

Sigmund Freud and His Love of Dogs

Ernest Jones noted that it was uncommon for Jews of Freud's generation, in Europe, to have much contact with dogs. Some say it was because Jews saw dogs as dirty and others because Jews had been victimized by attack dogs in the hands of Europe's anti-Semites for years—for example, during the pogroms. But as mentioned earlier, in 1925 Freud bought as a gift for Anna a big, black male Alsatian to accompany her on her walks through the forest in the Semmering. His name was Wolf. For Freud's next birthday, May 6, 1926, Anna wrote a poem for her father, signed it "Wolf," and gave it to him along with a photograph of the dog. This poem was the first of many subsequent birthday poems "written by" Wolf.

In 1927 Wolf bit Ernest Jones, and Freud wrote Eitingon: "I had to punish him for that, but did so very reluctantly, for he—Jones—deserved it" (Molnar, 1992, p. 206). Freud's affection for dogs was not much different from his love for children. This does not belittle his love for children but rather illustrates the deep love and high regard he held for his dogs. That same year, he wrote to Jeanne Lampl-de Groot, "How is it that these little beings [children] are so delightful? For we have learnt all sorts of things about them that do not correspond to our ideals and must regard them as little animals, but of course animals too seem delightful to us and far more attractive than the complicated, multistoried adults. I am experiencing this now with our Wolf who has almost replaced the lost Heinerle" (Molnar, 1992, p. 213). Jones later wrote that Freud's fondness for dogs was "evidently a sublimation of his very great fondness for young children, which could no longer be gratified" (E. Jones, 1957, p. 141; Molnar, 1992, p. 67; Burlingham, 1989, p. 193).

In June 1928 Freud wrote to Eitingon of "a charming Chinese bitch, a chow, which is giving us much pleasure" (Gay, 1988, p. 540). Freud took to Lün Yug right away, but in August 1929 Eva Rosenfeld was accompanying Lün Yug from Berchtesgaden back to Vienna when the chow broke loose, ran away, and was run over by a train. Freud's pain was similar in quality, though not in as much intensity, to the loss of a child, an experience with which he was quite familiar (Heller, 1992, p.120; E. Jones, 1957, p. 141).

In September 1929 Anna wrote to Ernest Jones and said, "I would very much like us to have a new Lün. For the time being my father does not want to hear of it." Yet on November 11, Freud

noted in his log, “Adda given away,” and Michael Molnar speculates that “Adda” may well have been another animal that stayed only a short while in the Freud home. On November 25, Freud wrote, “Adda fetched.” Had the mysterious animal returned? It’s hard to say. But on December 30 Freud wrote, “Adda died” (Molnar, 1992, pp. 46, 48, 51).

In March 1930 Dorothy brought two red chows to Professor Freud—Jofi and Lün Yug II. Jofi (or *yofi*, which means “beautiful” in Hebrew) was Lün Yug’s sister and somehow related to Lün Yug II. But Jofi and Lün Yug II did not get along well. Lün Yug II was too nasty for Jofi and consequently was given to Helene and Felix Deutsch (Molnar, 1992, p. 215; Burlingham, 1989, p. 194). Three weeks after Jofi’s arrival, Freud wrote, “Jofi daily wins more fondness, she beds down in front of a door instead of making herself comfortable” (Molnar, 1992, p. 61). It is interesting to note what it is that wins Freud’s fondness—the renunciation of instinct, once again!

Beginning in 1926 it became a tradition for Anna to write a birthday poem for her father, sign it in the name of one of the dogs, and put it around the neck of the dog to deliver it to Freud with love. In 1930 they were in Tegel, away from their dogs, so Jofi’s poem was delivered attached to a pet tortoise (Molnar, 1992, p. 69). In a postscript to a letter written from Tegel, Freud wrote, “P.S. Is anybody at all visiting Jofi? I miss her a great deal. The tortoise is a poor substitute” (p. 61).

In 1931 Anna’s poem for her father’s seventy-fifth birthday was tied with a pink ribbon around the neck of one of the dogs and signed, “The union of quadrupeds—Wolf, Jofi, Tattoun” (p. 98). Tattoun was another of the Princess Marie Bonaparte’s chows. In August 1931, Freud wrote to Eitingon from one of his vacation spots, “Don’t laugh, but our dogs contribute a great deal to the pleasure of Pötzleinsdorf, and they keenly enjoy their freedom in the garden. My Jofi is a delightful creature, recuperation after most of the human visitors, her black son is a pleasant rogue. I can no longer imagine summer without these animals” (p. 106).

