

Unpublished

## **Alfred L. Kroeber: San Francisco's First Psychoanalyst**

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San Francisco's first psychoanalyst was an anthropologist. Alfred Louis Kroeber was born on June 11, 1876, not in Vienna or Berlin or Zurich, but in Hoboken, New Jersey. He was the oldest of four children born to Florence (his father) and Johanna Kroeber. Florence, born in Cologne Germany, came to the United States when he was ten years old while Johanna, also of German descent, was born in this country. Nonetheless, when the two of them created a family of their own, German was the language spoken in the home. While Alfred never forgot his German, in later life he only spoke it to accommodate a German colleague whose English was insufficient.

Florence Kroeber's work in the import business was successful enough for him to provide his family with servants and to educate his children with tutors and private schools. The family was Protestant but religion was relatively unimportant to them. Alfred Kroeber went to Colombia College in 1892 at the age of 16. He graduated with a degree in English in 1896 and completed his master's degree in the same subject in 1897 with a thesis on the English heroic play.

He then began taking courses in anthropology, psychology history and philosophy. He actually began studying psychology before getting into anthropology, and minored in psychology for his doctorate in anthropology. He studied psychology under James McKean Cattell. Cattell was famous for his tests of mental processes and his important administrative roles in the founding of American psychology. Kroeber also took a seminar in North American Indian linguistics led by Franz Boas. Franz Boas was a giant in American anthropology who, it will be recalled, attended Sigmund Freud's 1909 Clark University lectures. Cattell was also at those lectures and the two of them are depicted in the now famous group photo commemorating those lectures. In 1899 Kroeber's first two anthropology papers were published. They were on Eskimo folklore. The next year he studied the Arapaho in Oklahoma and in 1901 he received his doctorate in anthropology after writing a 28-page dissertation on the decorative symbolism of the Arapaho. He was 25 years old.

In 1900, Kroeber was appointed Curator of Anthropology at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco and began launching field expeditions to tribal communities around the state. He was at the Academy for only a year before being invited to be an

Instructor of Anthropology at the University of California by then President Benjamin Ide Wheeler. At Berkeley he pursued his research on the California Indians. In addition to fieldwork and teaching at Berkeley, he was also responsible for the University of California Museum of Anthropology housed on Parnassus Heights next to the University of California Medical School in San Francisco.

Kroeber married Henriette Rothschild in June of 1906 only two months after San Francisco's famous and devastating earthquake. The San Francisco Chronicle announcement of their marriage concluded with the following statement. "The wedding was entirely unexpected, as no announcement had been made of the engagement." (May 24, 1906) This may say something of the wish for privacy that this already very public man sought. Henriette went on expeditions with her husband to collect folk tales and some of these were published under her name. The newly weds seem to have had two good years together before Henriette developed tuberculosis in 1908. There then followed a series of long troubling stays in sanatoriums followed by intermittent returns to the Bay Area.

Kroeber was a prolific writer and by 1911 he had already written over 80 professional articles on topics from basket designs to linguistics to mythology and folk-lore to cultural descriptions and archeology. And then something truly extraordinary happened. In late August 1911 a man - a Native Californian - who had been living alone for years in the Mills Creek wilds of Northern California, walked out of his traditional Native American life and into the white man's world. He was picked up by the Oroville sheriff and put in a jail cell as he didn't speak English and the sheriff didn't know what else to do with him. It was front-page news the next day. When Kroeber read the news, he confirmed the report with the sheriff and sent his colleague Professor Thomas Waterman to go bring this man to the Bay Area.

The man was a Yana Indian who had been living alone for years after everyone in his community had either been massacred by white settlers or had succumbed to disease. He never told his name but was referred to simply as "Ishi" - which means "man" or "one of the people" in his native language. Ishi's story captivated the imagination of people near and far. No longer a threat that needed to be exterminated, Ishi was romanticized in the press as "a very simple, unspoiled and uneducated child of nature" "a brown skinned cross between Sir Walter Raleigh and Charlemagne." (Stellman, 1912).

Ishi was brought to San Francisco where Sam Batwee became his translator and Kroeber and Waterman and Saxton Pope, head of surgery at the Medical School, became his good friends. From Ishi, Saxton Pope learned how to shoot the Yana bow and arrow. Pope then went on to study other types of bows, wrote several monographs about them and began

the renaissance in archery that turned it into the sport that it is today in this country. Mrs. Phoebe A. Hearst, who provided substantial support to Kroeber and the Museum, stepped forward again to provide additional funds for Ishi to live permanently, in a furnished room in the Museum itself!

