was very ~~ix~~ valuable for me because I didn't have a car, I couldn't drive yet, you know, ~~and she~~--so she took me around and showed me Los Angeles. And then Estelle Levy was here and David, David Brunswick, of course. And I got a good impression of Los Angeles right a way. On the second day that I was here there was an earthquake-- and that was quite interesting.

K: Did you also have a good impression of the state of psychoanalysis in Los Angeles?

D: Well, at the beginning I wasn't able to form any opinion about that. But I remember the first meeting that I attended--that was in Dr. Simmel's house and Professor Paul Epstein, who is not an analyst--you know him--

K: I know of him--a professor of physics at Cal Tech.

D: That's right. He gave a paper, but I don't remember any more about what it was. But I must say, this first meeting--it was so --there were so many ~~x~~ people there that I got the impression that the interest in analysis must have been very great.

~~What else?~~

K: Do you recall the names of some of the people at that meeting or in the early days-- not only teaching personnel but were there some early candidates?

D: Candidates, yah, I remember Dr. Daniels, who is now, I ~~think~~ think in Long Beach here. He is not a member of our Society. Oh, and then Ruth ~~Talmon~~ Tolman and her husband, I think Richard Tolman, yah,---who else was there----were the Lachenbruchs?--no, I don't recall--you know for me they were all people whom I didn't know, so of course I forgot many names.

K: I first met you at your home on Plymouth Boulevard--when did you move to Plymouth Boulevard?

D: Well, I came here in '35, and in '36 I moved to Plymouth Boulevard. ~~Yah, you--I~~

~~met you the first time I think there was a meeting--wasn't there?~~

K: I ~~don't recall~~--I recall ~~more~~ it was the first time I came to your home for supervision, which was about November, 1947. We probably had met before then.

D: I ~~thought~~ thought it was at a meeting because we had often a meeting at my house, you know, from not the Society, which didn't exist, but the Study Group.

K: Some people had been very interested in the ~~i~~ kind of people Simmel and Fenichel were, and I thought perhaps you could--would like to tell us now, perhaps starting with Simmel, what kind of a person was he and how did he work and live? ~~so forth?~~

D: Well, it's very hard to say, not only because he has been dead for such a long time already, but now what should I tell you? You know what he looked like, and what should I tell you? One of his most outstanding characteristics was his courage. I don't think that Simmel ever was afraid in his life, you know; and I don't mean only physical dangers, but he--he was so outspoken, so courageous, you know, that I couldn't understand that he ~~could~~ could get out of Germany alive. But otherwise what could I tell you about him? He was quite a good speaker, although his English was not so very good, approximately like mine; but he formulated everything very well. I know that I was here only a short time when he gave a series of--a few--I don't know--three or four or five lectures in an organization called, I think it was called the Forum. Lectures about psychoanalysis and they were excellent, and also they were attended by so many people, so again I felt there must be very much interest for analysis among people.

K: David Brunswick and ~~others have~~ others have sometimes commented that Simmel could be gullible--that is, I think you know what I mean--

D: Oh, yah, exactly. Well there is no doubt he was very gullible and there were many people who took advantage of that. I remember that once, I don't know whether you ever heard of Dr. Montgomery?

K: I have heard about him, but I would like now for you to tell----

D: Well, that was a man who said he was an analyst and a member in New York, ^{one} ~~some~~ of the New York Societies, and ^{said} that he was analyzed by Ferenczi, and he wanted to

become a member. And he was a nice, friendly man, ~~you know~~, and since there were very few analysts here, it was quite good that one new one came, and he got some patients, you know. Well, one of his patients--no, not patients but candidates--he took candidates--you know this thing, this whole thing wasn't really well organized then. One of his candidates once phoned me and asked me for an interview. And he came and he told me that he is in analysis with Dr. Montgomery but he had begun to doubt ~~that~~ whether Montgomery is a real analyst. For instance, there was in the room where he worked, there was a closet that was closed only by a curtain, and he said to this candidate that he should sit on a chair behind that curtain and listen while he analyzed another patient. And he thought it was terrible but he didn't know whether---and Montgomery said that is how training analysts train their candidates. And things like that. And, well, of course, I reported that to Simmel, and Simmel had ~~known~~ Montgomery come to him, I was there too, and Montgomery just laughed it off and said that's nothing but resistance from that ~~same~~ candidate and that's ~~a~~ some fantasies. But then when Montgomery had gone, I said to Simmel, "Listen. Do we know really whether he is a member in New York?" "Oh," Simmel said, "We can ask in New York." And so he wrote to New York and asked about the standing of Dr. Montgomery and so on, and there came an answer, Dr., ~~now~~ ^{was} I don't know the first name anymore, let's say ~~William~~, ^{in New York, but the first} Montgomery ~~is~~ ^{was} a member ~~but this man was not William~~, ^{his} name was different. He ~~is~~ ^{was} a member of very good standing, he ~~is~~ ^{was} a member since ~~that~~ ^{such such} and ~~that~~ ^{so} year, he was analyzed by so and so, not by Ferenczi, and so on. And Simmel phoned Montgomery that he had an answer from New York, I don't remember anymore who wrote this answer, and that he should come to see Simmel because there are some discrepancies. And I can only tell you that the next day Montgomery had vanished from Los Angeles, left nothing but debts, and that was the end of him. Afterwards we heard that he was not only not an analyst, ~~he was~~ ^{he was}--he had had, what was it, a beauty salon. He was a beautician. But I think from what he said in many times that we were together--

