

I Historical background of the birth of psychoanalysis in Poland

I was born into a Polish-Jewish milieu at a time when the process of assimilation was in full swing. But the Jewish tendency to create a separate, closed, religious society within the larger society was also still operating. Caught into this conflict and ambiguity, I usually identified more with the romantic "suffering, enslaved Poland" than with my Jewish background. Anti-Semitism all around me tipped the scales further. In short, I wanted to be Polish. The influence of the budding Zionist nationalistic movement was not an important factor at the time of my childhood.

Helena Deutsch, *Confrontations with Myself. An Epilogue*

While I was in Cracow, I came into close contact with members of the Polish Social-Democratic Party and espoused their cause. Many of friends and colleagues, both Jews and non-Jews, subscribed to the Party's programme, and like them, I accepted some rather dangerous assignments at its behest. Along with other Jewish members of the Social-Democratic Party, I anticipated that, with the solution of the social problem would come, automatically, the solution of the Jewish question. Since I felt more and more that I was a Jew, and belonged with my fellow-Jews in their struggles, it is not easy for me to understand how it happened, nevertheless, that I bypassed the Zionist movement.

Herman Nunberg, *Memoirs. Recollections, Ideas, Reflections*

The Jews, wherever they live, assimilated to a larger and smaller degree – they assimilated in France, Germany, England, America etc., but to us, Polish Jews, it is by no means unimportant with whom Polish Jews assimilate, we want them to assimilate with the Polish nation, that is that they would become Polish.

Adam Wizel, "Asymilacja czy polonizacja?", *Izraelita* 1910

1 Introduction: The winding paths of Polish psychoanalysis between 1900 and 2015

To write about the history of psychoanalysis in Poland is to walk backwards in time along one of the most winding paths in our cultural tradition. Moreover, in the last decades this path has almost completely been forgotten, while slightly before that, in the 1950s, it was suppressed for ideological reasons. To write about this history is also to follow the equally complicated, sometimes tragic fates of those who first broke ground along these trails. Human fates intertwine here with the fates of the theory and the movement. There is no doubt that practicing psychoanalytical theory in the Polish lands during the partitions, and then in the interwar period and under communism, was – although in each of these periods for different reasons – a truly heroic enterprise.

An eloquent testimony to this is the bitter words of Ludwik Jekels, who, in his book on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis (1912), the first publication in Polish on this theory, complained about the widespread misunderstanding of its assumptions, taking issue with the prevailing prejudices and false ideas on psychoanalysis:

Observing the approach both of scholarly spheres and the intelligent public to psychoanalysis, one notices that it has many more opponents and critics than followers. I think not many areas of human knowledge confront as many prejudiced judgments as Freud's psychoanalysis does, even from serious scholars. Because it should be their duty to use this special method employed by Freud to conduct experiments and thus to scrupulously study whether the mental phenomena discovered by him really exist and whether there indeed are relationships between them which psychoanalysis perceives. But instead of this experimental approach, which in this matter is the only acceptable one, they are content with an a priori "no," although disguised in sundry scientific robes and seemingly logical arguments.³⁹

This resistance to psychoanalysis on the part of Polish scholars and the "intelligent public" was not something exceptional at that time. While in Vienna and a few other cities of Austro-Hungary there was a strong, affluent middle class, whose representatives were ready to endure the peculiarities of psychoanalytical therapy, in the Polish lands⁴⁰ such people were much harder to come by. Not only did the average Polish member of the middle class approach the novelties from

39 Ludwik Jekels, *Szkic psychoanalizy Freuda* (Lwów: Polskie Towarzystwo Nakładowe, 1912), p. 2.

40 This term refers to the lands of the former First Republic, that is, the territory of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the partitions.

Vienna with much suspicion, but also among the Jews, predominantly Orthodox (and poor), psychoanalysis did not find many patients. It was, after all, a product of an assimilated Austrian Jew, who treated it as a new method of psychotherapy springing from the European scientific tradition, and he was strongly critical of the Jewish religious tradition and distanced himself from it. To make matters worse, he treated all religion as an illusion, perceiving it as the only effective instrument that checked the human drives of aggression and destruction.

Naturally, the psychoanalytical movement in the initial period of its existence was created by Jews who, like Freud, came from assimilated communities and were usually medical students or graduates.⁴¹ But it should be remembered that in Central and Eastern Europe such people were a small minority among the Jews. This was noticeable especially in Galicia and in other Polish lands, as well as in Russia. At the turn of the 20th century and in the interwar period, large-scale emancipation and the assimilation of Jews living in these areas – and in Central Europe as a whole – were only beginning.

In any case, these first adepts and advocates of psychoanalysis had been mentally shaped by European scientific and cultural tradition. Like Freud, they treated psychoanalysis as a modern scientific theory claiming universal validity. So if the label of a specifically “Jewish” science was stuck to Freud’s theory, this resulted mostly from the fact that, because of the peculiar nature of assimilation, which in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy gathered impetus in the second half of the 19th century, Freud exerted an extremely powerful influence on the young generation of emancipated Jews. They saw psychoanalysis as a great chance to enhance their status in contemporary society, in which, due to rapid cultural changes, various types of neuroses, especially hysteria, and all kinds of frustration became rampant. It opened huge opportunities for development in psychiatry and various forms of psychotherapy, and the psychiatric profession began to gain authority in bourgeois circles. In the case of psychoanalysis, there were also hopes for the transformation of society, leading not only to a greater tolerance and openness to various manifestations of human sexual life, but also to a decrease of conflict and aggression in interpersonal relations.

If we consider Freud’s theory in the context of contemporary ideas about science shaped by the Positivist tradition, we will see that many of its elements

41 As Dennis B. Klein says, in the initial period after 1906, the psychoanalytical movement centered around Freud consisted exclusively of Jews. See Dennis B. Klein, *The Jewish Origins of the Psychoanalytical Movement* (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1981), p. 7.

corresponded to these ideas. In addition, Freud consistently emphasized that psychoanalysis was a science with strong empirical foundations, meeting the criteria prevailing in the natural sciences. This belief is also apparent in Jekels' statement quoted above, where the scientific "empiricism" of psychoanalysis is juxtaposed to the "a priori" argumentation of its critics. So the fact that in the initial period it was mostly young Jewish representatives of the medical professions who joined the psychoanalytical ranks was a result of the peculiar nature of assimilation processes in the Habsburg Monarchy at the turn of the 20th century. It was definitely not a consequence of psychoanalysis as such being a specifically Jewish science, which would in turn favor a peculiarly Jewish approach to sexuality.

Nevertheless, opponents of psychoanalysis often resorted to this "argumentation," claiming that its supposed "amoralism" in sexual matters was closely related to the fact that it was a typically "Jewish" science. Such judgments, with clearly anti-Semitic overtones, must have been widespread at the time, if Karol Irzykowski felt inclined to make an ironic comment on this subject. In his article *Freudyzm i freudyści* (Freudism and Freudists) he mocks all those who identified Freud's theory with promoting the slogans of "free love" and absolute amorality: "An anti-Semite would even be happy to concoct the sophisticated line of argumentation that since Freud is a Jew, his emphasizing the sexual element in everything comes from his Jewish nihilism, because those who don't have their own country cling to such non-national issues and impose them on other people by force."⁴² Later in this article, Irzykowski emphatically demonstrated the absurdity of this type of interpretation of psychoanalysis.

The distrust towards psychoanalysis coincided with skepticism – arising from social and religious considerations – towards its anthropological assumptions, expressed mostly by representatives of the Church and circles associated with it. Later, in the 1930s, this was supplemented by "criticism" from native nationalist groupings with fascist leanings, which saw in psychoanalysis a strongly suspect Jewish gnosis, dealing with filthy aspects of the human soul. One telling illustration of this was the hostile shouts of nationalists during the defense of a post-doctoral thesis by the most distinguished Polish interwar psychoanalyst, Gustaw Bychowski. What they held against him was that in his book about Juliusz Słowacki, published in 1930, he had made a "blasphemous" claim that this Polish national bard harbored unconscious incestuous feelings towards his mother.⁴³

42 Irzykowski, "Freudyzm i freudyści," *Prawda*, No. 2–6, 8–9 (1913); reprinted in: *Kronos*, No. 1 (2010), p. 223.

43 See: Bychowski, *Słowacki i jego dusza*.

It should be emphasized, however, that many ardent supporters of psychoanalysis appeared among the Polish intelligentsia. They came mostly from medical, philosophical, and literary-artistic milieus. They did not treat psychoanalysis only as a slightly lurid “novelty” from Vienna, but they took it quite seriously as a scientific theory revealing previously unknown secrets of the human soul and opening new therapeutic perspectives. In the interwar period, this group was joined by literary scholars and pedagogues who not only looked to the psychoanalytical theories of Freud, but also of Adler and Jung, for sources of inspiration in developing new concepts for educating children and youth. In the years of war and occupation, all Polish representatives of this tendency who had remained in the country, predominantly Jewish, were murdered by Germans and Soviets. They found death in ghettos, concentration camps, Soviet prisoner-of-war camps, and labor camps. And when after the war Poland became a communist country under Soviet tutelage, psychoanalysis, a “bourgeois science,” was removed from the curriculum at the universities and its private practice was forbidden. Those few of its supporters who survived the war (they can be counted on the fingers of one hand) were forced to renounce their youthful mistakes and to practice Pavlov-style psychology.⁴⁴ In practice this was the only chance for them to continue working as a doctor or an academic.

The first attempts at reactivating the psychoanalytical form of therapy appeared in postwar Poland only in the late 1950s, but since psychoanalysis was still under the Communist curse, they assumed clandestine forms. For this reason, the first proponents of this theory in Poland were to a large extent self-taught (Zbigniew Sokolik, Jan Malewski, and Michał Łapiński). Fascinated with the theory of Freud and his descendants, they tried to explore its secrets and practice it on their own (of course unofficially), and after 1956 they established contacts with more experienced colleagues from Hungary and Czechoslovakia. These contacts took the form of almost conspiratorial private meetings, consultations, and supervisions.

44 In postwar Poland this process was slightly delayed. It was only at the Congress of Polish Psychiatrists in Wrocław in 1950, entitled “The Materialist-Dialectical Foundations of Psychiatry,” that psychoanalysis and other non-Marxist currents in psychology were subjected to criticism. One of the targets of this criticism at the Congress was the coursebook by Maurycy Borsztajn, *Wstęp do psychiatrii klinicznej. Dla lekarzy, psychologów i studentów* (Łódź: Księgarnia Ludowa Łódź, 1948), written from psychoanalytical positions.

With time, starting from the end of the 1960s, a quite vigorous, gradually more numerous – but also increasingly diverse⁴⁵ – psychoanalytical community started to emerge. It consisted mostly of graduates of psychology and medicine, who were often working for government institutions and attempted to employ the psychoanalytical method (or its elements) in their psychotherapeutic practice, for obvious reasons not using this label officially (e.g., the Raszów center near Warsaw founded by Jan Malewski and later run by Jerzy Pawlik). There was also an increasing number of people who underwent professional training abroad and then practiced various types of psychoanalytical therapy (Katarzyna Walewska, Wojciech Hańbowski, Elżbieta Bohomolec, Katarzyna Schier, Anna Czownicka, Ewa Wojciechowska, Ewa Modzelewska, and others). In the late 1980s, the last barriers put up around psychoanalysis by the communist system broke down. You could “openly” organize psychoanalytical seminars, universities started to offer classes in psychoanalysis, and national and international conferences were also organized.

But the real breakthrough took place in 1989. Polish psychoanalytical circles were able to establish contacts with representatives of the psychoanalytical movement in the West and other countries without any political – and ideological – constraints. Both in public institutions and privately, psychoanalytical therapy could be practiced. There was a growing interest in various forms of psychoanalysis among Polish philosophers and humanists, mainly the younger generation of scholars. This change was greatly influenced by the wide range of opportunities for Polish scholars to travel abroad for scholarships and internships at Western universities and other scientific institutions, as well as by unlimited access to the latest literature. It later found an eloquent expression in a spate of publications, books, and articles focused on psychoanalysis (Andrzej Leder, Jan Sowa, Szymon Wróbel, Lena Magnone, the author of this book, and others).

There were also the first books of Polish psychoanalysts, who – on the basis of their therapeutic experiences – offered reflections on the mental condition of contemporary Polish society, its dominant pathologies, and their sources.⁴⁶ All

45 I mean here the emergence of groups endorsing an approach close to psychoanalysis in Jungian or Lacanian versions.

46 You could name here such publications as Wojciech Hańbowski, *Tożsamość psychoanalityka i inne studia przypadków*, Sopot 2013; Katarzyna Walewska, *Progi narodzin*, Kraków 2011; Katarzyna Schier, *Piękne brzydactwo. Psychologiczna problematyka obrazu ciała i jego zaburzeń*, Warszawa 2009.

this means that we are seeing the germs of an psychoanalytically inspired current of critical reflection on the so-called difficult issues related both to our attitude to our history and to the threats coming from contemporary civilization and culture.

2 The curse of communism and disputes over the psychoanalytical *episteme*

The fate of psychoanalysis in 20th-century Poland is therefore a tragic history, perhaps even the most tragic when compared to the histories of other scientific movements in this country. The paths of this movement reflect, as in a kind of a distorting mirror, the tragedy of recent Polish history, through its ups and downs, with which they are inextricably bound. But this means that any attempt to explore them is a hugely important venture. It is not only an attempt at mapping one of many uncharted areas in our recent cultural traditions, but it is also a kind of repaying our debt to those who took up the pioneering task of instilling in Polish society a new way of thinking about human mental illness, human sexuality, education, and attitudes to our individual and collective past.

A book on the history of psychoanalysis in Poland is not only about psychoanalysis itself. The history of psychoanalysis is part of a comprehensive picture of Polish culture in the 20th century, of its transformations, new tendencies, disputes, arguments, and artistic, literary, political, philosophical, and religious debates. From its very beginnings psychoanalysis was something more than a form of therapy based on a specific theory of the human mind. It was founded on a new anthropology, a new image of the society of the future and of culture, and a new approach to aesthetic issues and art.

Therefore, when writing about the history of psychoanalysis in Poland, you cannot ignore the fact that representatives of this trend were also strongly involved in the struggle to transform the self-knowledge of Polish society and to give a new form to the national culture, bringing it closer to modern Western European tradition. They criticized the traditional social model with the dominant position of the father in the family, they urged for a debate on a new model of educating children and young people, they raised the questions of anti-Semitism and racism, they took up the “sensitive” issues of sexual pathologies and the sexuality of children and women, and they opted for a more open approach to ethnic minorities and all forms of cultural otherness. All this automatically brought them closer to the left side of the political scene in Poland during the partitions and the interwar period; incidentally, after the May Coup of 1926, the Polish left was largely marginalized, while some of its leaders, headed by a group

regarded by the regime as political enemies, were subjected to various types of repressions (e.g., locked up in the detention camp in Bereza Kartuska⁴⁷).

But of key importance was the fact that after the murder of almost all psychoanalysts of Jewish origin by the Germans and Soviets, the psychoanalytical community practically ceased to exist. After 1945, the only psychoanalysts who survived the war were Roman Markuszewicz, who died in 1946, Maurycy Bornsztajn (Bornstein),⁴⁸ who died in 1952, and Tadeusz Bilikiewicz, who joined the Communist Party and eagerly (though probably not quite sincerely) subscribed to Pavlov's theory in psychiatry.

After the Congress of Polish Psychiatrists in 1950, psychoanalysis was officially banished by the communist regime and its ardent supporters in psychology and psychiatry. In addition, domestic humanities and philosophy were almost completely cut off from new Western concepts and trends, so they knew very little about the influence of various theories and versions of psychoanalysis on ethnology, literary studies, social sciences, cultural sciences, theories of art, aesthetics, and other branches of scholarship. Of course, such a state of affairs resulted mainly from the fact that from 1948 until 1956 the so-called Marxist-Leninist approach was promoted in practically all academic disciplines. And later it coexisted with ideologically neutral – and therefore tolerated by the regime – tendencies grounded in Positivism and Neo-Positivism, whose representatives charged psychoanalysis with being “unscientific” and discredited its cognitive and therapeutic value.

This “tolerance” of the communist regime for this type of argumentation in psychiatric and psychotherapeutic circles resulted also from the fact that instead of talking to the patient, it promoted politically safe forms of treatment such as pharmacotherapy (“pills”) or surgical interventions. Meanwhile, psychoanalysis assumes that an important element of therapy is the transformation of the patient's self-knowledge through a conversation during which interpretations of

47 Bereza Kartuska was a detention camp founded by the Polish Sanacja regime on the initiative of Józef Piłsudski. The camp existed in 1934–1939. It was created in order to isolate as well as mentally and physically torment political opponents from various groups, including members of the National Democracy, the communist and peasant parties, as well as Ukrainian nationalists. Prisoners were sent to the camp by way of an administrative decision, without a judicial verdict and without the right of appeal. The use of torture was a permanent feature of the treatment of prisoners.

