

FREUD IN ISTANBUL

Turkish Contributions to Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis

Edited by
Salman Akhtar



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To

VAMİK VOLKAN

in gratitude

IŞIL AND SİMAVİ VAHİP

in friendship

CEMİLE GÜRDAL

in generativity

and

MÜGE ALKAN

in love

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Culture and Psychoanalysis (Yapı Kredi Publishing, 2018), and the editor of numerous volumes from the Emerging Issues in Psychoanalysis series published by Ithaki including *Bensizbiz/ Iyouus* (2002, edited volume); *Kadınlık, Yeniden/Femininity, Again* (2003, edited volume); *Neden Psikanaliz/Pourquoi une Psychanalyse?* (Roger Perron, 2003); and *Çocukluk Çağının Sıcığında/Au Vie de l'Infantile* (Florence Guignard, 2010). She is also the editor of the Turkish translation of M. Klein's *Love, Guilt and Reparation* (Kanat Publishing, 2008). Since 1996, her articles and interviews have been published in journals such as *Cogito, Defter, Tarih ve Toplum*, and *Doğu-Batı*. She has also contributed to edited volumes: *Yüzyılın Psikanalizi/The Century's Psychoanalysis, Freud Konuşmaları/Freud Lectures, Cinsiyetli Olmak/Being Gendered, Tuhaflik ve Yaratıcılık/Strangeness and Creativity* (Yapı Kredi Publishing, 1996, 2008, 2007, and 2024). In addition, she has published a number of papers in prestigious psychoanalytic journals including *Revue Française de Psychanalyse* and the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. She maintains a private practice of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in İstanbul.

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Introduction

Most books owe their origin to “sources from above” and to “sources from below,” to extrapolate Freud’s dictum about dreams. This book is no exception. Among its “sources from above” is my long-term interest in the dialectics between the internal world and external reality and the specific hues and flourishes of it in a given culture. This intellectual bent was fomented by my training in psychoanalysis as a “minority candidate” (I was the only Indian in my psychoanalytic institute and, to the best of my knowledge at that time, the only Indian candidate in the entire American Psychoanalytic Association) and later found expression in my books on immigration (1999, 2011) as well as my edited volumes on the people and culture of India (2005), Australia and New Zealand (with M. T. Hooke, 2007), the Muslim world (2008), China, Japan, and Korea (2010), and upon African Americans (2012b) and Hispanic Americans (with S. M. Bertoglia, 2015). Putting together *Freud in Istanbul* was thus an expected and logical step in my search for a genuinely anthropological psychoanalysis.

Now allow me to say a few things about the emotional origins or the “sources from below” of this book. Born in British Imperial India and raised in the newly independent, but tragically partitioned, nation as a member of a religious minority, I grew up sensitized to cultural differences, discrimination, and prejudice, the sustaining value of linguistic ancestry and festive rituals, and the evolution of amalgamated and hybrid identities. My immigration to the United States, during my late twenties, furthered such awareness, both on the conscious and the unconscious levels. In my newly adopted country, I encountered Professor Vamik Volkan, a Washington-based psychoanalyst and a prolific writer of Cypriot Turkish origin. A supervisor–supervisee relationship (1974–1979) grew into a long-term mentorship by him and then settled into a deep, ongoing friendship, though without the compromise of the generational difference between us. In 1999, he arranged for me to give a talk at a psychotherapy

workshop sponsored by the Halime Odağ Foundation in İzmir, Turkey. There I met not only its founder, Celal Odağ (1931–2021), a patrician, dignified, and generous Turkish man who had trained in intensive psychotherapy in Germany, but also a number of fellow professionals who became my lifelong friends: prominent among them were Fisun Akdeniz, Gülgün Alptekin, Ayhan Eğrilmez, and Işıl and Simavi Vahip. Somewhat later I made acquaintance with the eminent members of *Psike* (the IPA recognized psychoanalytic group in İstanbul) including Yavuz Erten, and Ayla Yazıcı. I then started visiting Turkey often, becoming a “regular” at the educational conferences at the Odağ Foundation. I also supervised the work of a blossoming analytic candidate, Cemile Gürdal, and this put me in touch with the subjectivity of the younger generation of Turkish professionals.