--oh, he gave also , he gave a lecture, yah, he gave a paper in the Study Group, yah, and ~~now all that~~ from all that he must have been analyzed, you know, not only that he knew the terms and that he knew about resistance, he knew about transference and so on, you know, he must have been analyzed, bad or good, I don't know, but we never heard from him again. Maybe he has a beauty salon in ~~down~~ downtown Los Angeles, I don't know. That's all I can tell you. Oh, even he published this paper, and I must have it. Yah, I have it. Would it interest you?

K: Sometime--we won't interrupt our interview, but by all means it would be an interesting historical item.

D: And that is just one example of the gullibility of Simmel, because Simmel didn't think of asking in New York^o first, you know. But there were other examples, too. I don't recall anymore, but you know when Simmel sometimes said, "Oh, I met somebody--" who is either an analyst or anything like that, we were always suspicious, you know, whether this is true or not.

K: Simmel of course had many talents of leadership, organizing, teaching--

D: Oh yes, he was a very good teacher, very good.

K: ~~If you'd--if you know, we consider this a rather confidential interview--if you want to comment--Simmel had unhappiness in his personal life.~~

D: Of course, he had a highly neurotic wife. You know that much later, a few years ago, x she committed suicide and she was in analysis with several of us, but it wasn't possible to analyze her. Of course I wouldn't like to have these remarks about Mrs. Simmel to be published--^{or}-(obscured)-made public.

K: Yes, ~~we are well aware of the caution and care and--about confidential material--we need to exercise----~~. Could you say something about Fenichel--again, whatever you like, personal, official contacts or anything at all.

D: Well, it's not quite easy exactly as it isn't easy to talk about Simmel, you know. ~~You didn't know him--oh yes, you were in analysis with him. Well, then you know more about him than I do.~~

answer

answer

answer



K: ~~In one way--(obscured)~~. Of course, I ~~he died before my analysis was too~~
~~far along.~~

D: We were very good friends, already in Berlin. I--how do you call that--I read the proofs of his book that he published as long as he was still in Berlin, and then he took over my practice in Prague. He hesitated a long time to come to the United States, but finally under Hitler it became too bad there, and so he came over-- I don't recall ~~how~~ when that was, but you can look that up somewhere.

K: ~~The date of Fenichel's coming--~~

D: ~~When he arrived.~~ I know he came directly, from his trip over here he came to the-- to the meeting in San Francisco. When was that? Oh, '38, yah. ~~No I see here.~~
~~it says School for Nursery Years, yah, the Study Group founded it and the--well,~~
~~actually, the first beginnings of it were made by who is now Eleanor Nordlinger~~
~~and--wait a minute, who was the other one--Eleanor Nordlinger and I think Laura~~
~~Ellis. I think so. But the Study Group used their place on Vine Street for~~
~~meetings, you know, and for the very small beginnings of our library, you know that~~
~~was about 20 books that we had.~~ And what else can I tell you? Oh, about Fenichel you wanted to know. Well, you know that he was a very bright man, a very good speaker, also his English wasn't so very good and he enjoyed Los Angeles very much, he made many trips for a day or two, for a weekend, you know, he knew everything around here. What do you want to know?

K: The relationship between Simmel and Fenichel was smooth and harmonious-- ?

D: Oh yes.

K: Was there never any feelings of rivalry or conflict?

D: Not that I remember. ~~No. Wait a minute, let me think of that time.~~ No. I don't remember any friction or any conflict between them. Maybe I just didn't know. On the contrary, they complemented ~~xxxxx~~ each other very well. And then, you may know that his last year he spent in--I think it was the Cedars.

K: Cedars of Lebanon Hospital.

D: Yah, as ~~a resident~~ ^{an interne}.

