

Green

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PSYCHOANALYSIS COMES TO THE WEST COAST

Ralph R. Greenson

For me the coming of psychoanalysis to the West Coast is a personal story. I do not have the capacity to talk about events which played such a great role in my life as though I had been a mere observer. What follows is a subjective history of how psychoanalysis came to the Pacific.

I arrived in Los Angeles in 1936 fresh from five months of seemingly successful analysis by Wilhelm Stekel in Vienna with his "Active" technique. I worked for three-quarters of a year in his "Aktivepsychoanalytisches Ambulatorium" and felt I had performed the "wonders" of his method with most of my clinic patients. When I set up private practice in Los Angeles, I told my patients that if they were not cured of their major symptoms within six months, I would continue treating them without charge. By 1937 most of my patients paid no fee. I wrote to Stekel about my predicament. He told me not to despair; Americans, he pointed out, are different from Europeans, etc. It then slowly dawned on me that perhaps I had the wrong training and I began to read the Freudian literature. I realized that by using

not a
more
subjective
history

5 mos 1936
called Vienna
Aktivepsychoanalytisches Ambulatorium

med info MOS
937- p. 110
file

only downed

free association, and by being more passive, the Freudians seemed to go deeper than I had been able to. I began to have the feeling that my personal analysis did not go far enough and that my training was superficial.

From Manny Lipp

I had heard that a few Freudian analysts were practicing in Los Angeles under the leadership of Ernst Simmel, but I had never met them. In 1935, they had formed a Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Study Group including quite a few lay analysts. It was 1937 when, because of my plight, I decided to call Dr. Simmel. I told him my story and I asked if I could attend the Study Group meetings. Dr. Simmel was friendly but told me that this was a Freudian group and in his experience with the Stekelians there was constant wrangling which had proven to be fruitless. He did not feel it would serve a useful purpose for me to attend.

*Heard of
Sandy Gross*

*1935.
Called Simmel
in 37 -
no useful
purpose*

*1938
Consult Simmel
Otto Fenichel*

In early 1938, I realized my situation was untenable and asked for a private consultation with Simmel. He recognized that I was serious in my purpose. He said he had no time, but referred me to another analyst who had just arrived in Los Angeles, Otto Fenichel. This name was familiar to me as chapters of the first version of his book had been printed in the Quarterly and later published as the "Outline of Clinical Psychoanalysis."

*My Story
DPT's couldn't
help*

I saw Dr. Fenichel and told him my story in the following order:

1. I was unable to get my patients well even though I used the Stekel method with, I believed, great skill.

2. In reading about Freudian analysis I was struck by how much more thorough they were by using free association and by being relatively passive. Also, they spoke of matters I did not know anything about, personally or clinically.
3. I felt I had a few minor personal problems, but they were no great worry to me. My major concern was that I felt guilty in not being able to help my patients.

I spoke with Dr. Fenichel several times. At first he listened to my problems with my patients. Then he slowly got me to talk about my personal life, my marriage, my friends and my family history. Finally Fenichel said he thought I needed a more thorough analysis, a Freudian analysis. After a while we would be able to see if I should become a psychoanalytic candidate. I felt sure that with my openness I would complete even a Freudian analysis in six months. I was wrong by about three and a half years.

There were specific conditions. I was not to call myself a psychoanalyst, not to use the couch or free association. I found myself with practically no patients. This had one great advantage; I had my analytic hour, saw one or two patients a day, and would spend the rest of the time reading in the library. Thus, from 1938 to 1940, I was able to read the entire psychoanalytic literature published in English. As my fund of information increased my fund of money

Freudians
so deep

Few personal
problems

I need ~~more~~ of
Freudian ~~analysis~~

6 months →
3 1/2 yrs.

Conditions
No patients
could read

1938-1940
and in ~~the~~ L.A.

Debt

2 week LAS study group

1934
1935 Simmel

Late arrival
Other analysts

901 Hudson St

Sponsor a
Nursery
School

dwindled. My family and I moved to a one bedroom apartment and I was up to my ears in debt.