48 Maurycy Bornsztajn's family name was Bornstein. Under the latter name he published his articles in Polish and German until 1920. In the 1920s he Polonized it as “Bornsztajn,” emphasizing his Polish identity.

his dreams, slips, and symptoms are suggested to him. And this naturally implies his reflexive and critical approach to the whole social, cultural, and sometimes even political sphere. Moreover, such a form of therapy is difficult to control politically. It is obviously impossible to “objectively” determine what the analyst was talking about with the patient. Perhaps they both spoke critically about the regime and the system? Perhaps they planned some protest or coup? Unless you tap all the psychiatric offices...

The ultimate effect of all these factors in the communist period was the emergence of the view in Polish academic and intellectual circles that psychoanalysis was an anachronistic trend and that since the times of Freud nothing important had happened in it. Moreover, since no one conducted major research into the history of the movement and its impact on Polish culture between 1900 and 1939, there was a widespread opinion – in the light of latest publications, a completely false one – that at the time it was a quite marginal trend with hardly anyone taking it seriously.⁴⁹

Today, of course, the discussion on the scientific status of psychoanalysis, on its position in the context of the epistemological assumptions of the natural sciences and humanities, assumes a new form, quite different from the one prevailing throughout the 20th century, when the controversies regarded mostly its hermeneutic-phenomenological and natural-science assumptions.⁵⁰ As a result, the so-called emancipatory claim of psychoanalysis is conceived differently. From early on and up to the 1960s, this claim was based on the assumption that the expected effect of psychoanalytical therapy is a profound change in the

49 The fact that in that period the trend was vigorously discussed by Polish academics and intellectuals is demonstrated in such thoroughly documented source publications as Paweł Dybel, “Urwane ścieżki czyli z dziejów psychoanalizy w Polsce zaborów i międzywojnia,” in: *Urwane ścieżki. Przybyszewski – Freud – Lacan* (Kraków: 2001), pp. 17–46; Bartłomiej Dobroczyński and Paweł Dybel, eds., *Od Jekelsa do Witkacego. Psychoanaliza na ziemiach polskich pod zaborami 1900–1918. Wybór tekstów* (Kraków: Universitas, 2016); Lena Magnone, *Emisariusze Freuda. Transfer kulturowy psychoanalizy do polskich sfer inteligenckich przed drugą wojną światową*, (Kraków: Universitas, 2016); Mira Marcinów, *Historia polskiego szaleństwa w XIX wieku* (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz/terytoria, 2018); Bartłomiej Dobroczyński, Mira Marcinów, *Niezablizniona rana Narcyza* (Kraków: Universitas, 2018).

50 I wrote about it in my article “Das Wissen vom Unsinn. Die Frage nach dem wissenschaftlichen Status der Psychoanalyse,” in: *Die Grenzen der Interpretation in Hermeneutik und Psychoanalyse*, ed. Hermann Lang, Paweł Dybel, Gerda Pagel (Würzburg: Königshausen&Neumann, 2014), pp. 29–72.

patient's attitude towards himself and the people around him.⁵¹ Only then can you speak about its curative effect. Such an approach implies that psychoanalytical therapy is closely intertwined with the sphere of cultural ideas and values regarding human self-understanding. And these ideas and values are determined historically, so they cannot be verified on the basis of "objective" empirical data, as is the case in the natural sciences.

As a result, the effects of psychoanalytical therapy can be assessed only in terms of the extent to which it gives the patient a better understanding of his problem concerning his attitude to himself and others which lies at the source of his disorder, and the extent to which this kind of self-knowledge allows him to cope better with this problem and rebuild his relations with others. On the other hand, the epistemological value of the theory itself should be assessed in terms of the extent to which its claims and insights reveal something important about the structure of human mental life, the mechanisms of human drives, the origin of sexual identity, etc. Insights of this kind are related to the historically shaped cultural and social self-knowledge of the patient, forcing him to take another look at its basic components, so no wonder that psychoanalytical theories inspired representatives of such disciplines as the social and political sciences, cultural studies, ethnology, and cultural anthropology. Not to mention the "unscientific" – but very important for the landscape of 20th-century European thought – philosophical tendencies such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, philosophical anthropology, or poststructuralism. It is mainly in these disciplines that psychoanalytical theories became an important source of inspiration, because of the new philosophy of man, the theory of interpretation, and the philosophy of culture implicitly contained in it.

This close relationship of psychoanalysis with the social and cultural context, which it attempts to influence by changing the patient's self-knowledge, can be clearly seen if we look at the history of this movement in Poland. Perceiving the sources of many neuroses to be rooted in a too-restrictive approach to the sphere of human sexual life, which was grounded in widely accepted cultural prohibitions and norms, Freud's theory urged people to ask questions about the sources of social differences and conflicts, and the cultural origin of female hysteria, it questioned the dominant model of raising children, and it shed new light on society's attitude to persons with non-heterosexual orientations. This in

51 This way of understanding the emancipatory claim of psychoanalysis is clearly stated in Jürgen Habermas's book *Knowledge and Human Interests*, translated by Jeremy S. Shapiro, Boston, 1972.

turn placed its supporters in strong opposition to prevailing views and notions on all these issues, bringing them into arguments with defenders of the Church doctrine, in which ideological elements could often be heard.

Such an attitude was not only a matter of the “personal” views of the representatives of the trend, but it was rooted in the concept of man contained in Freud’s theory, in his references to the cultural sphere and in his vision of a psychoanalytically “enlightened” future society. Similarly, the fact that practically all leading Polish psychoanalysts and psychiatrists of psychoanalytical orientation displayed left-wing sympathies resulted from the peculiar alliance between Freudian psychoanalysis and Marxism, an affinity which had existed from the very beginning. Representatives of both these trends, despite their often-diverging approaches to the questions of revolution, sexuality, and social emancipation, were brought together by a critical recognition of the self-knowledge of the traditional patriarchy or bourgeois society and the belief that this self-knowledge should be radically changed. Of course, they differed in their visions of how this change should come about and which elements of this self-knowledge should be first subjected to a radical revision.

3 The psychoanalytical movement in Poland during the partitions and in the interwar period

Thus, the study of the history of psychoanalysis in Poland has an important ideological aspect, because it raises questions about the shape of native cultural self-knowledge inherited from tradition. It is also impossible not to engage in the contemporary debate on the attitude of Polish people to their past and the disputes over the shape of today’s culture. For the history of psychoanalysis in Poland is not only an important element of our 20th-century academic tradition, mainly in psychiatry, pedagogy, and literary studies; of major importance is also the fact that once we carefully scrutinize it, we will look differently at the mental condition of contemporary Polish society and its problems, often not so distant from those haunting Poland a few decades back. It will also allow us to place the current discussions and disputes on such questions as methods of raising children, sexual education in schools, equal rights for women, or the attitude to persons with a different sexual orientation within a wider historical perspective. When I started this research, my academic colleagues often reacted with astonishment when I told them, for example, that between 1900 and 1939 in medical journals alone there were more than 100 high-quality publications on the psychoanalytical ideas of Freud, Adler, and Jung, and there were also many texts in journals devoted to literary theory, pedagogy, culture, and literature. And the

books discussing various aspects of these theories numbered more than a dozen. When writing this book, I wanted above all to show that, starting from 1900, psychoanalysis enjoyed a growing popularity in the medical community, and then among teachers, literary theorists, and writers. And these were the circles which since the early 19th century shaped the cultural identity of the Polish people. These milieus formed the very core of the Polish intelligentsia – this was a natural legacy of the partitions.

The first eloquent testimony to this interest in psychoanalysis were the events at the first Congress of Polish Neurologists, Psychiatrists, and Psychologists in Warsaw, where the first papers on psychoanalysis were delivered and later published in the leading medical journal *Neurologia Polska*.⁵² One of the speakers was Ludwig Jekels, and Freud's theory was also mentioned by such people as Tadeusz Jaroszyński, Marycy Bornsztajn (Bornstein), and Adam Wizel. The period up to 1939 saw the publication of an impressive number of academic articles and books about Freud's, Adler's, Stekel's, and Jung's psychoanalysis, not to mention several translations of their works and other foreign texts on psychoanalysis. In addition, critical commentaries, discussions, and disputes only enhanced this popularity.

The authors of works on psychoanalysis not only reconstructed the fundamental assumptions of the ideas of its main proponents (Freud, Adler, Stekel, and Jung), although texts of this type did prevail. The theoretical side was often illustrated with examples drawn from the authors' clinical practices, besides important events from patients' biographies containing also the sociocultural and sometimes even political contexts of the era. They also recorded the existential problems, inhibitions, depressions, antagonisms, and conflicts typical for Polish and Jewish society during the partitions and in the interwar period. Today, these medical histories provide extremely valuable material for psychiatry, but in equal measure for sociology, history, and cultural studies.

We find in these texts a direct or indirect answer to the question of what was so fascinating in Freud's theory for the first psychoanalysts in the Polish lands; these were often not just issues of a purely academic nature. Their authors saw in psychoanalysis also a theory allowing for the emergence of a new type of man, capable of better controlling his drives thanks to the development of a new approach to sexuality. They believed that a wide-scale application of this theory

52 Władysław Gajkiewicz, Adam Wizel, eds., *Prace I-go Zjazdu Neurologów, Psychiatrów i Psychologów Polskich odbytego w Warszawie 11, 12 i 13 października 1909 roku* (Warszawa: Skład Główny Z.Wende i S-ka, 1910).

would significantly reduce the occurrence of various types of mental diseases, neuroses, and psychoses. This was accompanied by the belief in the possibility of the emergence of a new type of society, emancipated from its inhibitions, traumas, harmful views, and prejudices.

Psychoanalysis was thus a movement which strengthened the modernizing tendencies among urban dwellers and intelligentsia, for its representatives and supporters overwhelmingly advocated liberal and left-wing ideas. Their aim was to turn Poland into a truly modern democratic state, in which particular ethnic groups, preserving their autonomy, would enjoy equal rights; in which poverty and huge financial differences (and the antagonisms resulting from them) would disappear; and in which a new, more liberal and also more rational – based on the achievements of science – attitude to the whole sexual sphere would emerge. These ideas guided the thinking of perhaps the greatest “promoter” of psychoanalysis in the interwar period, Grydzewski, who regularly published articles, reviews, commentaries, and other texts on psychoanalysis in the *Wiadomości Literackie* journal, opting for a more “enlightened” model of Polish society. Supporters of psychoanalysis joined the struggle to shape Polish society anew, hoping for a long-term victory in this battle.

There were also authors who pointed out to what extent psychoanalysis had become a source of inspiration for representatives of such disciplines as pedagogy, cultural sciences, social sciences, anthropology, literary studies, and aesthetics (Ludwig Jekels, Ludwika Karpińska, Gustaw Bychowski, and Stefan Borowiecki). Its claims and insights concerning the darkest sides of the human soul were also seen as an important source of artistic inspiration (Stanisław Przybyszewski, Bruno Schulz, and Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz).

It is enough to leaf through medical, philosophical, literary, or pedagogic journals from the time to see that texts on psychoanalysis regularly appeared in them. These dissertations usually started with extensive discussions on various aspects of Freud’s theory, so that a Polish reader who did not have access to original publications and who did not know German could learn about its basic tenets and assumptions. There were also the first translations of Freud into Polish, which also began to appear very early and were of quite good quality. It is worth emphasizing that Polish translations belonged to the first translations of Freud in the world (more about all these publications, including the bibliography, in Chapter 2, paragraph 4 and 6).

Generally speaking, it seems that if we take into account the number of publications and public appearances (e.g., at various medical and psychological conferences) on the subject of psychoanalysis and translations of texts in this area, its reception in the Polish lands during the partitions and in the interwar

period was particularly intense.⁵³ During the partitions this was obviously influenced by such factors as the geographic and cultural proximity of Vienna in the Austrian partition, as well as the widespread command of German among Polish academics and intellectuals, especially in the medical community. These milieus, as I already mentioned, had a special position in the social consciousness, grounded in the Polish cultural tradition. It was mainly their members who shaped the cultural self-knowledge of Polish society during the partitions. These communities were generally of a progressive nature, having since the 1870s combined the cause of national liberation with raising the general level of education (the Polish variant of Positivism). Their status resulted mostly from the crucial role they played in preserving a sense of national identity and cultivating tradition.

In the early 20th century, the idea of modernization, inherited from the positivist tradition, gained currency in large sections of these communities. Psychoanalysis, not only as new method of therapy, but also because of its underlying conception of the human mind, society, and culture, was one of the theories spreading the idea of modernization in Polish society. After all, its author invoked the human capacity for rational distancing oneself from prejudices and various instinctive determinants of mental life. So the modernization process was to be based on human mental faculties, without the intervention of divine, mystical forces usually invoked by religion. Psychoanalysis certainly was one of those scientific trends which, thanks to its emphasis on the role of critical self-reflection, greatly intensified the process of “disenchanted the world” in European societies, at least in the form in which Max Weber presented it in his works. In this case, it meant acting for the secularization of the spiritual life of man, who should instead learn to cope with his problems on his own, aided by a doctor-psychotherapist. It was supposed to be accompanied by an analogous secularization of social life, which should be guided by principles developed by man himself.

Polish supporters and sympathizers of the movement came from intellectual circles, whose representatives undertook various actions for the sake of the so-conceived modernization process. Their role in initiating and enhancing

53 Of course, during the partitions it concerned mainly Galicia, but psychoanalysis found many supporters also in the Congress Kingdom. They were fewest in the Prussian partition, where, as I mentioned, the rights of the Polish population to cultivate their traditions, acquire education in their native language, establish their own institutions, etc., were limited to the largest extent. And the relatively small, but wealthy Jewish community was already overwhelmingly Germanized at that time.

this process was very similar to that played at that time by advocates of psychoanalysis in other countries of Central Europe, mainly Hungary, Bohemia, and Slovakia. This is illustrated very well by Adam Bžoch in his book about 20th-century Slovak psychoanalysis: “It places a kind of mirror in front of the modernizing society, on the cultural periphery of Europe reflecting the attitude of the emergent social elites to modernization and social change.”⁵⁴

As in these countries, in the Polish lands during the partitions and in the interwar period this pro-modernization social elite constituted only a small percentage of the total population. As a result, its educational efforts and its influence on shaping the self-knowledge of the public had a limited reach, embracing only the better-educated urban strata. It is enough to recall that the urban population in interwar Poland was just 20 percent of the total, and the general level of education was very low, with as much as a 23 percent rate of illiteracy.

4 Vanishing traces of memory and uncharted areas of the past

When studying the history of psychoanalysis in Poland, one also encounters obstacles of an objective nature. They are associated with the existence of many “uncharted areas” in the history and achievements of the movement.

Naturally, if you browse through various books in Polish from the turn of the 20th century, through articles in Polish medical, philosophical, and literary journals (published mainly in the Austrian and Russian partitions), if you explore the records on lectures about psychoanalysis in Kraków, Lviv, or Warsaw, it turns out that this material is – as I already said – astonishingly abundant. But many items are difficult to find today, if only because numerous library collections and archives from that time are still not ordered and incomplete, while some materials have been lost or destroyed. Others are rarities for book lovers and you have to look for them in libraries on other continents.

Moreover, we often do not know the various biographical details of Polish analysts which would be important for a better understanding of their academic and therapeutic careers, and even their individual fates (we do not know, for example, the date and circumstances of the death of Leopold Wołowicz from Lviv, the author of one of the first Polish-language works on Freudian psychoanalysis; and we do not know what he was engaged in after 1927⁵⁵). We only

54 Adam Bžoch, *Psychoanalyse in der Slowakei. Eine Geschichte von Enthusiasmus und Widerstand* (Giessen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2013), p. 9.

55 See Leopold Wołowicz, *Jeden z problemów psychoanalizy Freuda*, (Stryj: publisher August Olbrich, 1912).

know that he was a teacher in one of the Lviv secondary schools and that he was associated with a group of philosophers centered around Kazimierz Twardowski, founder of the so-called Lviv-Warsaw School. We often do not know the significant circumstances and details of their therapeutic work in the community in which they were operating. Their life paths often break off, and it is difficult to find witnesses who could tell us something more about them. This applies above all to analysts and the supporters of psychoanalysis who were of Jewish origin and who were murdered during World War II or died of emaciation or diseases in ghettos, labor camps, and concentration camps (Jan Nelken, Norbert Praeger, Estera Markinówna, Władysław Matecki, Salomea Kempner, Józef Kretz-Mirski, and others). And those who “miraculously survived” (Roman Markuszewicz and Maurycy Bornsztajn) could practice psychoanalysis after the war only to a very limited degree (and only until 1950). And their descendants who are still alive and could tell us something about them are scattered all over the world and are difficult to find, and year by year, month by month there are fewer of them left.

During this research one is often confronted with an experience similar to that which happened to those archeologists who discovered beautiful rooms with excellently preserved wall paintings in the underground canals of Rome. Once they came in contact with air, they started to discolor and vanish. In any case, history does not know the concept of a perfectly preserved image of a bygone era that would be resistant to time and oblivion. This image begins to fade and change its color at the very moment of its creation, parts of it immediately crumble, fall off the wall, and are no longer possible to reproduce. Sometimes other images are superimposed on them and they merge, forming new configurations of people, things, and events.