On Sunday afternoons Kroeber would introduce Ishi to visitors and Ishi would shake hands with them, sing Yana songs, make arrowheads or start a fire with a fire drill. He and Kroeber learned each other's languages and became close personal friends.

Henriette's tuberculosis persisted and then Alfred Kroeber developed an ear infection with the accompanying symptoms of vertigo, nausea, buzzing in the head, headaches, and impaired hearing in the left ear. Because the onset of symptoms was associated with stress and exhaustion, and their reduction associated with vacation, he was diagnosed with neurasthenia.

In 1913 Henriette died of tuberculosis. Lost in sorrow, Kroeber sought refuge in his work and found comfort in his friendship with Ishi and his colleagues. In the spring of 1914 Ishi, Kroeber, Waterman and Pope went into the foothills of Mount Lassen and for a month, lived like Yana Indians fishing with harpoons and nets, hunting with bows and arrows, digging for roots and picking fruit. Ishi had no immunity to the many diseases of the white man and he frequently caught colds after his exposure to them. Sometimes his colds turned into pneumonia.

In the spring of 1915, Kroeber began a sabbatical year by spending a summer among the Zuni, in the Southwest. In September he went to New York and in August sailed off to Europe. In Europe he visited family and went to the centers of culture and learning in Holland, Germany, England and Austria. He spent some weeks in Vienna where he visited the psychoanalytic group. We don't know if Kroeber ever met Freud face to face but he had already been reading Freud and there was some sort of correspondence between the two of them. Unfortunately, no letters from this correspondence remain. Kroeber found his visit with the Viennese analysts exciting and refreshing. He described Freud and Boas as similar in that they were almost the same age, looked alike, and had the same Jewish intellectual background. Furthermore they had "daemonic drives, large capacities and ultimate limitations." (Kroeber, Theodora. 1970, p. 102) In February, Kroeber returned to Washington and the Smithsonian Institute. In March he received word from his friend and colleague, Edward Gifford, that Ishi had died of tuberculosis.

Kroeber returned to the Bay Area, taught another year and took another sabbatical. The deaths of his wife and Ishi, the pattern of strenuous overwork and the symptoms associated with his ear infection came together as a motivation for this sabbatical. He

went to New York in the autumn of 1917 and began work at the Natural History Museum, where he wrote his book *History of the People of the Philippines* (1919), but the driving reason for the sabbatical at this time and specifically in New York was that Alfred Kroeber wanted to be psychoanalyzed.

At forty years of age Kroeber had suffered the loss of his first wife, the death of his friend Ishi, and the problems with his ear. He was working extremely hard and finding less satisfaction in it. He was becoming exhausted. Before going to New York he submitted, to the Smithsonian Institution, his classic 995 page *Handbook of the Indians of California*. Kroeber liked the psychoanalytic interest in prehistory, tribal peoples, mythology and folklore as well as its openness to the "primitive" impulses in modern peoples. But at this point Kroeber was suffering. His interest was no longer simply intellectual. He wanted an analysis.

He began his analysis with Dr. Smith Ely Jelliffe. Kroeber and Jelliffe were familiar with each other through correspondence and they had both read each other's work. Consequently their meetings remained stimulating but their dialogue was more scholarly than analytic. After a few sessions they terminated their therapeutic relation, which had apparently never gotten off the ground, and Jelliffe referred Kroeber to his son-in-law, Dr. Gregory Stragnell (1888-1963).

In Kroeber's biography, written by his second wife, Theodora Kroeber, she states that Stragnell was from Vienna and "trained, I think by Anna Freud." (Theodora Kroeber, 1970, p.102). Though I have been unable to track down **Stragnell's** origins, it seems unlikely that he would have studied with Anna Freud as she was only twenty-two in 1917 and was not a member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society until 1922. In addition to his analytic work, Stragnell was also an associate editor of *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease: An Educational Journal of Neuropsychiatry*. Kroeber was in analysis with Stragnell for nine or ten months. While the analysis was useful it turned out that his problems related to his ear were the result of Meniere's Syndrome, the symptoms of which disappeared after he became totally deaf in one ear. Of the analysis Theodora Kroeber wrote:

“He once told me that the analytic period had been for him a serene and absorbingly interesting one; that perhaps he had felt just enough urgency and pressure to give himself wholly to it without being so seriously disturbed as to inhibit him from reaching complete dream participation and positive response to the dreams and to the analyst. “There may be an optimal degree of need for getting the best results” was his speculation. When I asked him what he "got" from analysis, not over-all or intellectually or theoretically, but in immediate,

concrete return, he answered half in fun but only half, "I got over my *Sturm und Drang* which had overtaken me twenty years late. I learned not to be so solemn." (Theodora Kroeber, 1970, p.104)