Now to return to the history of Psychoanalysis moving west and to the Los Angeles Study Group. In 1934 a group of analysts consisting of Thomas and Margrit Libben (later Munk), Estelle Levey, Marjorie Leonard, under the leadership of David Brunswick, invited Dr. Simmel to come to Los Angeles. He did this in 1935, established a Study Group, and became its first President. Simmel was followed by Frances Deri, Hanna Heilborn (later Fenichel), Christine Olden and Otto Fenichel. These were the analysts in the Study Group when I first began to attend their meetings. Later arrivals were the two Drs. Haenel, Charles Tidd, May Romm and a somewhat mysterious analyst who came and went, Dr. George Gero. Interested participants were doctors Burns, Arthur Timme and Glenn Meyers - all from psychiatry, Prof. Epstein of Cal-Tech, and Prynce Hopkins, an analyst of Ernest Jones, ^{and Emanuel Libben, our financial advisor.} The meetings were held in Dr. Simmel's house on 901 Hudson Street. I still remember the large speaker's table covered in dark green felt cloth, which was always present to the day of Simmel's death.

The Los Angeles Study Group began to sponsor a nursery school with a psychoanalytic orientation. When the Board of Medical Examiners in Sacramento gave Simmel trouble about our training of lay analysts, the School for Nursery Years became a haven for us. We moved our meeting place from Simmel's residence to the School's first home on North Rossmore St. Our affiliation continued. We helped with their training program and supervision of child cases; they helped us by offering a new

vs child observations

meeting place on North Alfred Street. The Study Group and the
Nursery School/^{have} had a continuing relationship until the present. This change
in name only when the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society was formed
and the school became the Center for Early Education.

The Los Angeles Study Group had no official timetable of
scheduled courses. The curriculum consisted of Theory, Technique,
Literature and Case Presentations. We could go at our own pace and
every teacher gave time for ample discussion. I believe it was in
the Fall of 1939 that I began to attend seminars. The first was
"The Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex" which Fenichel led.
All the candidates and most of the analysts were present. Dr. Sperling,
Henderson, Evans and Greenson were the first candidates and were
later joined by Reider and Newhouse. The Seminar took most of the
year; on the first evening (from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m.) we never
got past arguing about the meaning of the word libido which ^{occurs} on the
first page. Other classes that first semester included Ernst Simmel's
Psychoanalytic Literature course which started with the Studies in
Hysteria. Mrs. Deri gave a seminar on Dream Interpretation and I
do recall that most analysts attended, even the two training analysts,
Simmel and Fenichel.

After we were allowed to begin an analytic case we had
case presentations. To the best of my recollection almost all the
analysts attended. Not only did the candidates present their cases
but the analysts presented some of theirs too. At that
time it seemed natural that a candidate would feel free to agree or
disagree with anyone who presented, a member, or even a training
analyst.

to this day /
by changed
times.

Courses

27
Candidate books

27
Seminars
1 page

case presentations
numbers too
we could
disagree

It also seemed appropriate that Fenichel would side with whomever he felt was right, be it a candidate, member or training analyst. In short, we were then less status conscious than we are today. What mattered was who was right, or at least who seemed to be going in the right direction. In most instances, Fenichel was the final arbiter, because he knew the literature far better than anyone else and was apt to get to the heart of the matter.

less status conscious
Fenichel final
arbiter

As a candidate, at times you were gratified to find that your training analyst thought you were right and a senior analyst wrong. But also, I can recall an instance of disappointment when my training analyst thought I was acting out instead of describing the patient. Yet I did not have the impression that there were traumatic scars or that some "irreversible parameter" had been committed. However, the situation did get sticky in the Study Group meetings, where wives and other non-analytic guests were permitted to attend. Then, when an analyst was attacked, it could become traumatic. Fenichel, would save his remarks for summing up. Very often it was only after his comments that we fully comprehended the essence of the paper. On the other hand he spared no one in his quest for the true answer.

gratified or
disappointed

could be
harsh
when not
tactful

Fenichel was not tactful. His replies to the speakers and the discussants were often as harsh as they were thoughtful. Some people to this day scowl or shudder at the mention of his criticism. Fenichel was a rigorous thinker and above all could not bear a discussant who spoke with the primary purpose of saying "I am here also." I can remember his remark to a speaker's random

Fenichel not
tactful

comment: "If you had paid attention, you would not have the need to ask such an elementary question. If you did not pay attention you should have the politeness to keep quiet."

Within the Los Angeles Study Group Fenichel was the most prolific provider of scientific papers. In the four years of my training he gave about 20 essays, many published in his two series of Collected Papers. I remember in particular these titles: "Trophy and Triumph", "The Counterphobic Attitude," "The Misapprehended Oracle," and "Remarks on Fromm's Book: Escape from Freedom." In addition, whenever Fenichel went to an American Psychoanalytic Meeting we knew there was a treat in store for all of us. He had the knack of recapitulating in great detail what the speakers had said. This included the controversial writers of the times, Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, and even then Franz Alexander. After the summary, delivered with characteristic candor, he would state his own conclusions. Simmel, too, gave papers, rich in imaginative content, dealing mainly with addiction and psychosomatic problems. He referred to cases he had seen in Germany at Tegel, the first psychoanalytic sanitarium in the world. He also published a paper and edited a book on Anti-Semitism. There were other speakers and also able respondents but I want to touch on what I feel to be highlights.