As people depart, the image of the historical world they lived and acted in fades irretrievably. And no one is able to recover its original flavor and color. In addition, instead of “hard,” empirically verifiable data confirmed by eyewitnesses, the researcher is often confronted with comments, opinions, rumors, or anecdotes which are difficult to check. He often has to rely on speculation and guesswork.

Many of these events have passed into oblivion forever along with the protagonists of that time, many materials have been destroyed by the turmoil of two world wars, and what’s left is often scattered in libraries across the world – in Austria, Russia, the United States, Germany, France, Brazil, Australia, etc. Fragments of this story are still alive, just as they were handed down by grandparents and parents, cultivated in a new cultural environment as the memory of a family pedigree. But these also fade away with time.

This is, of course, not a unique experience. Every historian has to deal with it, the only difference being the scope of the erased memory, faded traces, destroyed

materials, difficulties in reaching witnesses of events or archives. When years ago, driven by simple curiosity, I carried out a small study on my own, looking for the first traces of the influence of Freud's theory on the Polish intelligentsia and artistic and literary circles, I was painfully confronted with all these difficulties.

Moreover, they were associated with the deep skepticism and resistance of a large part of the academic community to dealing with the history of psychoanalysis in Poland, as well as the difficulty with precisely defining the "object" of this research. But then, to my genuine amazement, in the University Library in Warsaw I discovered lots of materials testifying to a vigorous interest in Freud's theory within Polish psychiatry and the medical circles in Galicia and Congress Kingdom, as well as among writers, artists, and philosophers. And later, when I started to explore the interwar period from this angle, it turned out that more than 200 articles on Freud's, Adler's, Jung's, and Stekel's theories had been published in Polish medical journals. What is more, a large percentage of the articles and books boasted very decent academic rigor, although they were mostly reviews and reconstructions.

Compared to that, the postwar period, when Poland was ruled by the communist regime fighting against psychoanalysis as a "bourgeois science," was a real disaster. Scholarly rectitude in the presentation of the assumptions and main claims of the supporters of psychoanalysis – as well as genuine arguments and discussions with them – were replaced by pseudo-critical works written from Marxist-Leninist positions, obviously commissioned by the regime's functionaries. The goal which the authors of these texts set before themselves was to expose the erroneous assumptions of the theories of Freud and his successors, who had purported to treat various pathologies of human mental life without exploring their actual class-based causes. Academic works whose authors attempted to write honestly about various aspects of the influence of psychoanalysis in Poland, mainly on historians and writers, could be counted on the fingers of one hand.⁵⁶

56 One of these was Jerzy Spein's essay "Bruno Schulz wobec psychoanalizy," *Studia o prozie Brunona Schulza*, Kazimiera Czapłowa, ed., *Prace Naukowe UŚ* in Katowicach, No 115 (1976), pp. 17–30, and Stanisław Burkot, "Od psychoanalizy klinicznej do literackiej," *Rocznik Naukowo-Dydaktyczny WSP w Krakowie*, No. 68 (1978), pp. 133–157. One should also mention the book by Zofia Rosińska, *Psychoanalityczne myślenie o sztuce* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1985). But practically the only significant attempt at a synthetic review of the history of psychoanalysis in Poland was a brief, few-page article by Krzysztof Pawlak and Zbigniew Sokolik, "Historia psychoanalizy w Polsce," *Nowiny Psychologiczne*, No. 4 (1992).

The result of my research at that time was the essay *Urwane ścieżki* [Broken-off trails], which opened my book under the same title. It was conceived as a “preliminary diagnosis” meant to encourage others to take up more systematic research.⁵⁷ In the meantime, over a dozen years or so, a number of books, articles, and dissertations appeared, their authors exploring the origins of psychoanalysis in Poland. They were both representatives of the older generation of researchers (Edward Fiała, Stanisław Burkot, Danuta Danek, and Bartłomiej Dobroczyński), and increasingly numerous members of the younger one. Articles were written about the life and work of particular psychoanalysts (Jolanta Żyndul and Jarosław Groth),⁵⁸ about the presence of psychoanalysis in the literary press of the interwar period, mainly the *Wiadomości literackie* journal (Lena Magnone), or about its influence on literary criticism (Marek Lubański). Other young authors attempted to describe the work of particular writers from the psychoanalytical perspective (Czesław Dziekanowski, Magda Bartosik, Katarzyna Bonowicz, and Lena Magnone), and yet others tried to use it for historical and sociopolitical analysis (Jan Sowa and Andrzej Leder). A few interesting works on the philosophical and theoretical aspects of psychoanalysis also appeared (Szymon Wróbel and Andrzej Leder).

This clearly demonstrates that there was a change in the approach to psychoanalysis and its history in Poland among the younger generation of researchers. This situation creates quite a different backdrop for this current book compared to the one that existed at the time of my writing *Urwane ścieżki*. It is certainly a much more “friendly” situation, but the author of this work has to confront new expectations on the part of the younger generation of researchers and readers, who are much more familiar with psychoanalytical ideas and their influence on contemporary philosophy and the humanities than two decades ago.

5 Is psychoanalysis a science? – a never-ending dispute

The interest in psychoanalysis first emerged in the Polish medical community, mainly among psychiatrists and, to a lesser degree, psychologists, where in the early 20th century the first supporters of Freud’s theory appeared, such as

57 Dybel, “Urwane ścieżki.” This article was also published in German: Dybel, “Unterbrochene Wege.”

58 In the meantime, a book with extensive articles on the biographies and achievements of Polish psychiatrists of psychoanalytical orientation operating during the partitions and in the interwar period was published. See Paweł Dybel, ed., *Przywracanie pamięci. Polscy psychiatrzy XX wieku orientacji psychoanalitycznej* (Kraków: Universitas, 2017).

Ludwig Jekels, Herman Nunberg, Ludwika Karpińska, and Karol de Beaurain. They saw in it not only a promising methodological proposal for curing neuroses, but also a theory penetrating the deepest corners of the human soul and revolutionizing existing views on this subject. In the interwar period, this theory would acquire many new advocates in the Polish medical community. It would also arouse the wider interest of other scholarly groups, such as pedagogues or philosophers. And finally it would become an object of interest for critics and historians of literature, as well as writers, who would often express their views on it. The former frequently with praise and enthusiasm (Juliusz Kleiner, Gustaw Bychowski, Bolesław Miciński, Jerzy Stempowski, and Stefania Zahorska), the latter usually with reserve or even critically (Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Bruno Schulz, Witold Gombrowicz, Maria Kuncewiczowa, Zofia Nałkowska, Michał Choromański, Emil Zegadłowicz, Jan Brzękowski, Antoni Słonimski, Julian Tuwim, Czesław Miłosz, and others⁵⁹).

There was nothing unusual in this. The interest in psychoanalysis in Vienna, Budapest, Zurich, or Berlin, to name only the most important centers of the psychoanalytical movement in the early period of its existence, developed in a similar way. This was due to the fact that psychoanalytical therapy did not confine itself to the doctor's office, but since it took the form of a conversation with the patient, it related to various aspects of his private and social life and concerned cultural traditions or even political issues. This was the source of its special position among contemporary psychiatric and psychological theories. It was a theory which, although founded on the psychiatric and psychological tradition of the 19th century, transcended this tradition in the direction of philosophy and the humanities, thanks to its interdisciplinary nature.

The emergence of the psychoanalytical movement in Poland cannot, therefore, be treated in isolation from the way it spread and gained popularity in such countries as pre-war Austria (Austro-Hungary), Germany, Switzerland, or Russia. Just like in these countries, the criticisms targeted at the theories of Freud and his successors were basically twofold. On the one hand, there were ideologically and culturally motivated charges, and on the other hand, people argued

59 The names mentioned belong to leading Polish writers, poets, and playwrights of the interwar period. It should be emphasized, however, that at that time the influence of psychoanalytical theories on this community was much smaller than on German and Austrian writers. See Tomas Anz and Christine Kanz, eds., *Psychoanalyse in der modernen Literatur. Kooperation und Konkurrenz* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999). Not to mention the influence of psychoanalysis on French literature, which started in the 1930s.

against psychoanalysis from scientific positions, questioning its claim to being scientific.

In the first case, the charges were usually made by representatives of conservative bourgeois circles, seeing Freud's psychoanalysis as a deadly threat to their notions about the family, the model of raising children, and sexuality. In the second case, as I already said, the critical argumentation came mostly from representatives of the natural sciences, empirically oriented psychology, or the scientific currents of philosophy (philosophy of language, philosophy of science, and logic), who at best saw psychoanalysis as a kind of pseudoscience, unable to meet the criteria of verifiability of scientific knowledge.

The dispute over how the scientific value of Freud's theory should be assessed continues to this day. Recently, every year we see several books whose authors proudly proclaim to the world that they finally exposed the pseudoscientific nature of Freud's theory. At the same time, however, every year there is a number of books proposing new readings of Freud's work, pointing at its interesting motifs or aspects previously overlooked by the interpretative tradition. Their authors show that these themes have inspirational value for contemporary humanities and philosophy. Regardless of which side we support in this dispute, its very existence more than a hundred years after the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, where Freud presented the first version of his theory, testifies to its amazing vitality.

6 Psychoanalysis and leftist thought – two assimilations

One of the main reasons for the wide-ranging and rich impact of this theory, which went beyond psychology and psychiatry, was a new vision of human mental life which Freud proposed was the basis of the therapeutic method (the conversation with the patient). This vision questioned previous understandings of man's mental workings. Of ground-breaking importance was the claim that a crucial role is played by the unconscious (*das Unbewusste*) in the human psyche, conceived as a system of repressed "instinctive representations" (*Triebvorstellungen*), which have been cut off from consciousness and are available to it only indirectly, in the form of its pathological derivatives (dreams, slips, and symptoms).

This claim profoundly complicated the existing vision of human mental life in psychology and philosophy. For according to this claim, the human mind is composed not only of actually or potentially conscious "instinctive representations," but also of which the subject is not and never can be conscious. And that is not all. Freud also claimed that these unconscious instinctive representations remain in conflict with the conscious ones. Consequently, the patient's therapy,

although it should lead to his becoming conscious of some repressed instinctive representations, can never result in a complete transparency of his consciousness. And he is never able to completely remove all the conflicts which underlie consciousness, but remain unconscious, because they have been repressed. Therapy may only make the patient realize their nature. In short, psychoanalytical therapy may enable him to cope with these conflicts better.

In this form, Freud's theory became a real challenge both for psychology and psychotherapy, and for philosophy and other disciplines in the humanities. One of the reasons for that was that, assuming the transformation of the patient's self-knowledge as an important element of the therapy process, it contained a clear emancipatory claim. After all, the patient was expected to change his attitude to his own sexual drives and aggressions, and consequently to adopt a new attitude to his own past. This, in turn, implied a change of his attitude not only to himself, but also to others.

As a result, the task of "curing" the patient became closely related to the requirement of transforming his traditional social relations. This caused Freud to write a number of texts in which he reflected on the possibility of transforming collective self-knowledge on the basis of psychoanalysis and prompted him to interrogate the position of human beings in culture. The appeal to liberate the patient's mental life from the traumas of the past and the symptoms produced by them turned into an appeal to "emancipate" entire human communities through psychoanalysis.

The emancipatory claims contained in Freud's psychoanalytical theory were taken up in the interwar period by representatives of the Frankfurt School in Germany and became an important element of its social philosophy (Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, and others). As a rule, they were combined with Karl Marx's theory, which resulted in original critical discoveries regarding everyday social awareness, fighting prejudices, and superstitions produced by tradition. A separate place should be awarded to the works of Wilhelm Reich, who believed that the fundamental task of contemporary social and political thought was a synthesis of psychoanalysis with Marxism.⁶⁰

60 See such works as Wilhelm Reich, *Dialektischer Materialismus und Psychoanalyse* (Kopenhagen: Verlag für Sexualpolitik, 1934); *Massenpsychologie des Faschismus: zur Sexualökonomie der politischen Reaktion und zur proletarischen Sexualpolitik* (Kopenhagen, Prag, Zürich: Verlag für Sexualpolitik, 1933).

The elements of political and social thought contained in Freud's works inspired mostly authors with left-wing attitudes, from Trotskyist communists through socialists to advocates of social democracy. An overwhelming majority of disciples of Freud and continuators of his theory also displayed clearly left-wing sympathies. This was associated with the fact that both Marxism and psychoanalytical thought contained the emancipatory cause of transforming existing social reality, although this was often quite differently conceived. In both cases theoretical claims and postulates were based on the hope of the emergence of a new, socially and sexually "enlightened" society in which social inequalities would be eliminated, human sexual life would not be so harshly repressed, and all nationalisms, racist views, and above all anti-Semitism would vanish. Nunberg writes about it explicitly in his memoirs, going back to the Kraków period of his career, when he was a member of the Polish Social Democratic Party: "Along with other Jewish members of the Social-Democratic Party, I anticipated that, with the solution of the social problem would come, automatically, the solution of the Jewish question."⁶¹

But characteristically, Nunberg immediately adds that because he later started to increasingly identify with his Jewishness, he cannot quite understand now, remembering this period years after, why he did not join the Zionist movement. And he explains it with his youthful rebellion against his father, who strongly supported this movement.⁶²

It seems, however, that at the time he still ardently believed in the success of the social democratic ideas and projects for the solution of the Jewish question. This is why he was not yet mentally ready to make such a radical U-turn. According to the belief which dominated among the left, the first incomplete emancipation of the Jews in bourgeois society, defined by the rules of the capitalist free-market economy, was to be followed – after the establishment of a socialist (or communist) society – by a second emancipation, this time total and genuine.

It would be enough to introduce common ownership of property and abolish social inequalities, and then anti-Semitism would simply vanish. Everything looked straightforward and beautiful. Unfortunately, reality turned out to be

61 Herman Nunberg, *Memoirs. Recollections, Ideas, Reflections* (New York: Psychoanalytic Research and Development Fund, 1969), p. 16.

62 This is how Nunberg writes about it in his diary: "Since I felt more and more that I was a Jew and belonged with my fellow-Jews in their struggles, it is not easy for me to understand how it happened, nevertheless, that I bypassed the Zionist movement." Nunberg, *Memoirs*, pp. 16–17.

much more complex, and anti-Semitic prejudices were far more deeply engrained than just at the level of capitalist market competition.

But the fact is that if we look at contemporary political groupings in Europe from this angle, we will see that only left-wing parties were free from anti-Semitism (although not all of them).⁶³ They usually rejected the idea of the nation underlying modern nationalisms, that is the idea of a community based on bonds of blood. From there it was only a short step to promoting racist criteria, which later actually took place. Therefore, anti-Semitic attitudes, directed not only against orthodox Jews, but also assimilated ones, dominated among supporters of these groups. Such attitudes were an inseparable part of their outlook, even if they were not always explicitly formulated. It repeatedly affected Freud and the advocates of his theory in Vienna, while Helena Deutsch wrote about it succinctly in the Polish context.⁶⁴

On the other hand, left-wing parties, promoting the elimination of social inequalities, usually distanced themselves from the idea of the nation or rejected it altogether. What was important for them was the supranational social solidarity in the struggle against capitalist exploitation rather than blood affinities. No wonder that the first psychoanalysts of Jewish origin active in the Polish lands usually directed their political sympathies towards the left. Similar attitudes could be observed among members of various sections of the psychoanalytical movement in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Russia, or Germany. Identifying with the left were Herman Nunberg (he belonged to the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, SDKPiL) and Ludwik Jekels,⁶⁵ Adam Wizel and Helena Deutsch, who was also personally involved with the leading

63 In an interview on her book *Tajemnica pana Cukra. Polsko-żydowska wojna przed wojną* (Warszawa: Wielka Litera, 2015), where she presented various manifestations of anti-Semitism in Poland of the 1930s, Anna Kłys says: “In fact, it can be said that only the left - workers, intellectuals, artists - did not display anti-Semitism, or even did the opposite. Sensitivity, a sense of social justice does not have any political color, but was more often present among the left.” Anna Kłys, “Tajemnica pana Cukra. Polsko-żydowska wojna przed wojną,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, March 11, 2015 (dzieje.pl), and online: <http://dzieje.pl/ksiazki/tajemnica-pana-cukra-polsko-zydowska-wojna-przed-wojna> (October 12, 2015). Well, more often, but not always. An eloquent example of anti-Semitic attitudes in the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) is given by Helena Deutsch, who wrote that herself and her Jewish colleagues were rejected as members.

64 Deutsch, *Confrontations with Myself*.

65 A good example of that was Jekels selling his sanatorium in Bystra to a local workers' co-operative, as I already mentioned in the introduction. See information about it in: <https://www.niedziela.pl/artykul/57184/nd/Mozna-inaczej>

activist of the Polish left in the interwar period, Herman Lieberman. Maurycy Bornsztajn and Jan Nelken were particularly active in this field at the turn of the 20th century. The former was a member of a chapter of Józef Kwiatek's Polish-Jewish socialist organization and took part in the famous manifestation in April 1894 commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the Jan Kiliński uprising (he was even arrested afterwards and kept for three weeks in the Pawiak prison in Warsaw). The latter was associated with the Polish Socialist Party (PPS); in 1896 he was banished from his university for his political activities and later he was arrested more than once. Roman Markuszewicz subscribed to left-wing political views, and similar proclivities were demonstrated by Władysław Matecki and Norbert Praeger, although these two were not directly involved politically. And Hanna Segal, who after World War II made a career in Great Britain as a psychoanalyst, in the 1930s was a member of the PPS youth group.