Following his analysis, Kroeber returned to teaching and research at U.C. Berkeley but his interest in psychoanalysis continued. The year was 1918 and it was in this year that Kroeber published his first psychological paper. It was a book review of two of Carl Gustav Jung's books - *Collected papers in Analytical Psychology*, edited by Constance E. Long (1916) and *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, translated by Beatrice M. Hinkle (1916). *The Psychology of the Unconscious* is known as *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* in the original Swiss edition. This book, which was subsequently revised, was retitled, in English, *Symbols of Transformation*. When it originally came out in 1912, it stood as Jung's declaration of his own unique view as well as his break from Freud, which was finalized in 1914. This was also the book from which Freud received his stimulus to write his own *Totem and Taboo* (1913). Perhaps without knowing of the Freud-Jung split, Kroeber writes:

"...if the psychoanalysts are right, nearly all ethnology and culture history are waste of effort, except in so far as they contribute new raw materials. If, on the other hand, current anthropological methods and the psycho-biological assumptions underlying them are correct, the phylogenetic theories of Jung and his collaborators are only a mistaken excrescence on their sounder work. Mutual understanding will not progress as long as the two tendencies go their conflicting ways in ignorance of each other." (Kroeber, 1918. p.324)

In this last passage we see Kroeber attempting to establish a dialogue between psychoanalysis and anthropology both of which were ostensibly interested in the same material but ignorant of, if not hostile to one another. Kroeber was intensely aware of the animosity of his colleagues in anthropology in response to his interest in psychoanalysis and he was equally frustrated with the unscholarly approach to anthropology that the psychoanalysts were taking. Kroeber concludes his review with the following sentence;

"For those whose patriotic sensibilities are keen, it may be remarked that while Jung writes in German, he is a Swiss and head of the Zurich school." (Kroeber, 1918. p.324)

A year and a half after his analysis, Kroeber was once again in New York and called up his former analyst Dr. Stragnell. They talked. The voice was familiar but the specialness and urgency had dissipated. The transference had dissolved.

In 1918, Kroeber started the first psychoanalytic clinic-based practice in the Bay Area. While continuing his anthropological research and teaching he began seeing patients two days a week at the Stanford Clinic where Drs. Saxton Pope, Henry Harris and soon others referred patients to him. He was successful beyond his expectations with his neurotic patients but not so with his psychotic patients. The Stanford Clinic, it should be noted, was, at that time, in the Pacific Heights neighborhood in San Francisco. It was part of the Stanford Hospital, which was located where California Pacific Medical Center is today. He practiced from 1918 into the summer of 1919.

In these early years Kroeber kept up a lively correspondence with his friend and colleague in Ottawa Canada, Edward Sapir. Sapir, Kroeber and a handful of others were giants in the field of anthropology in their day and their contributions were of such significance that their names and their work continue to be cited regularly in modern anthropological studies. Edward Sapir's (1884-1939) most significant contributions were in the field of linguistics but he was interested and involved in psychology. He was even a friend of Harry Stack Sullivan. Sullivan, who founded the Interpersonal school of psychoanalysis, was co-editor of *Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Relations*. When Sapir died, Sullivan wrote an obituary about him and published it in *Psychiatry*. It was Sapir who so eloquently introduced the notion that the experience of reality was a function of the language one used to describe it.

"Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society...the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group...We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation." (Sapir, 1941)

This notion was further elaborated by Sapir's student Benjamin Lee Whorf and their work together became known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis which is currently enjoying a renaissance in Bay Area psychoanalysis with all the interest in the Lacanian school and its emphasis on the relationships between the structure of the mind, the structure of the patient's language and the structure of the analytic dialogue.

In the correspondence between Kroeber and Sapir there are frequent references to Paul Radin. Radin was an anthropologist who specialized in the nature and origin of "primitive" religion. He had a teaching position at Mills College in Oakland. His work on the mythological figure of the trickster has been frequently referenced by Jungian authors and his *Winnebago Hero Cycles: A Study in Aboriginal Literature* is an important

reference in Joseph Henderson's *Thresholds of Initiation*. On August 17, 1919 I Kroeber wrote to Sapir:

"I don't know about being a mother to Paul, but I said when I took him on that herewith I became governess. And he isn't so much a spoiled child as a constitutional neurotic. And you know as well as anyone that a neurosis is only repressed and accentuated, not cured, by bullying. He will of course never overcome his very far, but he can be fitted usefully into society and be made rather happy by gentleness and tactful steering. I think the net effect of his paper will be all to the good." (Golla, 1984, p. 306)

And then in the same letter:

"For variety and as a mental discipline I have just put in several days on Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (the old *Imago* essays in English,) the result of which is going to the *Anthropologist*." (Golla, 1984, p. 308)

On August 31, 1919 Kroeber sent Sapir a short piece of fiction and wrote:

"I should particularly appreciate anything on the underlying psychology -- not of the story but of the author." (Golla, 1984, p. 309)

And then at some point in the early summer of 1920 Kroeber sent an undated announcement to Sapir:

"A.L. Kroeber Ph.D. has opened an office for the practice of psychoanalysis in the Physician's Building 516 Sutter Street San Francisco.  
Telephone Garfield 1352                      Hours by appointment"  
(Golla, 1984, p. 342)

With this announcement the first private practice in psychoanalysis was established in San Francisco. But Sapir did not respond promptly and this caused Kroeber some concern. On July 14, 1920 Kroeber wrote again to Sapir:

"Why are you silent on the notice of my new undertaking? You are the one man in the profession that I can count on not to take the event either as a slap or as a morsel of gossip. I wonder whether you have met Ernest Jones, or if he left Toronto before your interest in the subject grew." (Golla, 1984, p. 343)

Later in the same letter Kroeber wrote:

"I may add that I've been analyzed and have had some clinical experience but that I believe it is open to doubt whether this community is ripe for psychoanalysis." (Golla, 1984, p. 344)

It wasn't until October 4, 1920 that Sapir responded:

"I wish you every possible good luck in your psychoanalysis. I met Ogburn and Corey in New York. They're full of it. I'm now reading Bjerre's horribly translated book. Can you recommend something good in that line? I am sincerely interested and want to hear of your progress in your new field. I have no doubt you will make a brilliant success of it, though still a little gaping at your courage. I may as well confess that I have some notion of a certain limitation in your temperament that may impede you in your practice, but I am just as likely as not to be all wrong." (Golla, 1984, p. 351)

On January 19, 1921 Kroeber wrote:

"I haven't much to tell about psychoanalysis. Private practice remains almost nominal. My friends of course, keep away. The medical men with whom I have come in touch give me more recognition than I expected but of course don't send patients. The educated public is still much more suspicious of the subject than in the East, and doesn't know of me to any extent. And the uneducated want healing, spiritualism, direct stimulation by insistence, suggestions how to be successful. It will take time -- possibly more time than I have. This has always struck me as significant: my first and to date best patient was a New Yorker."

"The clinical work is fascinating, in spite of its difficulty, and I get as much of it as I can handle. There isn't much to be hoped for in the way of cures, as you might imagine, though I have one definite improvement of a long-standing hysteria and am hopeful of a couple of other cases. I get variety of experience: epilepsies and hypo-psychoses in with neuroses. They all illuminate mechanism and technique."

"My impression is growing that I began too conservatively and cautiously. Freud's theorizing tricks irritate me as intensely as ever, but he certainly is an astounding observer. He has a preternatural eye for significant minutiae. On any concrete point I believe he is almost infallible. Brill, by the way, has a little of that: in spite of his fast orthodoxy. Ernest Jones is the best writer in English. Freud's greatest book I hold to be his little *Three Contributions to Sexual Theory*; though his late



*General Introduction* is much profounder than it seems. I rather liked Bjerre. He keeps his head better than most of them."

"On the psychological side as distinct from the medical, I think symbolism interests me most. It really seems to be more nearly "fixed" than any critical mind would at first credit. I am getting some nice cases from patients whom I carefully keep ignorant, so as to preclude the possibility of suggestion. One can't of course disguise to them the presence of the sexual factor and be sincere in treatment, but I try to pile up long series of dreams before I give any interpretation. It's fascinating to watch the symbolism grow bolder and clearer each week." (Golla, 1984, p. 363-364)

By June of 1921 Kroeber's letters take on a new quality as he begins to desperately advise Sapir on diagnosis and treatment approaches for Sapir's wife who has begun having manic-depressive episodes. In late June, Kroeber responds to Sapir's question about the value of Kroeber's therapeutic/training analysis with Stragnell.

"You asked me recently what I got from being analyzed. It's hard to say. I have felt clearer, surer, readier to accept the inevitability of reality cheerfully ever since. How far the analysis did it, and how far other experiences, such as the outlet of the new undertaking of practice, I don't know. There is nothing very specific I can point to as an effect. But then there was nothing very specific that was wrong. All I know is that I'm glad I had it. If you feel the need insistently, you almost certainly have the need. If you're rather indifferent or merely curious, treatment would probably be rather sterile. That's what I tell prospective but doubting patients." (Golla, 1984, p. 374)

Kroeber felt he had helped most of his patients and had "cured" a few but was basically disappointed and dissatisfied with the modest yet realistic expectations one may have of an analysis.