Sigfried Bernfeld was the leader of the San Francisco group which had no official designation in 1938 except that they were part of the California group. When Bernfeld spoke, it was an unforgettable experience. I can recall his coming to Los Angeles to speak a few times before the war. He possessed a combination of eloquence, self-assuredness, and elegance, with no trace of arrogance. He paced with a lighted cigaret

Fenichel's Papers

*Summary
A PSA ASS
Ostin
also Simmel
Tegel*

Bernfeld

without notes, . this tall and oddly handsome man made an indelible impression. It was not just that he spoke with restrained passion but his papers were impeccably systematic, and this coming from a man who looked like a giant, was temperamental, and yet self-possessed. His subject matter was different from that of all the other analysts. He talked of Marx; Zionism and Freud, and the education of the common man, etc. In my years of listening to psychoanalytic speakers, and I have heard many great ones, like Zilboorg; but Bernfeld made the biggest impact on me. In addition, we heard from the other San Francisco analysts - Emmanuel Windholtz, Bernhard Berliner and later Jacob Kasanin and Anya Maenchen.

The Los Angeles Study Group and the San Francisco Group met together at least once a year, the first being Ojai Valley, I think in March 1940, and then in San Francisco in September of 1940. The meetings became a yearly occurrence, alternating between Los Angeles and San Francisco areas. This gave us a chance to get to know their candidates. I remember meeting Sophie Mervis, Phillip Shapiro, Joseph Soloman, Pearl Pourpirrt, and Douglas Cambell. I recall in particular, a marvelous symposium on Sleep Disturbance in San Francisco. Papers were given by Fenichel, Windholtz and Deri.

We found that the candidates in San Francisco had a more cohesive curriculum but less freedom than we had in Los Angeles. We had guest lecturers who mainly came from Topeka, because we were loosely under their jurisdiction. We had some marvelous talks by Robert Knight and Karl Menninger. We, in Los Angeles, also knew we were in some kind of trouble because we had an abundance of lay analysts. A new regulation

Next Transit
Education

(A +
San Fran
Ojai
of the Candidates)

Topeka

LA/SA

from the American Psychoanalytic Association said no one trained after 1938 could become a member. That ruling caused trouble for the members, but we candidates suffered no ill affects.

My experience with fees was / similar to that of the rest of my fellow candidates.

All of us were on the verge of being broke, or in debt. Psychoanalysis was not popular. Our training analyst charged \$5.00 to \$8.00 an hour and we candidates charged appropriately less. Occasionally a celebrity or millionaire paid \$10.00 or \$15.00 per hour and they usually went to Simmel or May Romm. This seemed natural. We candidates did not brag about our income. If anything, I think we used to brag about our debts.

OSA Not Paid.
5-8 feb
Natural for
your low
fees

We had dedicated teachers who loved teaching and were intent on our being well-trained. Though it was long, and for our paltry means, expensive, we enjoyed our training. I never paid for a supervisory session. The training analysts and teachers we knew had no wish for riches and were glad to help by giving us free supervisory time. Numbers of hours meant nothing to us or to them, for there were no strict rules of curriculum or supervision to follow.

Dedicated
Teachers
No pay Supv:

We had no official clinic but each candidate was expected to take a low paying patient. My first patient, a secretary, who earned \$30 a week, could only pay \$9. a week for therapy. I agreed to see her six times a week at \$1.50 per hour. My second and third cases paid \$3.00 an hour. Then I had a wealthy Pasadena lady who could pay \$10.00. I was so excited and nervous, the woman paid more than the rest of my practice put together. Mrs. Deri, who supervised me, said that I was so unnatural in my technique with my wealthy patient that I would probably lose her, which I promptly did. It still holds true; needing a patient is the best guarantee of losing him.

1st Patient
low fee \$

10 case

Just prior to World War II several new people joined the California Group. I can recall the arrival of Erik Erikson who spoke to us in 1941 On Observations on a California Indian Trip and later Psychoanalytic Observations on a Submarine. Erikson had a strange and interesting way of speaking, both in style and in content. He spoke with an air of modesty, understating points that were terribly interesting, expanding our horizons.