7 Psychoanalysis and the “stigma of being a Polish Jew”

When, years ago, I wrote a short essay on Polish psychoanalysis, I started with an anecdote on the origins of Freud's first name. In the 15th century, the ancestors of his family had fled from persecution from Cologne to Poland, where successive generations lived for several centuries, to move in the 19th century to Moravia and later to Vienna. When living in the First Polish Republic, they enjoyed privileges which the Jewish community at the time could not even dream about in any other European country. To commemorate the happy period of the times of King Sigismund, Freud's family cultivated the tradition of naming first male descendants Sigismund. We do not know what Freud himself thought about this genealogy of his first name. In any case, this anecdote found an administrative confirmation, because in the registry office in the Czech Pribor “Sigismund” is mentioned next to Freud's Jewish name Szlomo.⁶⁶

Of course, this is just an anecdote, which probably points to a purely mythical relationship of Freud with the Polish cultural tradition. We will find no other clues of this type in his biography. But in the context of our reflections on the history of psychoanalysis in Poland, it assumes particular significance. Because if we follow the family pedigrees of Freud's first pupils, those who formed the foundations of the Psychoanalytical Society in the 1920s in Vienna, we will find that they usually traced their roots to the former lands of the First Polish

66 This anecdote can be found in Ronald W. Clark, *Freud: The Man and the Cause* (New York: Easton Press, 1980).

Republic, regardless of whether they considered themselves Jews, Austrians, Ukrainians, Russians, Hungarians, or Poles.

It is worth noting that although the latter were not very numerous in the immediate surroundings of Freud (on the other hand, psychoanalysts of Polish extraction, such as Ludwig Jekels, Herman Nunberg, Helena Deutsch, and Beata Rank, were particularly influential in the Psychoanalytical Society), the popularity of his theory in the Polish medical community at the time was simply astounding. An eloquent testimony to this is the fact that at the Second Congress of Polish Neurologists, Psychiatrists, and Psychologists in 1912 in Kraków two separate panels were set up with papers on psychoanalysis, delivered in Polish by Jekels, Nunberg, Jaroszyński, de Beaurain, Karpińska, and others. They sparked fierce discussions during which Freud's theory was treated with utmost seriousness, even if some physicians harshly criticized it. This would be unthinkable among physicians in Austro-Hungary and Germany, where psychoanalysis was castigated by the medical community as “unscientific.”

How should we explain this phenomenon? According to statistics from that time, the profession of doctor – besides that of lawyer – was the occupation of choice for most sons, and sometimes even daughters, of emancipated Jewish families in Galicia and the Congress Kingdom. These were so-called free professions, where your career did not depend on various types of administrative constraints and traditional hierarchical arrangements, but on your actual abilities and talents. Significantly, they were held in high social esteem.⁶⁷

Psychoanalysis added another factor, namely the completely new form of therapy built by Freud and his students from scratch – a form in which the analyst had to rely largely on himself. It could potentially be practiced by anyone sufficiently familiar with its rules and techniques. Moreover, Freud gradually came to believe that in order to become a psychoanalyst it was not necessary to have a medical education, for a few years of training under the supervision of experienced analysts from the Society would suffice.

This was a theory which, like Marxism, assumed a radical transformation of human beings and in the longer term of the whole society. It was believed that once the multiple prejudices regarding the sexual sphere withered away, sources of all kinds of aggression would be successfully eliminated. This included

67 Based on the statistics from that time, Zbigniew Fras writes that “the domination of the Israelites in the free professions, that is, among lawyers and doctors, was particularly visible. In 1910, every attorney and every third physician in Galicia was a Jew.” See Zbigniew Fras, *Galicja* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2003), p. 217.

aggression based on ethnic and religious conflicts, of which anti-Semitism was one of the most significant manifestations. It seems that it was these latter factors which attracted the younger Viennese physicians from emancipated Jewish families to Freud's psychoanalytical theory. And it was an almost "magical" influence, if we consider the fact that until 1905 all members of the Psychoanalytical Society founded by Freud were Jews.

It seems that the same factors were at play in the Polish medical community. Under the Austrian and Russian partition it was physicians of Jewish origin who displayed particular interest in Freud's theory. The social foundation for this development was provided by the intensifying assimilation processes among the particularly numerous Jewish communities inhabiting the Polish lands at that time. They saw the spread of psychoanalysis as a chance for the emergence of a new type of man and a new type of human character, which would dominate in the society of the future. It was to be a society without prejudices – and the attendant aggression – and without social inequalities. In this new psychoanalytically enlightened society, all kinds of nationalisms – and the anti-Semitism shadowing them – were to die a natural death.

Of course, these were just semiconscious projections regarding the desired shape of the society of the future. The social and cultural reality of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Russia – with the Polish lands belonging to them – was far removed from this ideal. Anti-Semitism was not only rampant, but with the emergence of new nationalist groupings it adopted completely new and alarming forms. This led to the slow growth of nationalist conflicts of a new type. This must have generated a sense of a deep chasm between the actual state of affairs and the desired, projected ideal state of society in the future.

This antagonism often coexisted with a conflict of another type, namely the conflict between the fascinations with leftist ideals for the society of the future, where all ethnic differences and divisions would fade away, and the emergent Zionist movement, whose followers and leaders championed the idea of founding the state of Israel. The nature of this conflict is eloquently illustrated by the words of Nunberg quoted above: due to his leftist views he was skeptical of Zionism, but on the other hand he jealously regarded his Jewish colleagues leaving for Palestine in order to found a Jewish state there.⁶⁸

But there were also physician-analysts who came from emancipated Jewish families, but strongly identified with the culture of one nation, the nation surrounding them, and they constantly emphasized their patriotism, often in an

68 Nunberg, *Memoirs...*, p. 17.

exaggerated way. Some regarded themselves as Austrians and were ready to die for the Emperor, while others saw themselves as Ukrainians, Hungarians, or Poles. If we follow the biographies of Jewish analysts from Freud’s closest environs, we will see that even when they came from the same city – for example, from Lviv – they had different national and cultural identities.

This proves that the assimilation processes at the time were very complex and diverse, and did not follow one dominant pattern. At the same time, some members of assimilated Jewish families remained Orthodox, others became Zionists, and still others, rejecting national identity altogether, turned to left-wing parties. The huge divergence of the processes and divisions observed in this period is well illustrated by the following words of Helena Deutsch:

In my immediate environment, conflicting ideologies had been transmitted through three generations of ancestors who had borne the stigma of being Polish Jews. Even when one left the ghetto it took a long time to cast off the effects of this invisible mark. [...] In some families, religious orthodoxy extended over several generations, though in others a grandfather would still be deeply rooted in orthodoxy and the grandson assimilated to the point of complete identification with the Poles. The assimilated young people took an active part in Polish political demonstrations, festivals, etc., and there were even some who joined in the short-lived outbreaks of revolt against the Austrian Empire.

The Zionist movement had not yet developed a wide following when I was young. Politically active Jews, when not involved in assimilation through Polish patriotism, or when frightened by the ever-lurking Polish anti-Semitism, turned towards the Polish socialist movement.⁶⁹

Due to the complexity and diversity of these processes, the question of the cultural and national identity of the first generation of psychoanalysts active in the Polish lands, as well as those gathered around Freud, acquires an extraordinary poignancy. At the same time, the example of these people shows that someone’s national and cultural identity may assume many different configurations and mutual relations, which not only do not have to overlap with his “civic” identity, but also do not have to be in harmony with each other. Moreover, they can also change substantially over time.

It is a question of particular significance for this dissertation, because it is, after all, a text on Polish psychoanalysis. For what is in this case the meaning of the term “Polish psychoanalysis”? Who should be included in this tradition and who should not? What criterion of Polishness should be used? It seems that if you take

69 Deutsch, *Confrontations with Myself*, p. 92.

this perspective when following the lives and achievements of psychoanalysts born in the Polish lands (but then what does “Polish lands” mean?) and in one way or another associated with Polish cultural tradition, all issues raised above will return with particular force. I will come back to this question in further parts of this dissertation. First, I would like to outline a general historical and cultural background, which will allow us to better comprehend the emergence of Freud’s psychoanalytical theory and founding of the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society in the early 20th century.

8 The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy from the turn of the century and the paths of Jewish assimilation

Historians of the region now called Central Europe have long been fascinated by the phenomenon of the cultural and scientific flourishing in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which started in the second half of the 19th century. The center of this flourishing was Vienna, which became, along with Paris and Berlin, one of the most important European cultural centers and projected its influence on all the regions of the Empire. And especially on Galicia, or the former Polish lands which now had become part of the Austrian partition. One of the causes of this flourishing was the skillful (but also full of cynical sophistication) ethnic policy of successive emperors and their administrations, awarding to particular provinces inhabited by various nations a far-reaching autonomy of which they could not even dream in the Russian Empire or Prussia (and later in the German Reich). As a result, each nation could cultivate its own language and cultural tradition within the bounds of the Monarchy, and Polish language could be used in government offices along with German. At the same time, because in the Habsburg Empire there was no intense Germanization policy combined with the brutal discrimination of other nations (like in Prussia and then in the German Reich), it was easier for the more educated strata of the population to identify with German culture. People were ready to get acquainted with it and admired its achievements, and they voluntarily learned German. As a result of this policy, in various spheres of public life in the Monarchy – from the political scene and administration to culture, education, scholarship, and art – a peculiar melting pot emerged, with processes of identification running in various directions and identities often arranging themselves in the most bizarre configurations.

According to Carl E. Schorske, Vienna owed its dynamic cultural, scholarly, and artistic development in the second half of the 19th century to the emergence of a liberal middle class in the Habsburg Monarchy, which produced a new

cultural elite.⁷⁰ Its distinctive feature was the constant exchange of ideas between the particular artistic, scholarly, political, business, and professional groups forming it. This was possible thanks to the fact that in Vienna in this period “the salon and the café retained their vitality as institutions where intellectuals of different kinds shared ideas and values with each other and still mingled with a business and professional élite proud of its general education and artistic culture.”⁷¹

Due to the relative coherence of this elite, in which the separation of these groups had not yet occurred and everyone knew each other, it was not alienated from social reality. Consequently, it could act as a crucible in which new ideas, notions, and theories sprung up and new political views crystallized, exerting a strong influence on social reality. But towards the end of the 19th century, the first symptoms of the decline of the liberal middle class appeared. In the political arena, these symptoms manifested on the one hand as the victory in 1895 of the right-wing, nationalist, and openly anti-Semitic Karl Lueger’s party, and on the other hand the establishment of the Socialist Party. This was accompanied by the growing popularity of the Zionism among the Jews, both assimilated and Orthodox, who inhabited the Habsburg Monarchy.

In the area of culture and art, the revolt against the paternalistic culture of the liberal middle class intensified, resulting in various new trends in psychology, art history, music, literature, architecture, painting, and politics. According to Schorske, this was a rebellion of the young generation which had all the hallmarks of a “collective Oedipal revolt” targeted at the classical liberalism of their fathers, founded on irrefutable authorities: “What they assaulted on a broad front was the value system of classical liberalism-in-ascendancy within which they had been reared. Given this ubiquitous and simultaneous criticism of their liberal-rational inheritance from within the several fields of cultural activity, the internalistic approach of the special disciplines could not do justice to the phenomenon. A general and rather sudden transformation of thought and values among the culture-makers suggested, rather, a shared social experience that compelled rethinking. In the Viennese case, a highly compacted political and social development provided this context.”⁷² This broad context of the crisis of traditional bourgeois liberalism and the pursuit of radical transformations in

70 Carl E. Schorske, *Fin de siècle Vienna. Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), p. XXVII.

71 Schorske, *Fin de siècle*, p. XXVII.

72 Schorske, *Fin de siècle*, p. XXVI.

scholarship, culture, and art is perfectly aligned with Freud's psychoanalysis and its claims – revolutionary for that time – regarding the structure of human mental life. An eloquent testimony of these pursuits is his main work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, published in 1900.

It is an extraordinary work, for it not only touches upon the most personal aspects of its author's life, but also reveals from the inside various jealously guarded "secrets" and taboos of Viennese society from the turn of the century. What preceded the creation of this work, as Schorske writes, was Freud's long struggle within the Austrian social and political reality, in which he assumed various roles: "of a scientist and a Jew, a citizen and a son." As a result of these experiences, in his book about dreams "[...] Freud gave this struggle, both outer and inner, its fullest, most personal statement – and at the same time overcame it by devising an epoch-making interpretation of human experience in which politics could be reduced to an epiphenomenal manifestation of psychic forces."⁷³

But in order to understand how it was possible at all that Freud could play all these four roles and finally, after obtaining the long-desired title of professor, break through into the academic elite of Vienna (although he was not welcome by everyone there), we should look at his struggle in the context of the assimilation processes among the multi-million-strong Jewish community in Austria, which had intensified since the 1860s. For once, the liberal bourgeoisie gained the dominant position in the Habsburg Monarchy; representatives of the Jewish community gradually made their presence felt in political life, administration, scholarship, science, culture, and art.

It would not have been possible on such a scale without the "tolerant" policy of the Imperial regime in Vienna towards particular nations, as a result of which they gradually gained wide-ranging powers within autonomous regions. A large part of the Jewish community inhabiting the Monarchy, especially the middle class, saw it as a chance for social advancement, and over time its representatives virtually dominated some professions and sections of industry and trade. As Steven Beller writes, one researcher conducted a kind of thought experiment in which he envisioned Vienna from that time without Jewish-run restaurants, cafes, department stores, all kinds of institutions, etc. It turned out that it would be such a crippled and miserable picture that Vienna would in no way resemble the city from the turn of the century that we recognize today.⁷⁴

73 Schorske, *Fin de siècle*, p. 183.

74 See Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews. 1867–1938. A Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Moreover, in the case of emancipated Jews the identity processes mentioned earlier were often even more complex under the Habsburg Monarchy than in other nations. When they took place, say, in a Polish or Hungarian environment, the Jews, while remaining citizens of the Habsburg Monarchy where German was the official language, went to Polish or Hungarian schools and automatically immersed themselves in the culture of these countries. As a result, they became Polonized or Hungarianized, at the same time remaining loyal Austrian citizens with an excellent command of German. But they often preserved a strong sense of their Jewish roots. This multilayered, heterogeneous nature of their identity meant that its particular elements formed diverse configurations. Some of these people felt to be above all Jews, but for some individuals, the Polish, Austrian, Ukrainian, Hungarian, or other part of their identity dominated. In addition, these configurations often changed fundamentally over the course of their lives. Or they possessed a double or even triple identity, its constituent parts sometimes clashing with each other.

In his book on the Jewish community of the Vienna in 1867–1938, Steven Beller says that although this group experienced intense assimilation processes and a large segment of it adopted a modern, secular lifestyle with its attendant notions and values, its representatives always maintained a strong sense of being Jews. In other words, although they often regarded themselves as Austrians (and their lifestyle and mentality were virtually undistinguishable from that of their fellow Austrians), they always preserved a sense of their distinctive Jewishness in some form.

Beller's chief argument is that this sense arose from various manifestations of anti-Semitism which Austrian Jews encountered at every turn. So even if they did their utmost to be "true" Austrians, emphasizing it to the point of appearing "more Catholic than the Pope," behind this outer appearance there was a strong memory of their Jewish descent.

Of course, this attitude is nothing unusual. We often see similar behaviors in many nationalities which, after settling in some foreign country, try a little too hard to look similar to its native citizens, erasing all traces of their origin (as is the case with many Poles in Germany). Moreover, as Beller argues, there was a particular hostility towards Jews in Austrian society, therefore even the assimilated ones preserved a strong sense of their distinctiveness. So on the one hand, they regarded themselves as Austrians and loyal citizens of the Monarchy, honoring the Emperor, but on the other hand, they were treated as inferior and strongly suspect "others" by their Aryan neighbors. However, they remained Jewish in their hearts. Beller provides one more argument, claiming that the assimilation of Jews in Europe of the second half of the 19th century was quite different from

assimilation processes taking place in other ethnic groups. According to Beller, “[...] the presence in the family past of Jewish ancestors was liable to mean that one started with a view of the world which was substantially different from that of others who were not of Jewish descent. Seen in this way, the assimilation, far from producing a complete merger with the surrounding populace, was in itself a Jewish phenomenon. Therefore anyone who was a product of this assimilation can be included as Jewish, and that must, of necessity, include converts and so on.”⁷⁵ Beller justifies such a broad approach to assimilation with the subject of his study, aimed at a systematic and comprehensive presentation of the role and position of the Jews in Vienna between 1868 and 1938. It is therefore understandable from the methodological point of view.