After two years of private practice in psychoanalysis and continuing to direct the museum, Kroeber felt the need to decide one way or the other. Would he devote himself fully to psychoanalysis or fully to anthropology? In 1923 he saw the limitations of a practice as a lay analyst and decided to close his practice and devote himself fully to anthropology. Kroeber didn't like the harsh approach to the termination, which was popular in that day. The human relatedness of the clinical dialogue had been particularly important to him and when some of his patient's had difficulty with the termination he continued to see them for a time in an informal fashion outside the clinical consulting room. One patient continued to see him for the rest of his life and became a friend.

Nonetheless, he closed his office, packed up his couch and chairs and stashed them away in the museum.

"At the end of three years I felt I had acquired many new insights into the human mind, or as we have now renamed it, personality. I did not feel that these insights helped me appreciably to understand culture any better; which was one of the reasons I quit psychoanalysis - fearing the split of trying permanently to carry two professions that seemed irreconcilable. I mention these biographical details in order to substantiate that my negativism toward "culture-and-personality" is the result of disillusionment rather than of prejudgment." (Kroeber, 1952, p. 300)

Five years after closing his office, he added a study onto his house and saw to it that an outside door from the garden be put in so that a patient could enter and leave without walking through the house. He said, "This door is for a patient in case I sometime take another patient." (Theodora Kroeber, 1979, p.109) He never did. He sometimes received referrals and was tempted to take them but turned them down, nonetheless the door remained available until the 1950s when the door space was filled in with bookshelves.

Nineteen-twenty had marked the opening of Kroeber's private practice but it was also the year he published his important critique on Freud's *Totem and Taboo: Resemblances between the Psychic Life of Savages and Neurotics*. Kroeber's paper was entitled *Totem and Taboo: An Ethnologic Psychoanalysis* and was published in the *American Anthropologist*. In this critique, Kroeber calls the attention of his anthropological colleagues to Freud's interesting speculations about prehistory and their parallels to the psychic life of children and neurotics. He summarizes Freud's position, and quotes Freud's thesis "that the beginnings of religion, ethics, society, and art meet in the Oedipus complex." He then lists ten points illustrating the faulty nature of Freud's assumptions and speculations. They are scholarly and devastating.

Kroeber attacks the way Freud universalizes totemism and the associated impulses of men to kill their father and have sexual relations with their mother, or some other incestuously forbidden woman in the clan. He attacks Freud's speculations (based on Darwin's and Atkinson's speculations) about prehistoric events and social organization for which there is no record and no data. In doing so, Kroeber left the pieces of Freud's quilt pulled apart at their speculative seams and scattered across the bed. Points four and five in Kroeber's critique exemplify this.

"Fourth, coming to the Freudian theory proper, it is only conjecture that the sons would kill, let alone devour, the father.

Fifth, the fact that a child sometimes displaces its father-hatred upon an animal - we are not told in what percentage of cases - is no proof that the sons did so." (Kroeber, 1920, p.50)

One of the more curious and confounding aspects of human experience and psychoanalytic insight is the curious relation between the literal and the figurative. We see over and over again how the metaphors of dreams, fantasies and primary process thinking become the actual realities of symptoms, interpersonal conflict and life events. If Freud had had a still richer appreciation for the role of language in the structure of the psyche and the structure of culture I suspect he would have been able to avoid many of his quaint reconstructions of prehistory and in their place introduce the notion of patricide and incest as metaphors of psychic reality which only sometimes are acted out literally. When Freud's *Totem and Taboo* is read as a time machine account of prehistory it collapses under the weight of archeological and anthropological scholarship and critical thinking. When it is read as a metaphor of psychic structure and socialization, it not only illuminates the features that Freud intended it to, but it also helps us to see Kroeber's critique, as the kind of "patricide" everyone must make in order to carve out a little piece of the world for him/herself. It's a way of saying, "I'm playing ball with the big boys." or "The king is dead, long live the king." Patricide in this sense is not simply a hostile attack but a loving challenge, a cannibalistic incorporation and a transformation. Kroeber finds Freud to be worthy of a critique. He takes him on, takes him in and by qualifying Freud's assertions Kroeber transforms Freud into something more palatable for other anthropologists.