In September 1932 Siegfried Bernfeld wrote to his wife, Liesl, “Today I visited Anna F[reud]. Prof. charmingly amiable; spoke neither with nor about the dogs, but was very kind to me” (p. 128).

That December Anna would write that her father’s difficulty eating allowed Jofi the benefit of eating most of what had been on Freud’s plate (p. 137). In late January 1933, Jofi went to the

Kagran kennel for a rendezvous with a suitable and chosen chow. The meeting proved productive (p. 141).

On March 13, 1933, H. D. (Hilda Doolittle) wrote in her diary, "I feel limp and frustrated. I was annoyed at the end of my session as Yofi [Jofi] would wander about and I felt that the Professor was more interested in Yofi than he was in my story" (Doolittle, 1974, p. 162). The next day she wrote:

The Professor found me reading in the waiting room. He said that I must borrow any books of his that I wanted. We talked again of Yofi. I asked of Yofi's father. Yofi is to be a mother. He told me that Yofi's first husband was a black chow and Yofi had one black baby, "as black as the devil." It died when it was three-quarters of a year old. Now her new father is lion-gold and the Professor hopes that Yofi's children will survive this time. He said, if there are two puppies, the father's people have one, but if only one, "it stays a Freud." (p. 166)

On April 2, 1933, Ernst arrived from Berlin with Eva and Victor Rosenfeld. The next day Jofi gave birth to Fo and Tattoan. "Fo" means "Buddhism" in Chinese (Molnar, 1992, p. 171). Fo went off to some unknown fate (probably with the father's people!) while Tattoan, the black chow, became Tinky Burlingham's dog (Heller, 1992, p. 177). Freud commented that Jofi "had a dangerous delivery but is now well and proud of her two ratlike children" (Molnar, 1992, p. 145). A few months later he wrote that they were "almost as large as their mother, very high-spirited and get up to all sorts of tricks" (p. 145). Freud loved his dogs as anyone would. But as a Darwinian, he probably also paid attention to their behavior as determined by the evolution of their species and in accordance with their canine psychology and instinctual constitution.

In July 1933 Freud wrote to Hilda Doolittle: "There has been much commotion in the dog-state. Wolf had to be shipped off to Kagran, because both ladies were in heat, and the fierce antagonism between Jofi and Lün, which is rooted in the nature of women, resulted in good, gentle

Lün's being bitten by Jofi. Thus Lün, too, is at present in Kagran and her future is uncertain" (Doolittle, 1974, p. 191).

Freud kept his dog with him in the consulting room during analyses, and Anna did the same with Wolf. According to family legend, Freud always knew when psychoanalytic sessions were over, as Jofi, lying on the floor near the couch, would always get up at exactly the right time. Freud was also said to have used her to help him evaluate potential analysands. If she was suspicious of them or turned away from them, so the story goes, they were considered unsuitable for psychoanalysis (Freud Museum, 1998, pp. 39–40).

In 1991 the distinguished North American psychoanalyst Otto Will repeated a story he was told by his friend Roy Grinker Sr. regarding his analysis with Sigmund Freud:

Roy had gone back to work, I think a summer, with Freud. You know, to have two or three months' analysis with him. And he was on the couch, he said, and Freud was sitting there and Anna came and opened the door. She didn't know her father was with anybody. And she opened the door and was surprised to see her father there with a patient, and the dog jumped up and jumped on Anna, and Anna stumbled and Freud stood up and Anna fell down on top of the dog, and Freud stumbled and fell on top of the dog and Anna! And Roy said he just didn't know *what* came to mind! (Interview with Otto Will, December 18, 1991)

In Grinker's (1985) memoirs of his analysis with Freud, he recalled that it was difficult to express his hostility directly toward Freud, so he found ways to criticize him indirectly.

I could also scold the dog, which was definitely involved in my analysis, and in that way indirectly express my hostility to Freud. As a child I had been deathly afraid of dogs. Now Freud's dogs naturally got the full force of my fears and hatreds. When I rang the bell of the door which opened onto the waiting room that both the Professor and Anna utilized, there would be a horrendous barking from the other side. Paula, the maid, would open the door and a great big wolfhound would attack me with its snout at the same level as my genitalia. So I entered Freud's office with a high level of castration anxiety.

At one of the child psychiatric seminars that Anna held for the Americans, somehow or other that damn dog lay down next to my chair and started to bark. Anna said, “Dr. Grinker, he’s perfectly safe. Of course, when he was younger, he used to eviscerate sheep, and I couldn’t take him out. But now he’s perfectly safe; just pull his tail and he’ll stop barking.” Not me!