But one more argument could be added here, lurking somewhere in the background of the author’s reflections. Until the 18th century, the Jewish community in European countries had a peculiar status, incomparable to the status of other minorities or ethnic groups living within the same state. It was mainly due to the fact that their distinctiveness was based on their religion. This was the main source of cultural distinctiveness of Jewish Europeans; it produced their characteristic customs, dress, appearance, etc. In short, “being a Jew” meant above all being a follower of the Judaic religion, just as “being Christian” meant professing the Christian faith, regardless of all the differences between particular confessions. As a result, even in the Middle Ages or during the Renaissance, when the concept of the nation in the modern sense of the term did not yet exist, Jews in the religious sense of the word had completely different relations with the sovereign than representatives of the knightly, bourgeois or peasant estates. But in the First Polish Republic, where they formed a very large minority, they constituted what amounted to a separate estate, with their own governance and parliament. And their submission to royal authority was based on quite different principles than in the case of other estates.

It should be added here that this purely religious foundation of Jewish identity resulted in the deep hostility of their Christian neighbors, who did not tolerate this distinctiveness. Consequently, Jews were regularly subjected to various acts of violence, including mass slaughter. In this case, the source of conflicts was the antagonistic relation between the two religions, already evident at the level of theological assumptions. This relation formed one of the main sources of anti-Semitism, later supplemented with diverse cultural and social factors. For this reason, the antagonism between the Jewish community, founded mostly

75 Beller, *Vienna and the Jews*, p. 13.

on religion, and its social and cultural surroundings had a characteristic nature, not comparable to other antagonisms, which were of a social, ethnic, or cultural nature. It even differed from antagonisms between members of various Christian confessions. This is where the peculiarity of the sense of “being a Jew” lies; initially it was based on an awareness of a profound religious distinctiveness. Only later were new kinds of antagonisms superimposed on it, associated with the emergence of nationalist ideologies in 19th-century Europe.

Beller’s claim that you cannot look at the process of Jewish assimilation in isolation from the awareness of who their ancestors were becomes more comprehensible if you take into account the crucial role played by religion in shaping the cultural distinctiveness and separate identity of Jews. The memory of this distinctiveness, even in the case of assimilated groups, could never be completely erased. It was preserved also when orthodox Jews started to perceive themselves as members of a nation in the modern sense of the term. Zionism – in this context Jewish nationalism based on the idea of building a Jewish state in Palestine modeled on European states – was an especially radical manifestation of this phenomenon.

However, for assimilated Jews who regarded themselves as Austrians, Poles, or Hungarians, the memory of their separate religious and cultural roots was present, usually somewhere in the background and more or less pronounced. Or these new national identities could coexist with Jewish identity in the modern sense, but this was less frequent and difficult to sustain. A classic example of this two-way attitude is provided by Helena Deutsch, one of the leading figures of the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society of whom, as rumors would have it, Freud was particularly fond (she was called *Liebling Freuds*, “Freud’s favorite,” in these circles):

I was born into a Polish-Jewish milieu at a time when the process of assimilation was in full swing. But the Jewish tendency to create a separate, closed, religious society within the larger society was also still operating. Caught in this conflict and ambiguity, I usually identified more with the romantic “suffering, enslaved Poland” than with my Jewish background. Anti-Semitism all around me tipped the scales further. In short, I wanted to be Polish. The influence of the budding Zionist nationalistic movement was not an important factor at the time of my childhood. My father’s social position helped to give me a sense of belonging in Polish society. Wilhelm Rosenbach was a prominent lawyer and a scholar in international law. He exerted considerable influence [...].⁷⁶

76 Deutsch, *Confrontations with Myself*, p. 30.

These memories clearly show that the high social status of her father and his authority among the Poles had a decisive impact on the emergence of Helena Deutsch's Polish identity. One should note that it was also a choice made to spite her mother, who exerted pressure on her to identify with German culture (in a cruel twist of irony, during World War II she was hiding from the Germans in Warsaw cellars and paid them off with what remained of the family's wealth).

Obviously there were also extreme examples of assimilated Jews violently renouncing their own Jewishness, explaining it in different ways. Such was the case, for example, of Otto Weininger, whose extreme misogyny was accompanied by anti-Semitism. Such attitudes and ways of thinking embodied the logic of modern European nationalism. It changed one's perspective on everything, both on the "positive," that is the accepted, and the "negative," or the rejected forms of identity. This way you could be a Pole, Austrian, German, or Jew as a member of a specific national community or not belong to it at all. But in the second case, you simply were a member of another national community, based on the same criteria of belonging associated with race, religion, culture, or blood.

On the other hand, orthodox Jews openly preserving their traditional religious form of identity did not subscribe to the logic spreading along with all kinds of nationalisms. Therefore they were seen as a bizarre, self-enclosed, and anachronistic caste by the majority of "enlightened" society, who thought in secular and nationalist terms. As a result, the chasm between them and this society dramatically widened. Their separateness as a social group which self-defined in primarily religious terms became even deeper. Consequently, anti-Semitic attitudes started assuming a new form, motivated not only religiously or economically, but also nationalistically. Over time, these elements, mutually reinforcing each other, produced a deadly cocktail. Therefore, antagonisms between the Poles, Ukrainians, and Austrians on the one hand and the Jews on the other had a structurally different form than antagonisms between members of these three nationalities.

The picture of the process of Jewish assimilation becomes further complicated if we look at it from the perspective of profound civilizational changes which started in Western Europe in the second half of the 18th century and embraced practically all national, ethnic, and social groups. Considered from this angle, it was a process closely related to the emergence of a new type of society and state in Europe, with the rules of belonging defined in a completely new way. The sources of this process should be sought both in economic transformations (the appearance of the free-market model) and in the main ideas of the Enlightenment. Of crucial importance were the ideas of equality and freedom, assuming the necessity of liberating humans from the burden of prejudices and traditions and of

building a new type of nationally homogenous society, where cultural and religious antagonisms and differences would vanish.

From this perspective, the process of Jewish assimilation resulted from the pressure exerted on them by a new “secular” form of European culture, which it assumed mainly under the impact of Enlightenment ideas that were gradually introduced in the political and social practices of particular states. In other words, this process was an inherent part of this culture, and one of its consequences was the emergence of profound differences between Jewish identities in the various countries of Europe. The most significant development here was the appearance of Zionism, where a new understanding of Jewishness and the idea of the Israeli state were faithful copies of various forms of nationalism nascent in the countries of Europe.

In this sense, both Zionism and the processes of Jewish assimilation were produced by changes in European culture mentioned above. Of course, due to the aforementioned factors, assimilated Jews very often preserved elements of their previous identity, but this assumed diverse forms. It often happened, for example, that in the second or third generation of assimilated families the parents did not speak to children about their Jewish descent. Or if the children knew anything about it, they did not regard it as particularly important. Only as a result of constant confrontations with violent anti-Semitic attacks did many assimilated Jews start to value their Jewishness (the case of Hannah Arendt). Therefore, many assimilated Jews later joined the Zionist movements.

9 Psychoanalysis – a Jewish science?

If I devote so much space to the processes of Jewish assimilation in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, it is because these processes took place in equal measure among the Jews living in Polish social and cultural surroundings in Galicia and in the Congress Kingdom. And if all members of the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society were Jews in its first years of the existence (it was founded by Freud in 1902), you could also find people of Polish descent there. Of course, some of them regarded themselves also (or exclusively) as Austrians, Hungarians, Czechs, Poles (like Jekels or Deutsch), etc. It differed from individual to individual. Above, I tried to indicate the social and cultural sources of this phenomenon, which were very similar for each of these groups, for they concerned the civilizational processes occurring in the whole Habsburg Monarchy and embraced the Jewish community living in it.

For example, when the province of Galicia acquired greater autonomy, the Polonization tendency gathered momentum among the Jewish community. In

equal measure, although for other reasons, similar processes could be observed in the second half of the 19th century in the Russian partition, the region where such people as Nunberg, Bychowski, Wizel, and Nelken were born. As I already mentioned, very important in this context was the fact that very many young Jews from the lower strata of the emergent middle class studied medicine and became physicians. They saw psychoanalysis as a new, not yet institutionalized and therefore non-hierarchical form of therapy (in fact, they were the ones who established a hierarchy here), within which they would be able to demonstrate their abilities. Moreover, this new form of therapy was based on the belief that it could lead to a profound transformation of the patient's self-understanding. As a result, the patient would relate in a radically different way to himself and others, at the same time now able to control his sexual drives and aggression more effectively than before (the idea of rearing a new, psychoanalytically enlightened human being).

Later came the belief in the possibility of building a society based on this new model of interpersonal relations.

These were the main reasons which attracted many young medical students from assimilated Jewish families to the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society. As they formed an overwhelming majority in this organization, many opponents of psychoanalysis claimed that it was a typically "Jewish" science preoccupied with the causes of mental disorders of the Jews themselves (patricidal and incestuous tendencies expressed in the hypotheses of the Oedipus complex, various kinds of sexual perversions, aggression, etc.). It was impossible to overlook the clearly anti-Semitic overtones of this argumentation; as a "Jewish" science, psychoanalysis was a strongly suspect theory dealing with the filthiest and darkest aspects of the human mind, and instead of curing them, only led to the moral depravity of the patients.

Perhaps also as a reaction to this kind of "argumentation" and rumination, in the 1950s we saw the first serious academic attempts of tracing overt or hidden elements of Jewish influence in Freud's theory. The most significant of them was David Bakan's book *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (Boston 1958). It launched the now-rich interpretative tradition analyzing Freud's work from this angle.⁷⁷ Within this tradition, the purported "Jewishness" of

77 This tradition includes such books as Emanuel Rice, *Freud and Moses: The Long Journey Home* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); Dennis Klein, *The Jewish Origins of the Psychoanalytic Movement* (Chicago: Praeger Special Studies, 1981); Peter Gay, *A Godless Jew: Freud, Atheism and the Making of Psychoanalysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Sanford Drob, "Freud and the Chasidim: Redeeming the Jewish

psychoanalysis is regarded as something good; it is indicated how much Freud owed to the tradition of Jewish religious thought, with which he must have had wide-ranging, although probably indirect and random, contact at home. Although he did not know Hebrew or Yiddish and distanced himself from Jewish religion (and all religion in general), various elements of his theory bear distinct traces of the influence of this tradition.

It is argued, therefore, that the way Freud defined the relation between the conscious and the unconscious, as well as his method of interpreting dreams and symptoms (the logic of argumentation, establishing relations between particular elements of a dream, and the emphasis on the sexual aspect) show astonishing affinities with the Jewish mystical tradition, especially with the Kabbalistic interpretation of being. This leads to the conclusion that psychoanalysis is a science or a peculiar type of knowledge which predominantly belongs to the tradition of Jewish thought, for its assumptions and methods of inference and interpretation are evidently of a “Talmudic” nature. They are indistinguishable from a logic of reasoning which is exclusively Jewish and deeply rooted in the religious tradition of the Jews.

This way of interpreting Freud’s theory certainly pointed to a different way of looking at many of its aspects, revealing a new dimension. But it seems that treating it only as a direct extension or perhaps even a peculiarly secular version of the Jewish mystical tradition is a huge exaggeration, since such an approach is hardly substantiated in the available biographical and textual material. Looking from this perspective, you lose sight of the most characteristic feature of Freud’s theory: the multiplicity of its scientific and philosophical sources of inspiration. This approach is just as one-sided as the work of those authors who read Freud’s theory exclusively in terms of its relationships with the tradition of German Idealism and Romanticism or the tradition of the Enlightenment and Positivism.

In addition, treating Freud’s theory as a modern manifestation of Jewish thought, you assign it to the category of culturally regional conceptions. This means giving ammunition to all its opponents who claim, for example, that the obsessive preoccupation of Freud with sexuality, including the Oedipus complex, is peculiarly Jewish and does not feature in other societies or cultures. Moreover, it is incompatible with what Freud himself thought about his theory,

Soul of Psychoanalysis,” *Jewish Review* Vol. III, No. 1 (1989). In Poland there was Robert Stiller’s article “Freud i żydowska tradycja mistyczna,” www.gnosis.art.pl/numery/gn02stillerfreudizydtradmist.htm (accessed October 10, 2015).

being deeply convinced that its sources lay in the European tradition of the Enlightenment (British empiricism), and that this was universal. It is like saying that German Idealism expresses certain distinct features of the German cultural tradition and hence its meaning is largely – or exclusively – confined to this context. Consequently, this doctrine can only be comprehended and practiced by Germans themselves. Such views have already appeared in history and are somewhat ominous.

Naturally, you can always counter such arguments by saying that Freud did not fully realize how much he owed to the tradition of Jewish theology, although he had not studied it and had at best indirect contact with it. In fact, the argument goes, this influence, although hidden, was profound and decisive for the ultimate shape of his theory. Such claims contain a grain of truth, but at the same time they lose sight of the multiplicity of scientific, philosophical, literary, and cultural sources of Freudian psychoanalysis. Today, in the light of hundreds of works and articles on this subject, this is obvious, not to mention the type of education that Freud obtained and his numerous statements on his inspirations and on the scientific status of psychoanalysis.

When we follow Freud's biography in terms of his attitude to the tradition of Jewish culture and religion and to the Zionist movement, the emergence of which he witnessed, we can clearly see that this attitude was deeply ambivalent and cannot be reduced to one positive or negative formula.⁷⁸ In addition, it fundamentally changed over time. This issue is very accurately presented and richly documented by Jacques de Rider in his famous work *Modernité viennoise et crises de l'identité*.⁷⁹ He shows that the initial pro-Austrian attitude of Freud, related to his desire to assimilate into German culture, gradually broke down, also due to the painful experiences with various manifestations of anti-Semitism in academic circles and everyday life. Consequently, he started to emphasize his Jewish roots and reflect on the influence of the Jewish tradition on his theory. More interestingly, de Rider also shows to what extent this change of attitude was

78 This ambivalence is most emphatically seen in Freud's last book, *Moses and Monotheism*, in which he claims that Judaism, due to its particular national character, is a dead religion. And he also points at the Egyptian sources of the Mosaic religion.

79 See Jacques de Rider and his famous work *Modernité viennoise et crises de l'identité*. See the English translation: J. Le Rider, *Modernity and Crisis of Identity. Culture and Society in Fin-de-siècle Vienna*, New York 1993, in particular *Part IV. Crises of Jewish Identity*, pp. 187–250.

characteristic for assimilated Jewish milieus at the time and closely related to the birth of the Zionist movement.⁸⁰

Particularly interesting in this context are those comments by Freud where he voices his belief that the peculiar method of reasoning underlying the psychoanalytical theory is a significant embodiment of his “intellectual constitution.” This, in turn, is of “racial” origin, or that it follows from a biologically grounded way of thinking developed by Jews over the millennia of their history. This belief finds its eloquent expression in Freud’s letter to Karl Abraham, who was strongly skeptical in the matter of admitting Carl G. Jung to the Psychoanalytical Society. Freud attempts to convince his colleague that, from a strategic point of view, Jung’s intellectual non-Jewishness is an asset rather than a disadvantage:

Be tolerant, and do not forget that really it is easier for you to follow my thoughts than it is for Jung, since to begin with you are completely independent, and then you are closer to my intellectual constitution through racial kinship, while he as a Christian and a pastor’s son finds his way to me only against great inner resistances. His association with us is therefore all the more valuable. I was almost going to say that it was only by his emergence on the scene that psychoanalysis was removed from the danger of becoming a Jewish national affair.⁸¹

Two things are of note in this excerpt. The first is Freud’s words about “racial kinship,” reflecting his repeatedly expressed view that over the millennia of human history, people internalized various, at first purely external, prohibitions, notions, and ways of thinking, which became biologically

80 Incidentally, a similar process could be observed among assimilated Jewish circles in Galicia and the Congress Kingdom. The paradox of this process was that it originated in assimilated Jewish communities and primarily concerned them. It was, so to speak, a side effect that it also influenced orthodox Jews, in part of which a new type of national identity began to overlap with traditional religious and cultural identity. Assimilation processes and their diversity in both the Congress Kingdom and Galicia are excellently illustrated in such books as: Alina Cała, *Asymilacja Żydów w Królestwie Polskim (1864–1897). Postawy, konflikty, stereotypy* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1989); E. Prokop-Janiec, *Pogranicze polsko-żydowskie. Topografie i teksty* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2013); Z. Kołodziejka, *“Izraelita” (1866–1915) – znaczenie kulturowe i literackie czasopisma* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2014); E. Prokop-Janiec, ed., *Polacy – Żydzi. Kontakty kulturowe i literackie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2014).

81 Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham, *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham 1907–1925. Complete Edition*, Ernst Falzeder, ed., trans. Caroline Schwarzacher (London, New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 38.

grounded, so to speak. In other words, it is an assumption that phylogeny affects ontogeny. In Freud's theory, it found its perhaps most emphatic expression in the concept of "organic repression." Freud conceived this as a type of repression which initially is imposed on man, or his mind, from the outside, but then it becomes internalized and is inherited by the organism (body) from generation to generation.

Today this view, very popular in the scientific circles of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, is regarded as anachronistic and widely rejected as unconfirmed by empirical research. It is seen as at best a kind of mythopoeic explanation of the origin of certain phenomena rather than a coherent hypothesis which can be empirically verified.