K: Why did he do that work as a ~~resident~~ ^{M interne}, ~~what~~ why did he feel it necessary or desirable?

D: Well, I think that it was the fact that at that time--oh, I remember. There was much talk about the possibility that non-medical analysts should not be ~~not~~ allowed to analyze. I can't remember anymore how far that went, you know, but I know that I too thought, well, maybe if I--if I am not permitted to analyze anymore, what shall I do? You know, I made even some steps to prepare for some other activity. Yah. But he didn't like the idea, you know, that he was so ~~it~~ to say an ~~any~~ analyst second degree. I think that was the main reason why he did that.

K: In other words, he wanted the ~~residency~~ ^{internship} and then to take the State Board examination,

~~D: Yah.~~

K:-----for the California medical license.

D: Certainly. And you know I remember he even thought it would not be good for the Study Group and then for--we all knew that the Study Group would become a society or an institute, you know. But he thought it would not be good for this society which didn't yet exist if a non-medical analyst was in, well the Education Committee, ~~or in, you know~~. Well it became quite different later, you know, after all, we are now three lay training analysts: Hanna Fenichel, David Brunswick, and me--
oh, four--Ekstein, you know, and nobody made any objections.

K: Did Simmel have any discomfort about being an analyst without a medical license?

D: Not very much. Not very much. I know, I know that somebody, I don't recall who, somebody in the group objected to his signing something with doctor, Ernst Simmel, you know, because, he said, in ~~American~~ America you are not a doctor. Of course, that must have bothered him. But he didn't talk much about that. He was bothered by something else much more. You know he worked for years and years, mostly together with David Brunswick, in preparation of a sanitarium. Something like Schloss-Tegel, you know, and he--oh, he looked at many places to rent or to buy them you

know, and to do---and then the war came and everything was out then. He didn't like that at all, he was rather unhappy about it.

K: Apparently his sanitarium in Germany had been very scientifically successful, and attracted ~~so~~ much attention, didn't it?

D: Oh, yes, very much so. You know, his idea was that everybody who worked there should have been analyzed, even the nurses, even the janitor, everybody.

K: I also recall reading that it was a favorite place with Freud, who would visit there and would take ~~what?~~ a vacation there.

D: Yah, he spent, as far as I know, two summers in Tegel. It was a lovely place. You know a huge park with several buildings and a very nice lake. That is where I met Freud for the first time.

K: Tell me about your first meeting with Freud. I ~~thm~~ think that's very important and interesting. What was the occasion ~~and~~?

D: Well, that came-- (obscured)--I worked in Tegel ~~everyday~~ every day, analyzing the patients there, and I had heard something that Freud had come and lived there in Simmel's house in Tegel; but I didn't know, I didn't know the details, and once in our--in the lunch pause, I walked with Simmel through the park, and suddenly he said, "See, down there Freud is coming; but please, I know that he doesn't like to be talked to when he is in deep thought," and so on. Of course we ^{all} greet him, but don't make any talk; but he came and he stopped when he ~~w~~ saw us and went to Simmel, shook hands with him, and looked at me and Simmel introduced me, and so he said, "Oh, I've heard of ~~yk~~ you from--" I don't know now--from who^m, and we had a short talk there in the park, you know, standing ~~on the~~ at the lake; but ~~we~~ nothing very deep or impressive, and that was my first meeting him.

K: What was the year, do you remember?

D: When was I in Tegel? Wait a minute--I was there from ~~30--30xxxxx'30x~~ '30--'30 and '31 for almost two years, so it must have been at that time.

K: You implied that you have had other ~~we~~ occasions to visit and talk with Freud?

Schlossstrasse, but I don't remember in which department of Vienna that was. You know I never was in the ~~Bergstrasse~~ ^{Berggasse}. Maybe because I lived so far from that place.

K: This is very good, everything you have said so far, ~~much of it very~~ new to me, ^{and}

~~D: Oh, really?~~

K: ~~Yes,~~ ^{excellent} in its detail and ~~richness~~ richness-----

D: I want to tell you one thing. A few months ago I met socially, I was to some birthday party of a friend of mine, and there was a lady when I saw her I knew that I knew the ~~face~~ ^{face}, but I had no idea who she was. But she came up to me and said, "~~Was~~ Mrs. Deri, don't you remember me?" and I said openly, "No, I don't. I know that I know you, but I don't know from where." "Oh," she said, "for years I was the secretary for Ernst Simmel." I think three or four years ~~she was~~ before Diana Howard. And I have her address. Maybe she knows some things.

~~K: Who--who do you know---~~

D: ~~The name then,~~ ^{was Gertrude Frankel,} she married since then, ~~her name then was--wait a minute,~~ her name now is Picard. I have her address somewhere here.