In Freud’s office there was also another dog, a Chinese chow named Jofi. Jofi would sit alongside the couch, and after a while get up and scratch at the door to be let out. The Professor would get up, let the dog out, and come back and say, “Jofi doesn’t approve of what you’re saying.” Then, after a while, the dog would scratch at the other side of the door, and the Professor would get up, open the door, and say, “Jofi wants to give you another chance.”

In this country, no candidate would continue for long under these conditions! Once when I was emoting with a great deal of vigor, the dog jumped on top of me, and Freud said, “You see, Jofi is so excited that you’ve been able to discover the source of your anxiety.” But I wasn’t paying the dog! (p. 9)

American psychiatrist Joseph Wortis (1954) recalled that during his analysis, Freud’s dog sat “quietly on his haunches at the foot of the bed” (p. 23). One day when Wortis spoke of his reluctance in leaving his wife in the States to study for a time in Europe, Freud commented, “There is an element of dependence in every relationship, even with a dog” (p. 23).

In mid-November 1934, Wortis and Freud were having another of their many rather painful discussions about their tense analytic relationship. Wortis was rather concrete and intellectual and Freud was blunt in his observations. At one point Wortis described a list of little difficulties he’d had during a two-month period the year before—things like social shyness and wanting to be liked. Freud listened attentively and then replied, “A person can have ideas like that once or twice, but there is no reason why he should think he is being put in the same class as a severe neurotic. That shows your tendency to think in abstractions again. I refer to the ideas as compulsive and immediately you take the big jump to the conclusion that you are classed as a neurotic.” Wortis then continued, “At this point Freud’s big chow was heard scratching on the door, and Freud rose, as he

often had before, to let the dog in. She settled on the carpet and began licking her private parts. Freud did not approve of this behavior, and tried to make her stop. ‘It’s just like psychoanalysis,’ he said” (pp. 75–76).

Anna Freud’s dog, Wolf, was the first to enter the Freud family and Freud referred to him as “an old gentleman.” In 1936 Wolf developed some medical problems and seems to have died that year or shortly thereafter (Molnar, 1992, p. 206).

On Freud’s eightieth birthday H. D. sent him a birthday greeting and in her letter mentioned Jofi. Freud responded, “I am sure Jofi is proud of being mentioned by you. Believe it or not, early on the sixth she came into my bedroom to show me her affection in her own fashion, something she has never done before or after. How does a little animal know when a birthday comes around?” (Doolittle, 1974, p. 193).

On December 12, 1936, Freud went into the hospital for another of his many operations. Afterward he wrote to Marie Bonaparte, “I wish you could have seen with me what sympathy Jofi shows me during these hellish days, as if she understood everything” (Molnar, 1992, p. 214). The appreciation of this wordless understanding between beings is a recurring theme in the Freud family. It is seen in the harmony between Freud and his dog, between Freud and Anna, between Anna and Dorothy, and Ernst spoke of it repeatedly between his grandmother and her sister Minna. He also saw it in the unique and often wordless relationship between mother and baby.

A month after Freud’s operation, Jofi went into the hospital for removal of two ovarian cysts. The operation appeared successful, but on January 14, 1937, Jofi died of heart failure and Freud wrote, “It is a highly curious feeling, she was always so taken for granted and suddenly she is no longer there. Apart from any mourning it is very unreal and one wonders when one will get used to it . . . But of course one cannot easily get over seven years of intimacy” (Molnar, 1992, p. 214).

The day after Jofi’s death Lün Yug II came back to Freud (Molnar, 1992, p. 213). Lün Yug II originally had been purchased by Dorothy and given to Freud in March 1930 along with Jofi. But when Lün Yug II proved too nasty for Jofi, she was given to Helene and Felix Deutsch. When the Deutschs immigrated to Boston, in 1934 or 1935, Lün Yug II went to live with the Burlinghams. After Jofi died, Lün Yug II was returned to the Freud home. Thus, while Freud found distasteful the

idea of replacing a lost loved one with a substitute, he quickly replaced Jofi with Lün Yug II, who even had the same name as his first chow. About Lün Yug II, or simply Lün, Freud wrote that she is “very intelligent, much more trusty and tender towards many people than Jofi was, is very pretty, though without the lion’s head she [Jofi] had” (Molnar, 1992, p. 215). And thus it was Lün who stood by Freud during his final days in Vienna.

Wolf (Wolfi)	1925–1936
LünYug (Lün)	1928–1928
Adda	Nov.– Dec. 1929
Jofi	March 1930–Jan. 1937
Jofi gave birth to Fo and Tattoan in 1933	
LünYug II (Lün)	In the Freud home from Jan. 1937