

Review: The World of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalysts. Selected Papers of Arnold Richards, Vol. 5 IPBooks.

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*Dayenu!* Is a familiar Passover song at the end of the Seder, translating as “Enough,” as in had God only brought us out of Egypt, “*Dayenu*”; had he parted the Red Sea, *Dayenu*; had he given us the Torah, *Dayenu*.” Arnold Richards first essay in this book, “Dreams and the Wish for Immortality,” brings to mind “*Dayenu*.” Had he written only this essay, it would be enough. But, like the Passover jingle, he has written thoughtful, critical book reviews and made poignant remarks about his first psychoanalytic home, The New York Psychoanalytic Institute, that we offer repeated “*Dayenus*.”

The first essay adds a wish to Freud’s list of wishes in dreams: the wish for immortality (or at least, longevity). Richards also modifies Freud’s distinction between wish fulfilling dreams versus trauma dreams; that the distinction is not so discrete. Richards reminds us that dreams are about desire and its dangers. He reminds us of Freud’s metapsychological assertions about dreams: 1. Psychic determinism; 2. Unconscious exists; 3. Manifest and latent content; 4. Its sleep-preserving function, among others. And of psychoanalysis? It is a science of motivation.

Like Freud, Richards documents his discovery of dream’s wish for longevity/immortality with his own dreams. Only by twelve years old, do children develop understanding of four principles of death: it’s irreversible, universal, functional and has causality.

Freud chose as his epigraph, “Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo,” which Strachey translated as “If I cannot bend the higher powers, then I shall move the

Infernal Regions.” from Virgil. We are reminded of another story from Virgil. Aeneas, before he is “permitted” to discover his new home of Rome, goes to the underworld and visits his recently deceased father. They embrace. We can speculate: in shaking the underworld, is Freud also shaking his father back to life, the father whose death precipitated Freud’s preoccupation with dreams and its discoveries? And *this* psychoanalyst, Richards, we learn becomes a book lover, a book publisher, a book seller, as his father once was in Revolutionary Soviet Union. We will recall that Freud’s epigraph from Virgil was spoken by Juno, that mother goddess (also cuckolded by Zeus, her husband). She says this for she will intervene in Aeneas’s actions, correct him as he is about to enter the netherworld. If we can then speculate, it is the union of mother god and father that results in Freud’s great discovery of dreams in his netherworld. And, as Aeneas brings his father briefly back to life before he can continue his life’s journey, so too, Richards demonstrates that our dreams include the wish for longevity, immortality. Freud’s patient, the father who dreams of his dead son calling to him to extinguish a fire: Freud understood the “wish” here is to at least for moments of a dream, the father’s wish to bring his son back to life. Richards offers multiple examples of his own dreams’ Lazarus moments, reviving beloved friends and colleagues.

In this same essay, Richards alludes to his vicissitudes with his (once- and perhaps still-)beloved New York Psychoanalytic Institute. He enters the recently renovated building (or is it cathedral) on East 82d Street, next to the restaurant where Richard’s recently deceased friend and colleague Richard Gottlieb would entertain NYPSI speakers (and where Gottlieb offered the restaurateur his prime mutton from his sheep in Western Massachusetts). He muses (and later dreams) that he wished he could be

young again to have an office in the now-renovated building, mingle with candidates and colleagues; turn back the clock (the wish0 to a time when he was thriving and before ehe was extruded for his strong opinions about Training analyses, for instance. It is a moment of writing that is personal, vulnerable and moving.