But perhaps Kroeber became anxious about the effectiveness of his critique and concerned about reprisals, of the scholarly and/or intrapsychic type, because he then says:

"Lest this criticism be construed as unnecessarily harsh upon a gallant and stimulating adventurer into ethnology, let it be added that it applies with equal stricture upon the majority of ethnologists from whom Freud has drawn on account of the renown interest of their books: Reinach, Wundt, Spencer and Gillen, Lang, Robertson Smith, Durkheim and his school, Keane, Spencer, Avebury; and his special vademecum Frazier." (Kroeber, 1920, p. 52)

In other words, lest this murder of the father be construed as unnecessarily harsh, let it be added that I killed all his friends too! Kroeber's critique is effective. He's fighting on his own territory and he knows it well. It is as though each time he tries to pay homage to his slain victim he delivers another deathblow. He seems to treat Freud similarly to the way that Freud described the remorseful patricidal sons in *Totem and Taboo* where he

discusses *The Treatment of Enemies* and speaks of the need to appease the slain enemy. Kroeber continued:

"But, with all the essential failure of its finally avowed purpose, the book is an important and valuable contribution." (Kroeber, 1920, p. 53)

Kroeber then went on to acknowledge several points that he agrees with including the important correspondences between taboo customs and compulsion neuroses. These views were subsequently restated and amplified somewhat in Kroeber's book *Anthropology: Race, Language, Culture, Psychology, Prehistory* (1923, p. 616-621)

Following Freud's death in 1939, Kroeber wrote a follow-up article entitled *Totem and Taboo in Retrospect* for a special edition of *The American Journal of Sociology* devoted entirely to the influence of Freud's work. This edition included articles by Havelock Ellis, A.A. Brill, Smith Ely Jelliffe, Gregory Zilboorg, Karen Horney, Fritz Wittels and others. In Kroeber's contribution he wrote:

"Freud's explanations of cultural origins waver between being historic and being psychological in character. As history they remain wholly unfounded, but they may prove to contain elements contributing to understanding of the generic human psychology underlying the history of human culture, especially its recurrent or repetitive features"

"I see no reason to waver over my critical analysis of Freud's book....But I found myself somewhat conscience-stricken when, perhaps a decade later, I listened to a student in Sapir's seminar in Chicago making his report on *Totem and Taboo*, who, like myself, first spread out its gossamer texture and then laboriously tore it to shreds. It is a procedure too suggestive of breaking a butterfly on the wheel. An iridescent fantasy deserves a more delicate touch even in the act of demonstration of its unreality." (Kroeber, 1939, p. 446)

Is Kroeber paying his respects or seeking appeasement? He continues:

"It is difficult to say how far he (Freud) realized his vacillation between historic truth and abstract truth expressed through intuitive imagination." (Kroeber, 1939, p. 447)

It appears that what Kroeber is referring to here as "abstract truth" is possibly related to what we refer to today as "narrative truth." (Spence, 1982) Dismissing the historical authenticity of Freud's reconstruction, Kroeber suggests that the value of this

reconstruction may be in what it tells us about the psychology of the individual which serves as a substratum of social institutions like totemism and taboo.

Kroeber then went on to further refine his previous critiques and state directly his appreciation for the creativity of Freud's mind and many of the concepts he'd introduced including repression, regression, infantile fixations, dream symbolism and so on.

It is noteworthy that two other Bay Area anthropologists with international reputations also leveled similar critiques at Freud's *Totem and Taboo*. They were Robert Lowie, in 1920, and Paul Radin, in 1929. (Wallace, 1983)

Finally, we have Freud's critique of Kroeber's critique conveyed by Kroeber himself. In the 1939 article he noted:

"Freud himself has said of my review that it characterized his book as a Just So story. It is a felicitous phrase, coming from himself. Many a tale by Kipling or Andersen contains a profound psychological truth. One does not need therefore to cite and try it in the stern court of evidential confrontation." (Kroeber, 1939, p. 446)

Some consider Kroeber's psychoanalytic work as incidental, barely worth mentioning and others suggest that he had to repudiate it for political reasons at the University but it seems there is little basis for either view. He was personally interested in psychoanalysis, professionally interested in it, he wrote about it, traveled to Vienna to meet with its proponents, was analyzed, practiced for a time and continued to be interested in its developments throughout his life. "Anthropology was his public profession; psychoanalysis an intensely private and emotional experience." (Theodora Kroeber, 1970, p.112)

Between the publication dates of Kroeber's two articles on *Totem and Taboo*, in 1920 and 1939, he continued his anthropological research and writing, re-married at the age of 50 and began raising a family. Kroeber was married on March 26, 1926 after a discreet relationship with a widowed former pupil, Mrs. Theodora K. Brown. News of this marriage was just as surprising to those around them as was Alfred Kroeber's first marriage. Theodora Brown had attended U.C. Berkeley and earned her master's degree in anthropology in 1920. She was 29 years old and a widow with two children - Clifton Jr., aged 5, and Theodore, aged 3. Soon after her marriage to Alfred Kroeber two more children were added to the Kroeber family - Karl and Ursula. They made a home in Berkeley in a house at 1325 Arch Street built by Bernard Maybeck. In 1930 they bought an old farmhouse on forty acres in the Napa Valley, which they used as a retreat.

