

Examine Freud's interpretation of Dora's first dream

“Thanks to her father's shrewdness”

The validity of Freud's psychoanalysis in this instance is highly questionable because of his obvious physical attraction to her: “

“ her vulnerability while under his personal and sole care undoubtedly playing on his mind throughout his outwardly innocent attempts to understand and ultimately diagnose her psyche.....

Herr K: Dora had taken no interest in anything but sexual matters, highlighted by her reading of Mantegazza's Physiology of Love during her stay on the lake with them. It's most likely, according to him, that she had been over excited by such material and had merely fancied the whole scene she had described.

Her Father: no doubt that this incident is responsible for Dora's depression, irritability and suicidal ideas.

Refused to break relations with Herr K and Frau K. (we know that deeper motives made such a move all the more unlikely) because in his view (front) “I believe that Dora's tale of the man's immoral suggestions is a phantasy that has forced its way into her mind

Freud: “I had resolved from the first to suspend my judgement of the true state of affairs till I had heard the other side aswell”

Her experience with Herr K- his unrequited kiss and subsequent proposition and resultant inherent insult to her honour – seems to provide

in Dora's case the physical trauma which Breur and I declared long ago to be the indispensable prerequisite for the production of a hysterical disorder.

Prior to the relatively recent incident by the lake, Dora spoke of an earlier premeditated episode with Herr K., which according to Freud was even more likely to act as a sexual trauma. Apparently Herr K. had made an arrangement for both he and his wife to meet the then 14 year old Dora at his place of business one afternoon. He persuaded his wife to stay at home and sent away all other staff, so that upon Dora's arrival they were alone. Inevitably Herr K grasped this opportunity by catching her unaware, and pressing a kiss upon her lips, ignorant to the girl's tender age.

Freud seemed to look upon this particular incident of unrequited physical contact from an oddly perverse perspective, stating that "this was surely just the situation to call up a distinct feeling of sexual excitement in a girl of fourteen who had never before been approached."

Reversal of effect

Displacement of sensation

" Instead of the genital sensation which would certainly have been felt by a healthy girl in such circumstances, Dora was overcome...by disgust."

The problem inherent in Freud's psychoanalysis is his understandable inability to look at the case from anything other than a male point of view. His masculinity therefore leaves him almost oblivious to the nature of the feelings his patient may have incurred in the aftermath of Herr K.'s failed attempts.

Freud goes on to say that her behaviour prior to this incident had already proved herself to be “entirely and completely hysterical”

Freud goes to great lengths to emphasize the fact that, at no time during her treatment did he introduce her to any fresh facts in the region of sexual proficiency. This was done not because of conscientious motives but because of his own internal inquiry of the extent of her sexual knowledge. He goes on to state that there was very little ambiguity in her discussion of sexual matters save the source of her knowledge which remained elusive.

Freud cites Dora’s ability to give a detailed description of the events leading up to her father’s acquaintance with Frau K. as being integral to validity of his assumption that Dora was deliberately suppressing feelings harboured for Herr K. by failing to recollect certain facts in this regard.

Could his analysis of this ‘completely hysterical’ girl who apparently ‘secretly’ enjoyed the advances made by Herr K. and other such men (if it came to it) be written with the intention of

using it in self-defence on his part in the event that he managed to seduce a girl he was obviously attracted to.

Possible all the time of his psychoanalysis that Freud harboured lustful feelings for his patient and so attempted to suppress any emotive responses from said patient in an attempt to elicit

http://www.bham.ac.uk/english/bibliography/theories_of_the_mind/DoraLecture/Dora.htm

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Why did Dora come to Freud, or, rather, why was she sent? Because of hysteria: the travelling womb.

The Penguin Medical Encyclopedia (1984 edition) tells us this about hysteria:

A kind of neurosis, most often affecting women and once thought to arise in the uterus. Sustained anxiety, usually with little foundation, expresses itself in physical symptoms vaguely resembling those of physical illness of the part of the body that the patient associates with her worries. The hysterical fit, simulating epilepsy, has been out of fashion for many years. (230)

Freud says that 'none of her father's actions seemed to have embittered her so much as his readiness to consider the scene by the lake as a product of her imagination'

Dora, on the other hand, breaks away from this obscene conspiracy of three middle-aged men who, she thinks, are trying to subvert her reality.

Freud failed: he didn't get in touch with the underworld of the unconscious. Why not? Because he identified with Herr K. Freud, in

this famous analysis, was subject to counter-transference: he desired Dora too.

<http://www.massey.ac.nz/~alock/virtual/dora4.htm>

Freud and Dora: repressing an oppressed identity

By Michael Billig

Without doubt feminist re-analyses have succeeded in revealing aspects of the case which previously lay unnoticed. It is hard now not to see the behaviour of the males in the story as the problem, with Dora's symptoms as the effect. Dora tells Freud of the complex web of deception which has drawn her family close to the life of the K's. The two families often go on holiday together. Dora looks after the K's young children. She is particularly friendly with Frau K. The connections are not innocent. Her father, who has encouraged the closeness between the families, is having a protracted affair with Frau K, who is somewhat younger than himself. Herr K has been pursuing Dora since she was fourteen. On a couple of occasions, he grabs hold of her, trying to kiss her; one holiday he even tries to enter her bedroom while she sleeps. After an incident by a lake, when again he propositions her, Dora tells her father. However, her father accuses Dora of inventing the whole tale, suggesting that she is engaging in unhealthy sexual fantasies. Freud, for his part, accepts Dora's story. Yet he wonders why Dora claims to feel disgust, rather than sexual desire, when Herr K grabs her, pressing his erect phallus against her body. Freud

is of the opinion that Dora unconsciously desires Herr K. For good measure, he also claims that she desires Frau K. Dora denies both desires.