~~K: You don't mean Anne Barzman?~~

~~D: No. No.~~

~~K: Or Virginia Smith?~~

~~D: No, she was never Simmel's secretary--she was in the Institute. But I can find the name. I can find her address, and if you want me to, I can give you her address. Now, it's not here. But I don't know whether she knows anything, you know, that is of value to you, but it's possible. I have her address here somewhere--I know how the paper looks where I wrote it down, but it's not here. Look, would it interest you to---I--have the address?~~

~~K: Yes.~~

~~D: And after that I'll--you know, I don't know her maiden name, and it was under the maiden name that I--so I don't know where to look--to Simmel.~~

~~K: Diana Howard, you mean.~~

~~D: Diana Howard, yah.~~

~~I~~

K: I have done some verbal interviewing before we developed the use of these machines, and I had one hour with Diana Howard more than a year ago; but now I plan to go back and of course with this machine, which gives us so much more material.

D: Simmel was very satisfied with her. I know he said repeatedly that she's an excellent secretary.

K: Diana had previous experience in Chicago, I believe employed at the Psychoanalytic Institute.

D: In Chicago?

K: Did you ever know that?

D: No, I didn't.

K: One of the big chapters of our local history is the business of the Split. If you have some comments that you would like to add, by all means I'd be very happy to hear what you have to say about the Split.

D: Well, you know the main things. You know, rather soon it became clear that there were some members, then members, with whom it was very difficult to work, very difficult; and the worst was not May Romm, The worst was Judd Marmor. ~~Judd Marmor and what was the name of the other one? Carson or Carlson?~~

K: ~~Miller?~~

D: Miller wasn't very easy either and also Norman Levy. But I--I ~~remember~~ remember that once, --yah, that was Judd Marmor who said, "Why all this talk about childhood and childhood sexuality? That's all nonsense."--You know, and I have a it was like a blow to hear that from a ^{an} ~~training~~ analyst. But that was the trend, you know, and May Romm took that up, you know, gradually trying to undermine the main things in analysis, ~~you know~~; for instance the importance of ~~childhood~~ childhood and of childhood neurosis, ~~you know~~, and of the consequences of all that in later life; and from what I hear from other sources, she is still that way. But then when the Split then came, I know, Miller was the first one who said right away, "Then rather a split." I remember the meeting where he said that, and I was glad.

K: You once told me how you may have upset Miller when he first came to Los Angeles and introduced himself to you. ~~I forget the exact details, but~~---

D: ~~I don't recall what you mean.~~

K: You told me that you didn't place him exactly ~~as a psychoanalyst~~ and asked him if he were the analyst, or something to that effect; and he took offense at it.

D: ~~Oh, yah~~---

K: ~~Do you recall now?~~

D: ~~Very vaguely,~~ Very vaguely and you know I didn't mean it as an offense, but after all the name Miller is very--is not a rare name, you know, and I didn't know whether he was the same Miller from whom I had read some papers. But it is funny, these people from the other group and I know that there are some very good ones among them, too, these people who were members of our group ~~before~~ before the Split-- they are all so very sensitive to something they take for offensive. I remember on the first---the day that, what's his name--Grotjahn arrived there was a meeting in my house on Plymouth and he came and we greeted each other and I said, "You know, the last time I saw you," I was a very good friend of his father, "The last time I saw you, you were a little boy." And he said, "Nice weather today, isn't it?" And he talked about the weather and about, I don't know, ^{what} you know. He didn't want to be reminded that once he was a little boy. This is what I mean, you know, they are so ready to be offended.

K: Grotjahn was from Berlin?

D: Yah. His father was there a very wellknown, how do you call that in English?--- perhaps you call it social hygiene, or something like that, you know, and he was the top man in this part of medicine. And I know that I once was at his father's-- we talked about something and suddenly the door opens and a little boy came in.

~~What else is there?~~

K: ~~David Brunswick last week showed me a couple of very interesting old programs, one from 1936 ~~xx~~ which was the Freud 80th birthday celebration, the other was 1939, the Freud Memorial meeting.~~

D: '39? Oh, no. Well maybe. Yah.

K: On each program you appeared as a speaker. You remember these two meetings?

D: What was the first one?

K: 1936, wasn't that the occasion of Freud's 80th birthday?

D: Oh, yah, oh, yah, and I gave a paper. I can't remember-----in some organization--
the only thing I can tell you is that there was a rabbi who was chairman, Rabbi--he
had a funny name--/ ~~Sonderling?~~ ^{Sonderling?} Is that---

K: Sonderlein?