Imbued with the beneficence of my seniors, the camaraderie of my peers, and tenderness for those who are much younger than me, I fell in love not only with Turkey as an inexhaustible font of history, poetry, political intrigue, and cultural admixture, but also with a refined Turkish woman of supple intellect and kind disposition. Now my life partner, Dr. Müge Alkan was a psychotherapist who had a great interest helping patients with bipolar disorder and who had translated a few of my books. The love between us became yet another “source from below” for editing this volume on psychoanalysis in Turkey.

The book is divided into four sections that deal, respectively, with the history of psychoanalysis in Turkey, child development patterns and family structure as these impact upon epigenetic psychic unfolding matters of Turkish culture-at-large, and clinical issues and challenges faced by Turkish psychotherapists and psychoanalysts. The first section is titled Historical backdrop, and has three chapters, each of which approaches the arrival, development, and blossoming of psychoanalysis in Turkey from a novel perspective. The second section, Developmental observations, consists of four chapters, dealing with the psychology of mothers, fathers, siblings, and the adolescence phase in Turkey. The third section, named Cultural studies, has three chapters, which address the complexities and nuances of identity formation, nostalgic rumination, massive trauma, and female aggression in the context of Turkish society at large. The fourth section pertains to technical issues and is titled Clinical reports. It consists of seven chapters dealing with matters as diverse as grief, spirituality in the context of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, tenacious maternal transferences and the handling of amorphous nonverbal material in the clinical session, to name a few.

Three other comments about the contributors and the material included in this book seem warranted. First, while the book is intended to be psychoanalytic in its thrust and focus, not all its contributors are analysts; many belong to other fields including psychology, sociology, psychiatry, and cultural anthropology. Second, while all contributors (except the book’s editor) are of Turkish origin, their “distance” from the native country varies; some reside in practice in Turkey, while others represent the nation’s diasporic population. Finally, the level of clinical and academic experience of various contributors is also different. Some, especially T. Byram Karasu, Talat Parman, and Vamık Volkan, are established figures and prolific authors, with numerous publications to their credit; each of them has made profoundly

significant contributions to our field and each of them has either founded or been the chief editor of a major journal of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. Other contributors are relatively fresh to such academic discourse. In this context, therefore, representing such academic giants to the extent that they actually deserve became impossible. For this, I can only express regret and hope that the readers will independently pursue these authors' important works.

Before closing, I must mention a few prominent individuals, whose creative output and service to the cause of Turkish psychotherapy and psychoanalysis I was not able to include in this book. Some of them are psychoanalysts, others psychotherapists. Many are associated with IPA while others are not. Some reside and work within Turkey while others represent the diaspora spread over the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, and other countries. The contributions they have made vary in nature and scope, ranging from teaching, administrative activities, academic writing, community outreach, and, of course, clinical practice. Prominent among this group of individuals are the following. *Within Turkey itself*: Elda Abrevaya, Nesim Bitram, Banu Büyükkal, Levent Kayaalp, Ali Algin Köşkdere, Ayça Gürdal Küey, Serra Müderrisoğlu, Stella Ovadia, Mine Özmen, and Tefrika İkiz Tunaboğlu. *Representing the Turkish diaspora*: Berrak Cigeroğlu, Piyale Cömert, İlknur Girgin, Taner Güvenir, Yaprak Harrison, Ilgın Odağ, Özen Odağ, Fatema Sevinç, and Sumru Tüfekcioğlu.

All this having been put on the table, allow me to conclude this brief introduction by saying that the book in your hands, *Freud in İstanbul*, seeks to place Turkish contributions to our theory and practice on the international psychoanalytic stage from which it has been curiously absent. The extent to which its effort has been successful is for the readers of this book to decide, be they from other regions of the world or from Turkey itself.