But this excerpt could be read slightly differently, ignoring the Darwinist prejudice underlying it. In fact, it expresses Freud's belief that the psychoanalytical way of reasoning has profound roots in the Jewish cultural tradition developed over the millennia, characterized by a distinct way of thinking regardless of its actual religious substance. In this sense, the otherness of Jung's psychoanalysis is cultural; having been raised in the Christian tradition, Jung has a completely different kind of intellectual sensitivity than Jews. Therefore, when adopting the psychoanalytical way of thinking he has to overcome a number of "resistances" connected with his own intellectual constitution shaped by the cultural tradition in which he grew up. But it does not mean, of course, that because of his "racial" otherness he will never adopt this way of thinking.

The second interesting issue – ignored by de Rider in his interpretation – is that Freud perceives Jung joining the psychoanalytical movement – a Christian – as something very important strategically. This would clearly show, Freud says, that psychoanalysis was not "a Jewish national affair," but a theory which could convince people who are not of Jewish origin, including prominent representatives of science.

So if Freud believes that the way of reasoning and inferring that underlies his psychoanalytical theory is rooted in the Jewish tradition, he also thinks that this style contains some universal elements which can be adopted by people raised in other cultural traditions. Consequently, his theory will eventually become part of the general cultural heritage.

This belief accompanied Freud throughout his life. It clearly came to the fore in his famous sarcastic words to his pupils while traveling by ship to the United States: "They don't know that we're bringing them plague!" Psychoanalysis is a plague, because like every pestilence it does not recognize the division into races, nations, and cultures. It was born, in part, on the foundation of the tradition of Jewish thought, but it contains something that goes beyond the particularity of

this tradition. Consequently, it can infect anyone, regardless of what cultural tradition has shaped them.

I emphasize this moment because it eloquently shows Freud's intellectual openness. He obviously wanted to avoid the transformation of the psychoanalytical movement into a self-enclosed sect consisting of Jews alone, considering the questions of the unconscious, sexuality, and human drives in isolation. He believed that it would contradict the universal status of the concepts and terms of his own theory, which concerned the human mind "as such" and remained valid for all types of societies and cultures. Psychoanalysis was to become a common legacy of all human communities and cultures, not just the Jewish or European ones.

In the light of the extremely rich interpretative tradition concerning the origins of Freud's theory, its sources seem to be multiple, scientifically, philosophically, and culturally. On the one hand, Freud repeatedly emphasized that the prototype of true science was for him the model developed in the tradition of British empiricism and then of Positivism. This meant that psychoanalysis belonged primarily to the natural sciences. But on the other hand, Freud's theory of interpreting dreams and symptoms could be perceived as a new kind of hermeneutics. Seen from this angle, psychoanalysis was closer to the methodology of the humanities. In addition, the main argument for the validity of the Oedipus complex hypothesis and its universality was for him literature and myth rather than clinical data, and he labeled his theory of drives as psychoanalytical "mythology." Moreover, he wrote in German and had an amazingly extensive knowledge of German culture, including its humanist tradition and philosophy, as he repeatedly showed in his works, pointing at the writings from this culture as an important source of his theory. No wonder that authors of the most important works on the origins of this theory, such as Bruno Bettelheim and Odo Marquard, perceived the obvious influences of the Romantic tradition and German Idealism in it.⁸² Freud was also familiar with European literary traditions. This is evidenced by numerous references in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. They by no means played an ornamental role. Not to mention the fact that his case histories sometimes read like artistic fiction rather than scientific treatises or essays.

82 I mean primarily such works as Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man's Soul* (New York: Knopf, 1982); Odo Marquard, *Transzendentaler Idealismus. Romantische Naturphilosophie. Psychoanalyse* (Köln: Verlag für Philosophie, 1987).

In Freud's work we can find claims and excerpts which can be used to justify each one of these diverse interpretations. As a result, researchers tracing the sources of inspiration for his theory argue even today which one should be accorded the crucial role, and which produced the most interesting and innovative elements of his theory.

These arguments result from the heterogeneity of Freudian discourse, which combines elements of all these overlapping traditions. They sometimes reinforce and complement each other, but at other times they are antagonistic or even mutually exclusive. This makes me believe that if you aspire to a reliable picture of the role and significance of these diverse traditions in the process of building psychoanalytical theory and its successive Freudian versions, you should take into account the complex relations between those traditions rather than pinpoint just one of them.

An impressive openness also characterized Freud's attitude to the ancient sources of European cultural traditions. It is worth noting that, unusually so for the intellectual culture of his time, he was particularly fond of ancient Egyptian culture. In his doctor's office in Vienna, figures of sphinxes and other souvenirs from Egypt scowled at patients, artifacts which he passionately collected, spending a lot of money on them. The most eloquent testimony to this fascination was the aforementioned book *Moses and Monotheism*. The principal claim of this essay, namely that Moses was an Egyptian, was deeply offensive to orthodox Jews. Not to mention the fact that Freud described Judaism as a dead religion, which because of its parochialism had to lose against the universalist message underlying Christianity.

But it would be rash to conclude that Freud deprecated the tradition of Judaism and that it did not matter to him. After all, although he reinterpreted it, the biblical history of the Jewish nation, its mythical leader, and its God were regarded as being of crucial importance for European culture. And his claim that the new "Egyptian" God of Moses triggered the development of abstract thinking among Jews implied that their contribution to European culture and their place in it – with its philosophy and modern model of science – could not be overestimated.

The essay about Moses clearly showed Freud's ability to take a critically distant approach – if he deemed it necessary in the name of scientific honesty – towards any tradition, including the one which was closest to him. The demand for such distance followed from the methodological appeal grounded in the Enlightenment model of European science: the researcher should be able to distance himself from all his pre-existing beliefs if he concludes that they could be an obstacle in discovering the real essence of a given phenomenon, sequence

of events, or process. This far-reaching self-criticism in approaching the most deeply engrained prejudices in the researcher's consciousness was regarded as the fundamental condition for the credibility of scientific procedure. Developing such distance towards himself and his own past was also a task to be undertaken by the patient during his therapy. Considered from this perspective, the psychoanalytical approach, where the most intimate and also the most deeply rooted representations and thoughts were objects of critical reflection, was a more radical version of this attitude.

Such an approach was grounded in the philosophical tradition of European rationalism (the postulate of critically distancing yourself from your own prejudices and traditions), where it was regarded as a necessary condition for reaching the objective truth of cognition and self-discovery. The claims of psychoanalysis regarding the deep, unconscious structures of human mental life and the laws of cultural development in history were to attain the same status. The prototype of this truth was to be mythical stories dating back to ancient times, for in those times people had not yet developed sophisticated mechanisms of repression and of masking the repressed content. That is why Freud decided that the most emphatic testimony to the universality of the Oedipus complex was the story of the creation of the world and of its gods in Greek mythology, which swarmed with incestuous and patricidal acts and all kinds of crimes.

In his eyes, Greek mythology was the third antique source of European culture. In this way, paradoxically, a model of practicing science inherited from the Enlightenment tradition which proclaimed the necessity of the researcher distancing himself from his prejudices, made Freud recognize the universality of truth contained in ancient myths. Psychoanalysis itself was also supposed to contain these types of truths. It was meant to be a modern scientific theory comprising a number of fundamental claims on man and his culture which, while questioning their accepted understanding, were at the same time to maintain their validity across the world. In other words, psychoanalysis was to be "supra-national," to speak about man as such rather than, say, man as a European. So any claim about psychoanalysis being a "Jewish" science embodying the mentality and way of thinking of Jews is as equally bizarre as the claim that Einstein's theory of relativity is "Jewish."

The fact that, in its initial period, the Psychoanalytical Society founded by Freud was formed exclusively by Jews should be seen as resulting predominantly from the specific social and cultural circumstances in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the turn of the 20th century, and it would be wrong to create a kind of national mythology around it. The later history of psychoanalysis, which spread to other countries and continents like a "plague" and was practiced by

people of different nationalities raised in different cultures, eloquently testifies to the universalist claim underlying Freud's theory.

10 What does “Polish psychoanalysis” mean?

The above reflections lead us to the question of what the terms “Polish psychoanalyst” and “Polish psychoanalysis” could mean in this context. It arises not only because many psychoanalysts of Jewish origin born in the Polish lands functioned very well in the German linguistic environment, and today it is difficult – at least on the basis of extant records – to say to what extent they regarded themselves as Poles and identified themselves with Polish culture. Of equal importance is the fact that many of them, even if initially they functioned in a Polish milieu, later settled in Vienna, where they acquired their psychoanalytical education at the very “source” and wrote exclusively in German (Jekels, Nunberg, Deutsch, and others). In the 1930s, they were forced to emigrate, mainly to the United States, where they started to publish their texts in English. So how should we define them? As Polish, then Austrian, and still later American psychoanalysts?

This dilemma is best illustrated by the differences in defining the nationality of these analysts in the Polish, German, French, and American versions of Wikipedia. Just a few years ago, in the Polish version you could read that Jekels was a Polish psychoanalyst, in the German one he was called an Austrian analyst, and in the American version he became American. Recently the authors proposed a “compromise” version informing the readers that he had been a Polish-Austrian-American analyst. Of course, this sounds quite hilarious. Nevertheless, if we look at Jekels' texts written first in Polish, then in German, and finally in English, which coincided with his work in Lviv and Bystra, then in Vienna, and finally in America as an exile, such a “compromise” accurately reflects Jekels' functioning as an analyst in these three periods of his life and in three different cultures.

There is another solution to this dilemma, namely treating national or cultural identity as secondary and saying that Jekels was simply a psychoanalyst. After all, according to Freud himself – as we saw in the excerpt from his letter to Abraham – psychoanalysis was to be supranational and supra-cultural. For this reason, in 1911 Freud sent Jekels to Kraków and Lviv, and in the 1920s to Sweden with the task of promoting his theory in the Scandinavian countries. Consequently, besides his work in “the Polish lands,” Jekels also contributed to the promotion of psychoanalysis in these countries. Of course, this does not mean that we can also describe him as a Swedish or Scandinavian analyst. Especially because he did not write any texts in Swedish.

But if Jekels, probably because of his radical leftist views – first socialist and then outright communist – most likely did not attach particular importance to his national identity (especially in the later period of his life, when his attitude to the people and events around him was profoundly pessimistic),⁸³ a sense of nationality in the cases of other analysts played an important role. Eugenia Sokolnicka and Helena Deutsch provide telling examples.⁸⁴

The former (née Kutner) grew up in Warsaw in an assimilated Jewish family, engaged for generations in the struggle for Polish independence; in 1863 her grandfather apparently fought in the uprising against the Tsarist regime in the Russian partition, but this has not been definitively confirmed. In any case, she absorbed strong patriotic feelings at home and preserved them for the rest of her life. But she went down in the history of psychoanalysis primarily as the founder of the psychoanalytical movement in France and – with Marie Bonaparte – the psychoanalytical society there. Which, by the way, she had unsuccessfully attempted to do in Poland in 1917–1919.⁸⁵

Helena Deutsch was born in Przemyśl and emphasized her association with Polishness throughout her life. For a long time she was in a relationship with a Polish attorney (also of Jewish origin), Herman Lieberman, a prominent political activist, a PPS deputy in the interwar period, and Minister of Justice in Władysław Sikorski’s government-in-exile. Her already-quoted diary, written

83 But caution should be exercised in this case as well. Gustaw Bychowski, for example, in his report to Polish readers from the famous psychoanalytic conference in Marienbad in Germany in 1936, writes that “he met a Pole, Jekels.” So Polishness was an important hallmark for both of them at this conference. By the way, in the same report Bychowski is very flattering about Lacan’s speech about the mirror stage. See Gustaw Bychowski, “XIV Międzynarodowy Zjazd Psychoanalityczny w Marienbadzie (sierpień 1936),” *Polskie Archiwum Psychologii*, Vol. IX (1936), pp. 175–176.

84 Another example is, of course, Hanna Segal, a leading figure of British psychoanalysis. Except that her psychoanalytic activity begins only after World War II in Great Britain. Therefore, because she belonged to another generation of psychoanalysts, I do not mention her in this context.

85 A lot of information on this subject is provided by Jarosław Groth in his excellent article “Przyczynek do historii polskiej psychoanalizy – Eugenia Sokolnicka,” *Polskie Forum Psychologiczne*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1 (2013), p. 115, based on the correspondence of Otto Rank with Freud at this time. It resulted from the fact that a psychoanalytical group was being established in Warsaw, but for some unknown reasons (resistance of the medical community – internal disputes and divisions?) it did not happen. In any case, this correspondence clearly shows that Freud was very keen on establishing a psychoanalytic society in Poland.

towards the end of her life, is an invaluable source of information about the Polish period of her biography.

She describes her childhood years in detail, drawing an honest picture of the deeply ambivalent relations between Poles and Jews in Przemysł, and writes about her own dilemmas in this context. She also emphasizes that, despite the manifold manifestations of anti-Semitism which the Jews experienced from the Poles, she preserved her Polish identity, although it sometimes required a lot of resilience on her part. The reason she could do so was perhaps that she was capable of looking at these conflicts from a critical distance and noticed to what extent the “popular” Polish version of anti-Semitism was fueled by the demagoguery practiced by right-wing parties and the peculiar interpretation of Crucifixion promoted by representatives of the Church:

[...] It was unavoidably plain to me that in the struggle against exploitation the peasants made the Jew their scapegoat. He was conceived of as a type of devil who sucked away their savings for his own advantage. For them the Jew was indeed the immediate exploiter, but behind him is still the peasants' own near-deity, the aristocratic *szlachcic*. [...] One should not forget that the peasant, usually illiterate, took his religious ideas whole-cloth from the village priest, a figure of enormous influence, whose interpretation of the New Testament was laced with literal-minded bigotry. Every Sunday the flock was vigorously reminded that it was the Jews who crucified Christ.⁸⁶

Deutsch's account is particularly significant due to her crucial position – next to Jekels and Nunberg – in the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society, where she was Freud's assistant and ran the Training Institute. She also made an important contribution to the psychoanalytical theories of “sexual difference,” studying primarily the issue of female sexuality. *The Psychology of Women*⁸⁷ is regarded as her most important work; it offers a number of innovative insights on the female mind, developing and modifying Freud's claims on this subject. Today this work is considered one of the most significant, classic psychoanalytical texts on this issue. Along with later writings by Hanna Segal, Helena Deutsch made the greatest contribution to psychoanalytical theory among all psychoanalysts of Polish origin.

At the same time, however, neither Sokolnicka nor Deutsch wrote a single psychoanalytical text in Polish, although records show that in many cases they conducted psychoanalysis in Polish. So how should we categorize them? Can

86 Deutsch, *Confrontations with Myself*, pp. 34–35.

87 Deutsch, *The Psychology of Women* (New York: Grune&Stratton, 1944) Vol. I; Helen Deutsch, *The Psychology of Women* (New York: Grune&Stratton, 1945), Vol. II.

we call them Polish psychoanalysts, despite the fact that their contribution to the history of Polish psychoanalysis was virtually nothing? Sokolnicka's main achievements were connected with founding the psychoanalytical movement in France, while Deutsch was active in this area first in Austria and then in the United States. So perhaps it would be more accurate to call the former a French psychoanalyst, and the latter an Austrian and later American psychoanalyst?⁸⁸ But this approach, ignoring the issue of their national identity, which in their case was strong, would also be a simplification. Even when they are called “Polish psychoanalysts,” one should remember that this label concerns mostly their national identity rather than their legacy or their work as psychoanalysts. The situation was radically different in the case of Herman Nunberg or Tola Rank, who for a time practiced psychoanalysis during the partitions in the Polish lands and wrote their first psychoanalytical texts in Polish. Not to mention Jekels, if you consider his wide-ranging clinical, publishing, and translation work in Lviv and Bystra.

Yet another type of problem arises in the context of a large group of psychoanalysts who came from Jewish families, were born in the Polish lands, spoke Polish, got their education in Polish schools, but emigrated at a very early stage of their lives. These individuals often published nothing in Polish, and to make matters worse, we know very little (or nothing) about their sense of identity, their attitude towards Polish culture, etc. But even if they admitted to strong ties with Polish culture (e.g., the American Wikipedia claims that Rudolf Loewenstein was a Polish psychoanalyst), like Deutsch or Sokolnicka, they never published anything in Polish. Or sometimes it was just a handful of texts, as in the case of Mira Gincburg in Switzerland. When preceding the term “psychoanalyst” with an adjective defining their nationality, one should be very cautious, if only because such adjectives are ambiguous – they may refer to someone's national identity or to someone's contribution to psychoanalytical literature of a given country. Or to both.

Martin Buber's biography provides a good illustration of the fact that questions of national and cultural self-definition at the turn of the 20th century in Galicia and the Congress Kingdom were complex and fluid. He first attended a Polish

88 The authors of Wikipedia entries are also evidently struggling with this problem. In the Polish version Sokolnicka is a Polish psychoanalyst, in the French and German ones simply a psychoanalyst, and in the American version she is a French psychoanalyst. Deutsch, in turn, is a Polish psychoanalyst in the Polish version, an Austrian-American one in the American version, and in the French version she is an American psychoanalyst of Polish origin.

school and avidly read Polish Romantic literature, and later wrote his first texts in Polish. Then he found that he was more attracted to German culture – especially German Idealism – and started writing in German. Still later, in the 1930s, he became fully immersed in the Judaic tradition, and today he is regarded as a prominent Jewish theologian.