Before the war and shortly thereafter our Study Group had the privilege of hearing Hanns Sachs, Lawrence Kubie and Gregory Zilboorg. We had outstanding people from other fields like political scientist Harold Lasswell, Adorno and Horkheimer and anthropologist Margaret Mead.

To me this was the golden age of being a candidate. As long as psychoanalysis was unpopular it attracted original thinkers, pioneers, adventurers, and mavericks who were willing to take the risk of belonging to an 'impossible' profession.

Erikson

Sachs Kubie
Zilboorg
Carnegie etc.

Golden Age

Independent
Society
Ernst Simmel
Lay Analyst

San Fran.
Simmel
May 1942

I graduated
April 25 1942

1st Member
trained on
West Coast.

after Pearl Harbor
worked for
induction
center

O.S.G. Co
Win Fine

In 1942, the California Group decided to form an independent society because we had ^{in our hands and also we had a} a problem too difficult for Iopeka to handle. The most vexing dilemma was the lay analyst question and who should or should not be accredited. It was decided to form the new Society in San Francisco because they had more M.D.'s and fewer lay analysts. The Los Angeles people were free to join them. This was accomplished with the help of Robert Knight, Karl Menninger and Ernst Simmel. The San Francisco Society was formally recognized on May 17, 1942, and they chose as their first president Ernst Simmel. Shortly before this I had finished my training. I was given an oral colloquium by Simmel and Fenichel. At the first annual meeting of the San Francisco Society, April 25th, 1942, I gave my 'graduation paper' - "A Contribution to the Study of Epileptic Phenomena" which was acceptable. (Erik Erikson gave a paper at that meeting, "Remarks on Hitler's 'Mein Kampf'") When the San Francisco Society came into official existence I had the honor of being the first member who had received all his training on the West Coast.

After Pearl Harbor, all of us candidates worked for the Induction Service and reported on ^{our} their use of penetrating questions in 5-minute evaluations. This was a far cry from traditional psychoanalysis, but it was a broadening exposure for many. Most European analysts had no experience other than long term therapy. They were quite amazed with what we could do in brief evaluations and short term treatment.

By this time, the United States was deeply involved in World War II. The War brought significant changes to psychoanalysis. Analysts had to leave their ivory towers to serve in the Armed Forces. They were called upon to produce results with brief therapy. Men like Grinker,

Spiegel, Murray, W. Menninger et al dramatically demonstrated how much modifications of psychoanalysis had to offer.

As our reputation for successful treatment grew, analysis became popular. Before the war, there had been less than 250 analysts in the United States, now there are over 2,900 accredited analysts. When the war was over, we began to attract many serious candidates, but we also had those who opportunistically wanted to get into a popular profession. I am aware of the current trend to say that psychoanalysis is dead. Thank God or Freud, but I rejoice in the fact that it is once again unpopular. This, I think, bodes well for its survival.

Soon after the United States entered the war I volunteered for military service and so did most of my colleagues. I joined the Air Corps, November 1942, and was visited by the Fenichels. Fenichel was terribly interested in what we were doing with the war casualties. I was able to demonstrate to him the treatment of an acute war neurosis, a man who felt guilty for the blinding of his companion. They ran into heavy flak/ ^{and} my patient's friend had his eye shot out. He found it, put it back in the socket and fastened it with adhesive. They had to bail out and later discovered the eye was gone. Under pentothal my patient moaned repeatedly, "If only I had put more adhesive on, I could have saved the eye." He cried, wept and mourned and I listened, and tried to reassure him. After it was over, a shaken Fenichel said, how can you stand it. I said simply: I can't!

While I was serving at Fort Logan, in Denver, the Fenichel's again visited us and brought along the galley proofs from his Psychoanalytic Theory of Neuroses. We had many excursions into the beautiful environs of Denver only to rush home for dinner and relax, which to Fenichel meant correcting the galley proofs together. At that time

*Before War
250
Now 2,900*

*Good to be
unpopular*

*Fenichel's visit
during War*

*Fenichel Book
Denver*

Fenichel was trying to do an internship to be able to pass the State Board Examinations. He felt he had to be licensed in order to fight the battle he knew was about to occur in the American Psychoanalytic Association. He died suddenly of a ruptured brain aneurism in January, 1946.

