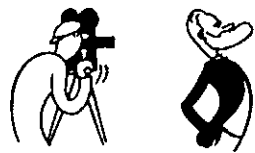


THE PICTURES TRANSFERENCE



A complete Sigmund Freud filmography might include, along with John Huston's "Freud" (1962), the Klaus Kinski vehicle "The Secret Diary of Sigmund Freud" (1984), and David Cronenberg's "A Dangerous Method" (due out this year), a home movie belonging to Lynne Lehrman Weiner, eighty-five, of White Plains. Weiner's film—fifty-five minutes of silent, 16-mm. footage taken by her father, a psychoanalyst and a patient of Freud's—shows Freud standing around, reading his mail, and playing with his Chow puppy. On a recent Sunday afternoon at Lexicon, a lounge on East Fifty-fourth Street, some seventy-five Freud enthusiasts gathered for a rare screening, described by the event's organizers, the Long Island Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies, as "Sigmund Freud, unbuttoned." Guests were greeted by a life-size cutout of Freud and platters of cheese cubes.

"I understand there's a lady here who, as a child, sat on Freud's knee?" an analyst named Karin Arlin said, referring to Weiner.

"Yeah, she's going to be doing the speaking," another analyst, Linda Peltz, said.

A third analyst, Steven Padnick, commented, "When I shook her hand, I felt like I was touching the great professor."

"There's a wish to just be close to Freud," Peltz said.

"He's our grandfather," Arlin said.

"He's like a founding father," Peltz said, "and so you have a lot of fantasies about him, a lot of feelings."

The partygoers made their way to a sunken dance floor, where rows of chairs sat under a motionless disco ball. A few of them parked wheeled walkers and motorized scooters around the perimeter.

Weiner, a petite, composed woman in a cream trouser suit, walked to the podium. "My claim to fame is that when I was a toddler I sat on Freud's lap," she said. "So my connection to him is strictly from the bottom up." She went on, "My husband loves the idea that I sat on

Freud's lap, because it gives him an intimacy with Freud enjoyed by very few."

Weiner explained that Freud resisted for eight years before accepting her father, Philip Lehrman, as an analysand. By that time, Weiner was two. Her mother, a singer, had wanted to leave New York to reunite with musician cousins in Austria, she said. "And so we set sail for Vienna for a year of music and psychoanalysis."

The film began. On the audio track, recorded in the fifties, Lehrman lists, in staccato spurts, the names of psychoanalysts who appear in flashes: austere men in suits on the streets of Vienna, Berlin, and Paris. After twenty-five minutes, there still had been no images of Freud. Lehrman explains, "He thought my desire to take a film of him was part of a compulsion and should be analyzed before we proceeded with the actual carrying out of the intention."

Finally, Freud appears. For the camera, he did quotidian things: opened an envelope, gazed out a window, strolled down the street with his daughter Anna. There were shots of Freud and Lehrman in the snow; shots of them in identical dress ("My identification with the professor grew, at least externally, so that I, too, acquired a fur coat"); and shots of Freud's mother ("Freud, who discovered the Oedipus, nevertheless every Sunday brought flowers to Mother"). Afterward, there was a question-and-answer period. Someone asked what Freud might have thought of modern psychoanalysis. "He probably would have questioned whether modern analysts could work with the stonewall of narcissism," an analyst named Rhoda Shapiro offered. "He to an extent suffered from a narcissistic defense that was not ever analyzed, because of his self-destructive behavior," Padnick said.

The discussion expanded to Freud's childhood. Michael Beck said, "One time, the young Freud had an accident in his parents' bedroom and his father said, 'You'll amount to nothing!' Another time, the mother took him to see a Gypsy. The Gypsy said, 'He'll do great things.' So I guess he got a lot of conflicting messages from his parents."

One woman noted that Freud's mother had lost a child before he was born. "She was quite depressed, and probably withdrawn and distant," she said. "And though he brought flowers to her every week, he did not go to her funeral.

Certainly, there was considerable ambivalence about the maternal figure."

Gerald Fishbein noted Freud's penchant for shopping. "He accumulated more than two thousand pieces of sculpture and art," he said. "Another sign of an oral-anal personality."

"Were those his transitional objects?" someone asked.

When the session was over, people crowded around the bar. "Freud seemed sort of fun-loving," Beck said. "He kind of got into the mood of the thing."

A woman with a gray bob was skeptical: "To see him compulsively smoking, that was upsetting."

At a table in the back, the topic was Anna Freud. "I loved seeing his relationship with his daughter," an analyst named Paula McNabb said. "You could see the warmth between them." Suzanne Krause, a psychotherapist, was doubtful. "I actually was struck that he didn't take her arm," she said. "She wanted to put her arm in his, and I think he moved apart from her."

On the way out, an analyst named Evelyn Liegner seemed unsatisfied. "There was no touching at all upon his vengeance, his envy, his grandiosity, his possessiveness," she said. "I would have loved to have had him as my patient."

—Abby Aguirre