It seems that although in the case of many analysts born under Austrian and Russian partitions the term “Polish” is much exaggerated (if legitimate at all), you can hardly ignore this group in a work on the history of Polish psychoanalysis. Especially because some of them later made big careers in the psychoanalytical movement, preserving their Polish cultural identity to a lesser or greater extent. They not only spoke excellent Polish and were deeply familiar with Polish literature, but sometimes they conducted psychoanalysis in Polish. They included Rudolf Loewenstein, co-founder of the French Psychoanalytical Society, who analyzed Jacques Lacan and taught him psychoanalysis, and was himself analyzed, among other people, by Sokolnicka; Zofia Morgenstern, who created the psychoanalytical movement in France in the interwar period; Beata (Tola) Rank, translator of one of Freud’s works into Polish; Mira Oberholzer (Gincburg), co-founder of the Swiss Psychoanalytical Society and author of several texts in Polish; Sophie and Berta Bornstein; and dozens of others. Although it would be difficult to associate the psychoanalytical achievements and clinical work of this group with the tradition of Polish psychoanalysis (it had an at best marginal importance in the context of their entire legacy), this group forms an important background for this tradition, tied to it via various threads.

It is difficult, therefore, to find a clear-cut criterion which would lead to a precise definition of the term “Polish psychoanalyst.” The principal reason is that in the early stages of the movement, up to 1918, the Polish state did not exist. Therefore, the first analysts and authors of texts on psychoanalysis, who either regarded themselves as Poles or wrote in Polish and were culturally associated with Polish traditions, were citizens of foreign countries – Austria Hungary, Russia, and Germany. So you can only speak about a psychoanalytical movement in “the Polish lands” in the sense of the partitioned lands which once belonged to the First Polish Republic.⁸⁹

89 The term First Polish Republic is used by historians in relation to the so-called Poland of the nobility, a state whose beginnings are usually identified with the hypothetical date of the baptism of Mieszko I (966) and its end with the third partition between Prussia, Russia, and Austria in 1795. Because from the 15th until late 18th century, the First Republic was also composed of lands inhabited mostly by the Belarusian,

Secondly, many psychoanalysts active in “the Polish lands” and writing in Polish had a dual, and sometimes even triple cultural identity, its individual components forming diverse configurations. Relations between these components could significantly vary. In addition, they changed over time due to some biographical or historical events, moving away and so on. In many cases we must resort to speculation, for the available records are scant or almost non-existent. Especially in Galicia, the national and cultural “polymorphism” was a widespread phenomenon. The administration was Austrian, both Austrian and Polish schools existed in cities and towns, there were two Polish universities, the Ukrainian population was as numerous as the Polish one (about 44 percent), while the Jewish populace was almost 10 percent. So it is not surprising that many assimilated Jews often had a dual cultural identity, Polish and Austrian, not to mention the traditional religious Jewish identity they to a greater or lesser extent preserved.

A good illustration of this is the article by Bertha Pappenheim, the famous patient of Josef Breuer, about whom Freud supposedly said that she was the true creator of the psychoanalytical method (!).⁹⁰ In her charity work for Jewish women in Galicia, Pappenheim had an opportunity to take a closer look at the complex ethnic relations and identity processes there. She emphasized in her article that “the individuality of the land, in its mixture of German-Austrian-Polish, and Jewish elements, has a very definite character.”⁹¹

Larry Wolff, who quoted these words in one of his books, notes that this cultural amalgamation was even more complex, for you should also mention the Ukrainians, who constituted almost half of the entire population.⁹² In any case, due the multicultural and multinational nature of the region, the assimilation of the Jews took three parallel courses: Polish, Austrian and, less frequently, Ukrainian.

Ukrainian, and Russian population and other nations, the term “Polish lands” is obviously ambiguous and simply means lands belonging to the said state.

90 This is a patient who in Breuer’s and Freud’s *Studies on Hysteria* appears under the pseudonym Anna O. She supposedly referred to the method of therapy used with her as the *talking cure* [in English in the original], which Freud considered to be an excellent description.

91 Berta Pappenheim, “Zur Lage der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Galizien. Reiseeindrücke und Vorschläge zur Besserung der Verhältnisse” (1904), in: *Sisyphus. Gegen den Mädchenhandel – Galizien*, H. Heubach, ed. (Freiburg: 1992), p. 44.

92 Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia. History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture*, p. 315.

Thirdly, it was not without significance that Freud himself understood psychoanalysis as a scientific theory of a supranational nature. In his eyes, it was neither Jewish nor Austrian, not even Central European, but had the status of a universal theory. In time, it was to become a common good for the entirety of mankind. From this perspective, the issues of the national, ethnic, or even religious identity of psychoanalysts were of secondary importance. Like the first Christians, they were to be above all emissaries for the new psychoanalytical truth about man and culture, proselytizers of the new method of therapy, expected to spread it across all continents.⁹³ Just like in the case of Christ, underlying this teaching was an obvious emancipatory claim: the emergence of a “better” type of man, more skilfully controlling his aggression. Like with the first Christians, the nationality of the analyst and patient did not matter at all. Obviously, the path to this “improvement” was to be completely different than in Christ’s teachings. The crucial role was to be played by a new approach – developed by the patients during analysis – towards instinctive representations repressed into the unconscious, mostly of a sexual or aggressive nature.

This does not mean that there is no point in speaking today about Austrian, French, British, American, Israeli, or Polish psychoanalysis. After all, in each of these countries specific psychoanalytical traditions in the native language developed, psychoanalytical societies were founded, specific tendencies gained predominance, and so on. But all these traditions should be treated as variants of psychoanalysis as such. In the final analysis they are important only insofar as they contributed something significant to its general development. Psychoanalysis does not differ in this respect from such trends of contemporary science or scholarship as structuralism, existentialism, phenomenology, or Marxism, in which various “national” versions and variations also evolved over time.

But nevertheless, structuralism is still structuralism, existentialism is still existentialism, phenomenology is still phenomenology. And psychoanalysis is still psychoanalysis.

Ultimately, we should recognize as Austrian, British, or Polish psychoanalysts, primarily those people who were working for the development of psychoanalysis in their respective countries, wrote in their native language, and predominantly conducted therapy in it. What counts is above all the professional or cultural rather than national identity of the analyst. Although, as I already said, the latter

93 Incidentally, the first emissaries of Christianity in ancient times were also Jews who “betrayed” the Mosaic religion and, in a sense, their nation, becoming followers of Christ, Saint Peter and Saint Paul among them.

should never be completely ignored. For example, Nunberg (not to mention Jekels) could definitely be treated as a Polish psychoanalyst, considering his work as an assistant in Professor Jan Piltz's clinic in Kraków, his early articles on Freud's psychoanalysis written in Polish, and the fact that he delivered his lectures and papers and conducted therapy in Polish. However, as he moved to Vienna after the outbreak of World War I, living there throughout the 1920s, he should also be considered as an Austrian analyst. Still later, when in the 1930s he emigrated to the United States and became active in the psychoanalytical society there, he became an American analyst. By the same token, Stanisław Przybyszewski in his early Berlin period can be treated as a Pole who was also a leading representative of German Decadent movement.

11 The dilemmas of assimilation and Zionism

Since the vast majority of psychoanalysts (or psychiatrists fascinated by Freud's theory) active before 1914 in the Polish lands came from assimilated Jewish families, their national identity was built on the foundation of their traditional religious Jewish identity, to which, mostly depending on their political views, they had different attitudes. In this respect, the processes in question were no different from those which occurred among Jews in the remaining regions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy or in Russia, which I described at the beginning of this chapter.

The historical course of these processes in the second half of the 19th century and later shows significant analogies to those described above. A good illustration of this evolution is provided in the already-quoted work *The Idea of Galicia* by Larry Wolff. The author gives the example of the Polish-Jewish *Ojczyzna* [Fatherland] magazine published in Polish that promoted Polonization in the 1880s. But in 1886 its publisher, Alfred Nossig, "converted" to Zionism and in 1892, in the annual journal *Przyszłość* (*The Future*), decided that Polonization as an idea was "pretty much worn out." Henceforth, he started to promote the idea of the Jews returning to Palestine and founding their own state there.⁹⁴ As a result, "Jews sought to establish a national identity of their own within the province, organizing a Jewish National Party of Galicia."⁹⁵

A similar process could be observed in the Congress Kingdom. Until the 1880s, leading representatives of the Jewish integrist movement in the Russian

94 Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia*, pp. 313–315.

95 Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia*, p. 313.

partition regarded themselves as Poles of the Mosaic confession. A good example of this was the Jewish magazine published in Polish called *Jutrzenka* [*The Dawn*] (closed down by censorship for supporting the January Uprising) and *Izraelita* [*Israelite*], continuing this line in a veiled form. In 1910, the magazine published an article by Adam Wizel significantly entitled *Asymilacja czy polonizacja* [*Assimilation or Polonization*], where he supported the Polonization of Jewish communities living in Poland:

Assimilation, taken literally, means becoming similar, and in this specific case it signifies the desire of Jews to become similar to the native Polish population in terms of language, customs and culture.

Assimilation so conceived is nothing other than the *Polonization* of the Jews, which should be clearly and openly stated.⁹⁶

By striving to raise the cultural level of the Jews, wanting to instill elements of contemporary European culture in them, we by no means intend to assimilate them with any community which might be at hand, but only with the Polish national group, which means that assimilation as we conceive it directly leads to the Polonization of Jewish masses.

And if so, the term assimilation, as too vague, should be completely rejected and unambiguously replaced with the term Polonization.⁹⁷

Striking in Wizel's argumentation is the fact that he perceives the assimilation of Jews, meaning their Polonization, as the most effective way of bringing them within the scope of influence of European culture. The political message was unequivocal: the Jews were not to Russify, for that would pull them away from Europe, but to Polonize, for this was their best way to enter the path of cultural development – meaning participation in science and scholarship, in democratic forms of political life, in art, etc.

This appeal becomes more understandable if we take into account the completely different situation of Jews in the Congress Kingdom as compared to their lot in the Prussian/German partition and even under Austrian rule. Nevertheless, Wizel's words are very significant, for they were pronounced by a Polish Jew deeply immersed in the tradition of European culture, very well-educated and an authority in academic circles. And he expressed this view with a deep concern about the future fate of Jewish communities, firmly believing that unless they quickly Polonized, they would become a marginal ethnic group with an archaic mentality and no one would take them seriously. In a word,

96 Wizel, in line with the rules of Polish orthography, uses the form "jew" in its religious sense rather than "Jew" which refers to ethnicity or nationality.

97 Wizel, "Asymilacja czy polonizacja?" *Izraelita*, No. 4 (1910), p. 1.

Polonization of the Jews was for Wizel tantamount to their Europeanization and hence to the possibility of playing a significant role in the future Polish state. Or at least within Polish society, to which they would become culturally similar without rejecting – as should be emphasized – the faith of their fathers.

Wizel envisioned the future Polish state as democratic and tolerant towards all religions, not forcing anyone to change his faith. The main factor unifying Jews and Poles in this state was to be the same cultural identity founded on the Polish language. In the same article, Wizel deprecatingly spoke about Yiddish, calling it a “dialect,” all the more undesirable, as for Poles it sounded similar to the language of their enemies (that is German, of which, according to Wizel, Yiddish was a poor caricature). Polishness for Wizel – the identification with Polish culture – equaled Europeanization, that is complete emancipation, and he saw Yiddish, serving to maintain the traditional religious identity of Jews, as the main obstacle hampering this process. The future was to show to what extent the reality of interwar Poland embodied these ideas.

Zionist ideas also became increasingly popular among the Jews in the Congress Kingdom. More and more intense anti-Semitic sentiments were an important factor of this polarization in Jewish communities. On the other hand, the idea of founding their own state and becoming a nation in the modern sense of the word was hugely attractive. Therefore, many Jews who previously had built their identity on religion started to regard themselves as Jews in the modern national sense.⁹⁸

This clearly shows to what extent the emergence of Zionism changed the attitude of some Jewish groups to assimilation, introducing a new element to it and decisively influencing its course. The paradox of this situation was that the idea of rebuilding the Jewish state in Palestine referred on the one hand to the religious tradition of the Jewish nation, and on the other hand to the modern understanding of the concept of the nation. So this idea was a legacy of European thought. But the growing popularity of this idea largely resulted from the intensification of anti-Semitic attitudes within European societies from the late 19th century, which perceived themselves more and more as “national.”

This produced the paradoxical fusion of assimilation and Zionization among Jews, because despite the fact that they were diametrically different, they were produced by the same cultural processes and the same way of thinking. Although ideologically similar, they were completely incompatible and at the same time

98 See Zuzanna Kołodziejska, “*Izraelita*” (1866–1915). *Znaczenie kulturowe i literackie czasopisma* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2014), pp. 123–130.

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led to an increase of anti-Semitic feelings. In the eyes of the Aryan population, the fact that the Jews, who had built their identity on religious tradition, suddenly wanted to be a nation in the modern understanding of this word and be treated in the same way as other nations, was psychologically difficult to accept.

Added to that was ordinary social resentment associated with the fact that, as a result of the industrialization of European societies and the assimilation processes fueled by this transformation, increasingly numerous groups of emancipated Jews were entering prestigious professions previously reserved for Aryans. What is more, this also meant a significant improvement of their material situation. Representatives of the petty bourgeois circles perceived this development as a threat to their own status, while the working class and the peasants, also resentful, saw it as a violation of the long-established order and the main source of their misfortunes. And when nationalist parties of all kinds started telling them that they should enjoy special privileges and rights as “native” Austrians, Germans, Poles, Ukrainians, and so on, they became equally suspicious and hostile to orthodox Jews, who founded their identity on religion, and to assimilated Jews regarding themselves as Austrians, Germans, Poles, or Ukrainians.

The only opportunity to break away from the vicious circle of rival nationalisms was offered by left-wing parties, promoting the idea of a supranational and classless society. No wonder that, like Zionism (although ideologically the very opposite), they attracted many assimilated Jews, who saw this “third way” as a real opportunity to change their situation.⁹⁹ This is where an overwhelming majority of VPT members invested their political sympathies, seeing a profound affinity between the idea of class emancipation of previously marginalized and economically exploited social strata and the idea of shaping a psychoanalytically enlightened man who would have a much greater control over the “economy” of his instinctive life.

12 Psychoanalysis and the anti-Semitic climate of Vienna

All the developments and processes described above define the direct social and cultural background of the birth of the psychoanalytical movement in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and in the whole of Central and Eastern Europe. The bourgeois circles in the Monarchy took a hostile and distanced view of this movement, contemptuously regarding it as “Jewish,” and this term perfectly

99 Naturally, there were also parties which tried to combine leftist and nationalist ideas, and one of them would later become very strong in Germany and Austria in the 1930s.

illustrates the hostility – laced with anti-Semitism – of these groups towards Freud's theory, which, to make matters worse, in academic circles was treated as something alien to contemporary psychology and psychiatry, as well as to scholarship as a whole. The main reason was Freud's claim that man, encouraged during analysis to directly confront the "representations" of sexual drives repressed by him into the unconscious, should strive towards a more open approach to the whole sphere of his sexual life, subject to excessive repressions in contemporary society. This view undermined a number of social taboos and prohibitions sanctioned by the puritan tradition and supported by the Church, and that attracted great suspicion on the part of usually conservative bourgeois circles throughout the entire Monarchy. In addition, the very fact that therapy took the form of the patient talking to the physician, with various sensitive details of the patient's intimate life being discussed and "reworked," seemed to defy the fundamental rules of decency.

In his memoirs from the Vienna period of his life, where he paints a picture of the political scene in Austro-Hungary at the turn of the 20th century, Richard F. Sterba points out that anti-Semitism defined the agenda of the two main parties from that time. The first was the Christian Social Party, closely associated with the Catholic Church and supported by the majority of society. In this party, "the fundamental anti-Semitism of the Church was combined with the traditional hostility of society towards the Jews."¹⁰⁰ The other grouping, the Great-German (*Groß-Deutsche*) Party, was anti-Semitic in the spirit of modern nationalisms, while the writings of its leader, Georg Ritter von Schönerer, were imbued with a fierce hatred of the Jews and later became a source of inspiration for Adolf Hitler. The only major party which was not anti-Semitic was the Social Democratic Party founded by Viktor Adler and fiercely opposed by the other two. Its members were mostly workers and representatives of secular-minded leftist intelligentsia.

If no openly discriminatory laws against the Jews were introduced at the time, it was only because the Emperor had the right to veto parliamentary acts, including those which could exacerbate the antagonisms between particular ethnic groups within the Monarchy. This meant also laws with obviously anti-Semitic intent, curtailing the rights of Jews. Therefore, trying to remain within the general guidelines of the political strategy chosen by the Emperor, the government conducted a policy aimed at mitigating all kinds of ethnic conflicts which

100 Richard W. Sterba, *Reminiscences of a Viennese psychoanalyst* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982), p. 10.

could lead to the disintegration of the Monarchy. So it was little wonder that when after the lost war this “neutralizing” factor no longer existed in Austria, the policy of the new state became openly anti-Semitic, which was accompanied by a growing hostility towards Jews throughout society. After the Anschluss of 1938, this hostility exploded with an unprecedented force, finding its expression in the import of discriminatory laws from Germany, more brutal than any previous administrative and legal acts directed against the Jews.