Before I go into the history of the Los Angeles Institute let me digress to give you a feeling of the atmosphere for a young analyst at that time. During the war I was invited by Fenichel to visit the Board of Professional Standards. I could hear the discussions between Alexander, Hendricks, Fenichel, Benedek, Grete Bibring, Sara Bonnet, Gitelson, Karl Menninger, Robert Waelder, Lorand, Phyllis Greenacre, Richard Sterba, Moe Kaufman, and others. This, when I was only a young analyst in a Captain's uniform.

Psychoanalysis has been good to me, and I am very grateful. I came into the profession at a time when it was possible to know personally its important scientific contributors. There were only a handful of us trained in the United States before world War II. I can think of Robert Knight, Max Gitelson, Douglas Orr (all trained by Blitzsten), Robert Morse, Ben Weininger, Jacob Kasanin, Sara Bonnet, Lincoln Rahman, Leo Bartemeier, and Maurice Levine.

As a young analyst who had been trained on the West Coast I was something of an oddity. This gave me the privilege of meeting the real scientific leaders of the American and the International. I got to know Anna Freud, Princess Marie Bonaparte, Glover, Hartman, Ernst and Marianne Kris, Lowenstein, Greenacre, Jacobson, etc. We got to hear their papers and even had a chance

Fenichel
1946

Young Person

Trained in
USA

Oddity

know people

to know some of them personally. We felt we were part of a vital movement not just anonymous newcomers.

LA Society
Access, index

After this digression let me return to the vicisitudes of the Los Angeles Society and Institute. It was formed in February 1946 after we had gathered enough new people. After World War II we had a heterogenous group of new members. They included Ernst Lewy, Norman Levy, Walter Briehl, Milton Miller, Martin Grotjahn, George Frumkies, Frederick Hacker and Albert Slutsky. Ernst Simmel was the first president and also the chairman of the Education Committee. But ill health plagued Simmel and he was to retire as Chairman within a few years. His place was ably taken by Ernst Lewy. Then came the most hectic time for our psychoanalytic lives, the time of the split in the Los Angeles Society and Institute. (Ernst Simmel had died in 1947)

Simmel -
Lewy

I believe the split in the Los Angeles Society dates back to 1946, at least scientifically, to the publication of a book called "Psychoanalytic Therapy." The most prestigious authors were Franz Alexander and Thomas French, ^(Alexander not in Los Angeles) but it was co-authored by the members of the Chicago Institute, Research in Therapy. Our seven man education committee had two opposing feelings about whether this was or was not analysis. For the book were: Grotjahn, Romm and Miller. Against the book: Lewy, Brunswick, Tidd and Greenson. In addition there were personal animosities stirred up by a flood of candidates, desire to be a popular teacher, the opportunity to make more money, jealousies and envies of all kinds. After much heartbreak and lots of backbreaking work, we felt it advisable to split, by allowing the split-off group to appoint a new training analyst (you had to have four to qualify as a separate institute). The separation was accomplished. We divided our money and our library and each candidate was free to join the institute of his choice.

Split -
Psy Therapy

It was a dreadful time for the Candidates and also the members. There were divided loyalties - to go with one's training analyst or to go where one felt at home scientifically or socially. At any rate, the split was accomplished and the Southern California Institute was officially formed in 1950. I am quite sure none of us felt we had all the good people and the others had all the bad ones.

*So Calif
1950*

Twenty-five years ago the split seemed imperative for our survival. We needed distance to cool the intensity of our clashing views. Today there are still many issues which we disagree about, but they are less intense and more diffuse. Indeed, in some ways there are certain members of the two groups who are in basic agreement. The separation caused much hardship, but I, for one, think it served a very useful purpose. We can be socially more friendly because we know that we have some well known divergent views. We do not have to be hypocritical about what we believe. Each of us can stand for his own analytical identity. Today I am afraid we are approaching other deep seated and intense differences which have reverberations going on underneath the surface. Again, I believe we should distance ourselves by having some kind of a division, in order to get away from hypocrisy and subversion.

*cooling down
period -*

*Another
split?*

None of us has a monopoly on truth. There are no absolutes in any science, and least of all in the science of what makes people behave the way they do. For Psychoanalysis to get closer to the truth we need rigorous thinkers, conscientious clinicians, who care more about their patients' welfare than they do about their

No absolutes in science

theories. We can not afford to be close minded and worship the old, nor can we recklessly throw out what our predecessors have worked so hard to give us. We need humility as well as pride for our discipline. Psychoanalysis is a wonderful and an impossible profession. In many ways, it is beyond the grasp of the mortals who practice it.

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