In the late 1920s Kroeber joined forces with Jean Macfarlane and Edward Chase Tolman - two professors in the Psychology Department at U.C. Berkeley. Together they taught joint seminars in anthropology and psychology.

In 1930 Dr. Joseph Thompson came to town. Thompson was a Naval surgeon who had been trained in psychoanalysis at the Washington-Baltimore Institute. He and Kroeber had been childhood friends in Hoboken New Jersey. When I had the pleasure of meeting Thompson's heir-apparent, a lay-analyst named Mr. Aaron Morafka, we talked for hours and on one visit he gave me boxes full of old psychoanalytic memorabilia - articles, letters, and other miscellaneous documents. Among these papers was a reprint of *Totem and Taboo: An Ethnologic Psychoanalysis* given to Thompson by Kroeber. Now, Thompson, you must understand, was famous for his many cats, among other things, and as fate would have it, this particular reprint is completely unusable as the pages have been cemented shut as a result of being appropriated and soaked in cat urine by one of Thompson's more scholarly kitty-cats. Nonetheless, the cover is in good shape and after 75 years it no longer smells too bad (but I still keep it in a clear plastic envelope). This reprint was also accompanied by an article by G. Elliot Smith entitled *Freud's Speculations in Ethnology* (1923) and a letter from Kroeber to Thompson. The letter says:

"June 22, 1931

Dear Joe:

Herewith a pleasant memory from the past that bobbed up the other day when I was clearing out and which I thought might interest you.

I also found some 30 or 40 pamphlets along medical, psychological, and analytical lines. A few of them may interest you. Next time you are over I wish you would look through them and pick out anything you might care for.

Intersession is over and I am packing for the country.

As ever

A.L.K."

What is particularly delightful about this note is that it is written on Kroeber's psychoanalytic stationary, which was apparently still around the house some eight years after he'd closed his practice.

When the émigré analysts began arriving from Europe Kroeber had some contact with them. He joined Siegfried Bernfeld's psychoanalytic study group and met with Erik Erikson when he came to teach at U.C. Berkeley in 1939. Erikson, who had a long standing interest in Native Americans, was interested in the relationship between the

person and society and had already done research on Sioux Indian education. Kroeber had developed relationships with the Yurok Native Americans in Northern California many years earlier and continued to have good relations with them. He took Erikson up north along the Klamath River where he introduced him to the Yurok and Karok Indians. Erikson's findings were published in the University of California Publications in American Archeological Ethnology under the title *Observations on the Yurok: Childhood and World Image* (1943). This article was subsequently reworked into a chapter entitled *Fisherman Along a Salmon River* in Erikson's classic book *Childhood and Society* (1950).

George Devereux did his doctoral dissertation under Kroeber and went on to do important psychoanalytically informed anthropological work. Kroeber was also quite close to Clyde Kluckhohn, who, like Kroeber, was one of those rare psychoanalytically informed anthropologists who had also been psychoanalyzed (Wallace, 1983, pp. 150-151). Kluckhohn is said to have influenced Kroeber significantly in developing his view of culture through the lens of psychoanalysis. Kluckhohn and Henry Murray co-edited the 1949 landmark book *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*. It includes articles by anthropologists such as Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and Jules Henry and articles by analysts such as Franz Alexander, Erik Erikson, Erich Fromm, R. Nevitt Sanford, and Robert Waelder.

Kroeber also had some sort of contact with Gordon Allport and Abraham Maslow. In 1955-56 Kroeber spent the year as a Fellow at the Center for the Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. Frieda Fromm-Reichman was there at the same time. Though she was trained and analyzed by Freud himself she was a freer thinker than the other analysts Kroeber had met. She agreed with Kroeber that the couch was not essential. Kroeber had not been "on the couch" in his own analysis and some of his patients had also preferred to talk to him face to face across his desk. Her dedication and very human approach to her patient's suffering had appealed to him. And her feelings are well expressed in the following note:

"Stanford, California  
May, 1956

My dear Alfred:

I have tried to convey to you in person how much the personal contact with you and Theodora during this year at the Center has contributed to the beauty of the year for me. I love to add in writing how much your wise remarks in our seminars

and workshops meant to me from a human and from a scientific viewpoint, and how much stimulation I have received from getting to know some of your work. June 11, the day when we fellows take the privilege to express our devotion and gratitude to you is a great holiday for us.