D: Nein, ling, Sonderling--but I'm not sure. I'm not sure. He was the chairman of,
some committee--I gave a paper on (well, on Freud?). But ~~his~~ that was so long
ago, you know. A quarter of a century ago so that I don't recall very much about
it anymore. ~~x~~ But the other, what was the other that you mentioned?

K: Freud Memorial meeting, presumably after the death of Freud.

D: Yah, I wasn't there. No. No, I wasn't there. I thought the letters--^{There} there were
some letters--from Freud to Simmel, and I bought them and gave them to the Insti-
tute. They are there. And I know that at this Memorial meeting, ~~Somebody, I don't~~
~~know who, took them to the meeting--where was the meeting? Not in Detroit, in~~
~~Chicago, wasn't it?~~

K: I don't know exactly ~~now~~ now.

D: And they told me that Jones was very much interested in these letters. And you
know these letters--do you know the story, the history of these letters?

K: Not very exactly.

D: You know there are people who rummage through the dumps, you know?

K: Oh, the ~~second-hand~~ ~~second-hand~~ second-hand book stores?

D: No, no. There are places where at that time ^{waste paper} everything that was thrown out, ~~you know,~~
trash, was dumped in, and there are people who look at these ~~x~~ things whether there
is anything valuable; and one of these people found a folder with these letters, and
he brought [†] them to this book store on La Cienega, I forgot the name, you know what
I mean.

K: Yes, I know the store.

D: And he phoned me whether I would be interested in them, and so I bought them.

A: This is a collection of quite a few letters written over a period of ~~xxx~~ years?

D: Oh, yes, yes. Some are really letters, handwritten, and some are just postcards with 5 or 10 words, you know. I have no idea who dumped them there. I guess Mrs. Simmel--she was that way.

K: You mean even knowing that they were Freud's ~~interx~~ letters?

D: Maybe she did that after Simmel's death. That's possible, I don't know when it was--yah, it must have been after his death. Well, that's about all I can tell you.

K: Well, this is very good, what you have told me. We have been talking here for about an hour.

D: Yah.

K: One of the first meetings I attended was at the old nursery school--

~~D: On Vine Street--~~

~~K: No, on Rossmore--~~

~~D: Yah, Rossmore, that is Vine--~~

~~K: Yes, Yes--that is right, they are about the same.~~

~~D: I know.~~

K: When Alexander was here in '45 or '46--

D: Yes, I remember--

K: It was a very heated meeting--

D: Oh, yes--Fenichel talked and the discussion--

~~K: You remember that, eh?~~

~~D: Yah, I remember that I thought that I had never seen Fenichel so aggressive.~~

K: You knew Alexander, did you, in Europe?

D: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, he taught in the Berlin Institute when I was in training. I always told him he should learn German, you know, his German was terrible.

~~K: Meaning he was native of---~~ 7

D: Hungary

~~K: Oh, I see--~~

D: Yah, he was a Hungarian; and his German was so terrible that sometimes it was very, very difficult to understand him. But he was a good teacher.

K: Yes, and a man of great vigor, although later with a ~~great~~ many controversial ~~theoret~~ theoretical ideas.

D: But you know you asked me about conflicts between Simmel and Fenichel. I don't recall any but between Fenichel and Alexander there was always some friction, always.

K: Friction on a theoretical level?

D: Yah, yah, mostly on theory. (obsured--tape ending) I sent him an affidavit. He was one of the ^{twenty} ~~twenty~~-one people that I brought out of Germany. He and his first wife.

K: What had been your relationship with Fenichel ~~and~~ in Europe?

D: Well, we were ~~friends~~ friends. That's about all I can say. We understood each other-- there was another thing, you know, that contributed to this friendship and that was that we lived in the same street, you know--just--like here with Friedman, you know?

~~K: Yes.~~

D: And very often when he ~~had~~ had given a course in the Institute and I had listened to a course in the Institute, we went home together, you know. Yah. I'm conscious of the fact that I can't tell you more but I really can't. You know I--before you came I didn't know what you would be interested in, otherwise I could perhaps have-----~~(tape ends.)~~ ~~(New tape starts)~~---thought about it some more.

K: Oh, again I repeat that what you have told me is excellent for our purposes. I suggest that we stop now or shortly and for me to think and perhaps for you to think, is there more that we would like to have by way of amplification.

D: Yah, I know what you mean; and if something occurs to me that should be all means be put in, you know, then I'll let you know.

D: Very good. All ~~xx~~ right, thank you Mrs. Deri so very much for your time and patience.

FIRST TRANSCRIPT by Jean Kameron

Second

(name)