An analysis of the political context in which the VPS (Vienna Psychoanalytical Society) was established in the early 20th century and in which it was active until the 1930s throws additional light on its functioning within Austrian society. From the very start, it worked in a hostile bourgeois environment, which saw psychoanalysis as an alien abscess on Austrian (German) culture. In the 1930s, Hitler, enthusiastically supported by the Austrians, managed to excise this abscess. A good illustration of this was a tragicomic situation which took place after World War II. When American tourists, visiting Vienna in droves, started asking the municipal authorities about the house of a certain Sigmund Freud, no one in the Town Hall had any idea who they were talking about. Pointing at this hostile social and cultural context in which the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society functioned makes it easier to understand the fervor with which its members defended the basic assumptions of Freud’s theory, seeing its wide-ranging implementation as a chance to build a new society in the future, free from anti-Semitism and all forms of aggression. Psychoanalysis was to be an effective antidote to the spread of these attitudes. This belief was the source of leftist sympathies among the society’s members. Some of them, like Wilhelm Reich, tried to combine the vision of the psychoanalytical emancipation of man with the Marxist project, while others joined left-wing parties or collaborated with them. It was only in the 1930s that some psychoanalysts from Freud’s closest circle – especially Jekels – started to realize that their faith in the imminent transformation of social self-knowledge thanks to psychoanalysis had been illusory, and they became deeply pessimistic. Others, including Freud himself, did not seem to perceive the actual scale of the threat resulting from the combination of anti-Semitism and right-wing nationalist political ideology. There is no doubt that the hostile sociopolitical context defined from the outset the essential context for the functioning of the VPS. And this context indirectly influenced everything that Freud and his supporters claimed about human sexuality, narcissism, aggressive drives, and the appeal to develop a new attitude towards them. Psychoanalytical therapy was not only about treating patients suffering from various kinds of mental disorders. Its ultimate effect was to be the emergence of a new type of man (and in the longer term of a new society), sensitive to ideas and values

which the conservative part of society found difficult to accept. Psychoanalytical therapy contained an element of the struggle to produce this new man and this new society and to emancipate it from its own instincts. Only in such a society could the other emancipation and assimilation – the true ones – of the Jews take place, with traditional national and social divisions disappearing.

The antagonistic relationship with conservative bourgeois circles in the Monarchy, resulting from the emancipatory claims of psychoanalysis and its sociopolitical nature, was accompanied by another, purely scientific conflict. As I already mentioned, it was the conflict between the hermeneutic method employed by the analyst-therapist which Freud proposed, based on interpreting pathological mental phenomena (dreams, slips, and symptoms) and deduction, where critical reflection coexisted with pure speculation, and the dominant beliefs of contemporary psychology and psychiatry regarding the scientific criteria which any theory of the human mind, its disorders and therapies, should fulfill. These beliefs were based on the model of scientific validity adopted in the natural sciences, where all claims are supposed to be empirically verifiable. According to representatives of these sciences, Freud's psychoanalytical theory did not fulfill these criteria. The dispute about psychoanalysis as "science" or not and on how its peculiar status should be understood is still ongoing.

13 A cultural transfer of psychoanalysis?

Freud's conviction about the universality of the theory and form of therapy he proposed led to his intense efforts at promoting psychoanalysis in various European countries and on other continents. Consequently, Freud and his pupils gradually developed a complex procedure of training future psychoanalysts, embracing regular supervisions. At the same time, they organized seminars and lectures, created a number of purely psychoanalytical journals where they published articles and posted information about important events in the movement, and organized and supported other publishing. A great emphasis was placed on translations. In the initial period, Polish analysts from Galicia and to a lesser extent from the Congress Kingdom were particularly active. The first articles on Freud's theory and translations of his texts started to appear in Polish medical magazines, lectures were given, patients were treated, and so on. Jekels played the leading role here, but he was bravely supported by Nunberg, Władysław Radecki, de Beaurain, and Karpińska.

Since Freud wrote in German, there is a temptation to describe this type of work, that is the presentation of his theory to the Polish medical community and to the general public, in terms of "cultural transfer." This term was introduced by

two French researchers, Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, who attempted to describe the complex relationships between various cultures influencing each other. Starting from the concept of transfer, they tried to describe the exchange and circulation of knowledge between Germany and France in the 19th century, emphasizing the processes of synthesis and fusion of various points of view, hybridization, and mutual impact.¹⁰¹ They juxtaposed this approach to the traditional comparative method, where cultural phenomena are treated as separate wholes and the focus is on highlighting differences and similarities between them. This approach was in line with a new political trend launched in the 1950s by the leaders of West Germany and France, aimed at a reconciliation between the two nations and at building solid foundations for political cooperation and a wide-ranging cultural exchange based on the principles of equality and partnership. In the context of the 19th-century tradition of French and German culture, this approach was justified inasmuch as they indeed influenced each other in many areas, and it was relatively easy to show their mutual impact.

But if we employ the “transfer” of Freud’s psychoanalytical theory into Polish culture, we will immediately see that the relationships between the participants of this exchange were not symmetrical, that the transfer was virtually a one-way street. As Freud wrote in German, his works belonged to the culture of the entire German-speaking area, of which Austria (or Austro-Hungary) was only a part. Of course, one can say that the basic cultural point of reference for his theory was Austrian culture (or in fact the Viennese culture from that time), but this term should be understood only metaphorically here. Especially because, as we already mentioned, the sources of his theory were manifold (he stressed, for example, the role of British empiricism, he liked to invoke English literature, and so on), and on top of that he endowed it with a universal, supranational character. In this case, the “cultural transfer” consisted in acquainting the Polish reader, mainly through lectures, articles, and translations, with the principal assumptions of his theory. Of course, in the context of the Polish cultural tradition all these elements acquired a slightly different meaning and were interpreted in a peculiar way, if only because Polish psychology already possessed some concepts which in a sense had prepared the ground for a positive reception of Freud in the Polish psychological and psychiatric milieu.¹⁰² Moreover, all reviews of Freud’s

101 Michele Espagne, “Les transferts culturels franco-allemands” (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999); *Transferts. Les relations interculturelles dans l’espace franco-allemand, (XVIII^e et XIX^e siècle)*, M. Werner, M. Espagne, eds., (Paris : 1988).

102 Bartłomiej Dobroczyński wrote about this in his book on the concepts of Polish psychologists and psychiatrists, who were using the term “unconscious” or its

theory contained elements of interpretation, inevitably imbued with the existing tradition of Polish psychology and psychiatry, where the concept of the unconscious (or, to be more precise, of the “subconscious,” for example in the works of Edward Abramowski) already functioned. Hence these discussions contained some new emphases and reformulations, while examples from therapeutic practice invoked by the authors often referred to a typically Polish social and cultural context. But you can hardly speak here about any impact of this tradition on the Viennese psychoanalysts gathered around Freud or on Austrian culture at the time. Consequently, you cannot say that there was a “cultural transfer” in the sense of circulation of ideas and mutual inspirations. The only thing a researcher (who wants to follow the relationship between these two traditions) can do is attempt to show that there were certain analogies and affinities between some conceptions of 19th-century Polish psychiatry and psychology, and elements of Freud’s theory. But even here one should be very cautious.

Likewise, caution is recommended when you follow the sometimes-astounding analogies between Freud’s theory of dreams and some literary works from the Young Poland period (e.g., Karol Irzykowski’s *Pałuba* or early essays and novels by Stanisław Przybyszewski from the Berlin period). For these analogies concern works whose authors knew very little or nothing about this theory when they wrote them. So we can hardly speak about its impact on these works, for the affinity resulted from the general spirit of the era.

Espagne’s and Werner’s theory of “cultural transfer” is problematic also in its assumptions. It assumes that all transfer of cultural ideas and values occurs in the sphere of pure thought through mechanisms of mutual influence, entering into various kinds of heterogeneous relations. As a result of this, “amalgams” of new theories, their mixtures and alloys, are formed within two different cultures. The achievements of one culture penetrate the other and over time they imperceptibly become its inherent part. Of course, this is a two-way process. This picture is no doubt very attractive intellectually, if only because it is so idyllic. But the problem is that the mechanisms of repression, exclusion, or degradation of what is “uncomfortable” or unacceptable for a given culture are also at work here. In practice, we will rarely see the “partnership-like,” symmetrically mutual influences of one culture on another.

Possibly, since it harmonized with the political line chosen in the 1950s by Konrad Adenauer and Charles DeGaulle, Espagne’s and Werner’s theory met

the expectations of the political elites on both sides. Nevertheless, even if we agree that it points to an important aspect of the process where different cultural traditions influence each other, it presents it in a one-sided way. It ignores the inevitable antagonism, ruthless struggle for domination, and profound conflict of ideas and values. It is enough to recall Friedrich Nietzsche, who, in his early works, perceived the relationship between German and French culture in the context of the 1871 war, claiming that military victory should be followed by German domination in the arena of cultural ideas.

Nietzsche's argumentation, corresponding with the spirit of *Kulturkampf*, may seem less pleasant to us. And also one-sided, because it emphasizes only the aspect of rivalry or conflict between cultures, assuming its "either-or" resolution. It usually comes to the fore in a situation where two different cultures which have been alien to each other come in contact and start to influence each other. All existing differences between them, above all mutually exclusive ideas and values, are "stimulated," launching a struggle for domination between the ideologies and axiologies of these cultures. The resulting conflict is an inevitable consequence of such close contact. The rivalry between two different cultures may be accompanied by a "transfer" of their differing ideas and values, which their representatives often do not notice (or do not want to notice). But this process goes along with other processes, diametrically opposed to such "transfers" and usually prevailing.

Discussed in this context, Espagne's and Werner's theory certainly makes us sensitive to an important aspect of the mutual influence of different cultures which occurs side by side with conflict and struggle. Nevertheless, in history we usually deal with a very "asymmetrical" impact of one culture on another, with the total domination or even destruction of the other side or a fully receptive attitude of one towards the other. In such situations, the "transfer" in the sense of a free circulation of certain ideas between two cultures does not occur or is of secondary importance. Moreover, the aspect of conflict and struggle is present in every encounter between two different cultures.

What is more, in the case of Freud's theory, we are dealing with an atypical situation, because – like in Marx's theory – it is founded on a universalist emancipatory claim assuming the necessity of transforming the very foundations of the cultural self-knowledge of European societies. It also questions the assumptions of many philosophical and scholarly traditions which to a large extent shaped this self-knowledge. This questioning concerns, among other things, the attitude of man to his own sexuality, which leads to a number of pathologies in his mental life, because it is subject to too many constraints and repressions. Consequently, besides the promotion of psychoanalysis as a theory and a form of therapy, there

is the necessity to develop a new model of raising future generations, which will result in the emergence of a new type of “enlightened” society and so on.

We can hardly even speak about a “transfer” of some ideas and values in one direction, for this term implies the previous consent of the seller and the buyer of a given product. Meanwhile, those who spread psychoanalytical ideas and attempted to instill them in various groups did not treat them just as an attractive product which should be marketed, to put it in quasi-economic terms. They saw their work as a kind of mission aimed at making their contemporaries believe in the universal “truth” contained in Freud’s and Jung’s theories, which concerned human life as a whole in all its aspects and dimensions. Therefore, this truth should gradually become the birthright of all humankind. No wonder that it was closer to the way in which followers of a given religion attempt to preach in a given community than to a strictly scientific approach, where “missions” usually play a secondary role. It inevitably meant that the preachers of psychoanalysis encountered – just like the preachers of new religious ideas – a strong and violent opposition from the usually conservative representatives of the European bourgeoisie, based on moral, religious, or political considerations. So when Freud – as will be discussed in more detail later – sent Jekels to Kraków and wrote to him that it was an “apostolic” mission, this jocular term in fact had a deeper meaning which should be read literally today. Yes, Jekels was to be an apostle of psychoanalysis among the Polish intelligentsia and persevere in his endeavor regardless of any possible resistance, harassment, and aggression.

14 Jews and Poles – two Messianisms?

For this reason, it is also difficult to accept the picture of the first Polish analysts of Jewish origin active in Galicia and the Congress Kingdom (and later also in the interwar period) presented by Waldemar Pawlak and Zbigniew Sokolik in one of the first postwar texts on the history of psychoanalysis in Poland.¹⁰³ They claim that the cultural identity of these analysts was determined by their culturally ingrained sense of belonging to the “chosen people,” which was in sharp conflict with the analogous form of the identity of the Poles shaped during the partitions. As we know, since the times of Romantic Messianism they also regarded themselves as the “chosen people,” enjoying special privileges from God (or actually from the Mother of God). This approach assumes that we are dealing with the “narcissism of small differences” described by Freud, when nations, which on the

103 Pawlak, Sokolik, “Historia psychoanalizy w Polsce,” pp. 83–90.

one hand have a lot in common, but on the other hand differ in certain “details,” are particularly hostile and aggressive towards each other.

The problematic aspect of this approach is that these Polish physicians-psychiatrists from assimilated Jewish families saw themselves as emissaries of a certain universal knowledge which did not offer special privileges to anyone. Including to those who preached it. This constituted the fundamental difference between their identity structure and traditional Jewish religious identity. In their eyes, psychoanalysis was a modern scientific theory whose claims and discoveries related to man “as such” rather than to some “elected” group or nation particularly suited to it.

Already in its assumptions psychoanalytical theory rejected building identity on belonging to a selected national or social group. This is clearly seen in the early works of Jekels, Nunberg, or Nelken, who strongly emphasized the universality of psychoanalysis. For instance, Jekels said in his *Szkic psychoanalizy Freuda* (A word on Freudian psychoanalysis) that, due to the reduction of mental elements to instinctive ones, psychoanalysis played a similar role in psychology as chemistry did in popular notions on the structure of the material world. While psychology stops at the superficial layer, “psychoanalysis penetrates through all these mental layers, down to the powerful drives constituting the essence and foundation of the whole mental system, and sees the properties of these drives as causes determining even the most complex mental manifestations.”¹⁰⁴

For Jekels psychoanalysis is above all a science which – like the natural sciences – tries to discover the actual reasons of mental phenomena and finds them to be determined by drives. Therefore, its practitioners are emissaries of a new scientific truth on the human mind and culture, and this truth retains its validity for all human individuals.

In his profound belief that psychoanalysis reveals the deepest dimension of human mental life, which will make it possible to solve all its “mysteries,” Jekels strongly resembles Doctor Szuman from Bolesław Prus’s novel *The Doll*.¹⁰⁵ Szuman represents a type of Darwinist scientist obsessed with a peculiar *idée fixe* that the chemical analysis of the components of human hair will make it possible to “objectively” determine the properties of all human races. Szuman is deeply

104 Jekels, *Szkic psychoanalizy Freuda*, p. 9.

105 *The Doll* is a classic novel of Polish Positivism, its plot taking place in the second half of the 19th century in the Russian partition, mainly in Warsaw. See Bolesław Prus, *The Doll*, trans. David Welsh and Anna Zaranko (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

convinced that so-called love is just a matter of the reproductive drive and everything else which is said about it in literature and art is pure fraud and humbug. If Prus moved the plot of his novel a few decades forward, Doctor Szuman would certainly be a psychoanalyst, who would pronounce views similar to those of Jekels and be equally convinced that Freud's claims on the unconscious and its instinctive foundations disperse the darkness surrounding the mysteries of human soul.

The example of these two figures – one fictional, one real – fascinated with contemporary scientific theories, perfectly illustrates the new type of self-knowledge proper to assimilated Jews who chose an academic career. Its most important distinguishing feature was a profound belief in the universality of scientific truth, which does not recognize any specially privileged groups and nations. Such a claim was also rooted in Freud's psychoanalytical theory, which in this respect – just as in Marxism – deviated from traditional Jewish identity based on a sense of being divinely elected. In the same way, it also turned against the traditional “messianic” form of Polish identity which emerged in the Romantic period. No wonder that orthodox Jews treated it with equal suspicion and hostility as other forms of European science and scholarship. A good illustration of this can be found in the biography of Gustaw Bychowski's father, Zygmunt: when his father learned that he had become a university student, he renounced him and told him to leave home. Only years later he forgave him for his “betrayal” of Jewish tradition and reconciled with him. In the interwar period, Zygmunt Bychowski was a respected neurologist, as well as a leading Zionist activist in Poland.

But in a sense we can say that in light of the assumptions of psychoanalysis, all representatives of the human race were the “chosen people.” Because each man, regardless of his nationality, race, or culture, was potentially capable of developing a new attitude to the instinctive sphere, different from the one imposed by tradition. This belief in the possibility of the profound transformation of human personality and hence a better use of the creative energies produced by the libido is repeatedly pronounced by Freud and his supporters. It was one of the most socially captivating versions of the myth of modernity.