Frieda  
Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann"

June 11th 1956 was, of course, Kroeber's eightieth birthday.

In 1960 Kroeber, then 84 years old, chaired a symposium entitled *Anthropological Horizons*, which had been launched by the Wenner-Gren Foundation. It was held in Eastern Austria. Alfred and Theodora flew to Paris and then went on to Vienna. There they met Paul Fejos of the Foundation and drove together to Burg Wartenstein, an 11th century castle with a view of the Semmering Pass. In addition to Kroeber and Fejos the other participants were James Ackerman, Ignacio Bernal, Rushton Coulborn, John Dodds, C. von Fürer Haimendorf, Dell Hymes, Claude Lévi-Straus, D.G. Macrae, Wilhelm Milke, Herbert Muller, Edward Shills, Milton Singer, and Eric Wolf. Those unable to attend were Julian Huxley who was in Moscow, Clyde Kluckhohn who had died suddenly, Robert Oppenheimer who was a friend of the Kroebers and was in Japan at the time and Carl Jung who had to decline do to failing health.

After the symposium the Kroebers returned to Vienna where they visited the Kunsthistorische Museum, the cathedral, and the little shops. They enjoyed wandering around through the back streets and sitting in the sidewalk cafes. And in the evenings they went to the opera or the ballet followed by dinners. Then they went off to Paris to continue their vacation but on October 4, 1960 Alfred L. Kroeber died of a heart attack in his hotel room with Theodora at his side.

The story I have told is accurate and is based on the data I have gathered from a number of different sources, but it is in some ways a distortion of the man's life. I have told the story of Alfred L. Kroeber, the psychoanalyst, and while his psychoanalytic work was important to him, it was in fact a very small part of an enormous life as an internationally known giant in anthropology. Omitted from this story are most of his 532 publications, his directorship of the Robert Lowie Museum, his 45 year active teaching career, his additional visiting professorships, his honorary doctorates, his various professional honors, his field studies in California, New Mexico, Mexico, South America, and Southern and Eastern Asia - not to mention his roles as father, husband and friend. There is even the story of his courageous court testimony on behalf of the Native Californians whom he said were pressured or strong-armed into giving up their land. For a richer



appreciation of this extraordinary man's life I refer the reader to the sources listed in the references and will especially call the reader's attention to Theodora Kroeber's affectionate biography - *Alfred Kroeber: A Personal Configuration* (1970).

I think we will understand Kroeber's relation to psychoanalysis better when we appreciate Freud's relation to anthropology. As we have seen, Freud's interest in anthropology is reflected in his book on *Totem and Taboo* but he picked up the theme again and again in other works such as *Overview of the Transference Neuroses* (1915), *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939). It was further reflected in his lifelong hobby of collecting antiquities of Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Asian origin. In Suzanne Cassirer Bernfeld's article *Freud and Archeology* (1951) she describes the personal motivations for Freud's interest in antiquities and the parallels between archeology, Freud's personal history and his psychoanalytic method, which allowed him to become something of an "excavator" of the mind.

The great names in the history of anthropology who were either psychoanalytically oriented or considered it seriously include Géza Róheim, Alfred L. Kroeber, Robert Lowie, Paul Radin, Margaret Mead, Edward Sapir, Clyde Kluckhohn, Weston LaBarre, and George Devereux. Furthermore collaborations between psychoanalysts and anthropologists took place between Abraham Kardiner and Ralph Linton, L. Bryce Boyer and Ruth M. Boyer, and other teams. A good summary of the relationship between these two fields can be found in L. Bryce Boyer's article, *Anthropology and Psychoanalysis* (1977).

L. Bryce Boyer, a San Francisco trained psychoanalyst with an international reputation for both his work with patients in regressed states and his anthropological studies, was married to his anthropologist collaborator, Ruth M. Boyer. In his articles *Anthropology and Psychoanalysis* (1977) and *On Aspects of the Mutual Influences of Anthropology and Psychoanalysis* (1979) Boyer says that Boas, Lowie, Kroeber, Mead and Sapir were the five people most responsible for shaping the average American anthropologist's view of psychoanalysis in the early part of this century. While Boas had attended Freud's Clark University lectures in 1909, his influence on American anthropologist's relation to psychoanalysis was a negative one. He steered them away from it. Kroeber, Mead and Sapir, on the other hand, were deeply interested in applied psychoanalysis. So as you can see, Alfred L. Kroeber, San Francisco's first psychoanalyst, played an even more significant role in psychoanalysis than his pioneering five years of clinical practice would suggest. He was an expedition leader into the uncharted territory between anthropology and psychoanalysis.

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