

No, Yes, Dora: A Student's Perspective

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'My expectations were by no means disappointed when this explanation of mine was met by Dora with a most emphatic negative. The "No" uttered by a patient after a repressed thought that has been presented to his conscious perception for the first time does no more than register the existence of a repression and its severity; it acts, as it were, as a gauge of the repression's strength. If this "No", instead of being regarded as the expression of an impartial judgement (of which, indeed, the patient is incapable), is ignored, and if work is continued, the first evidence soon begins to appear that in such a case "No" signifies the desires "Yes"'. (Freud, 1905:SE12:58-59).

Dora says NO!
and Freud says YES!

Sometimes "No" means No, according to the feminist dogma that's been in my past, but Freud says "No" indicates a hidden and secret Yes! As a new student of psychoanalysis I have begun to examine my own no's! I measure my world now against Freud's revolution of thought and I've had to shift my unrevolutionary thinking from No to Yes!

There's a lot of no's out there about Freud; Todd Dufresne wrote a great big hysterical No! Entitled *Killing Freud* (Dufresne, 2003.). I've heard psychologists shred Freud to bits and in the same breath use his theories to build all sorts of structures up which aren't really all that different to Freud's. As a feminist scholar I read a lot of No's about Freud, and believed them without ever having allowed Freud's Yes! to address the argument – how unfair!

Joseph Wortis (Wortis, 1975, c1954.) said that Freud once said to a patient that an analysis is no a place for polite exchanges; I came to study Freud because the No's! I'd believed suddenly all seemed to hide something. A "Yes!" seemed to insist through the veils, and I guess the unconscious "Yes!" in me needed expression.

Dora holds me in thrall – I read her and reread her and every time she changes; maybe my initial resistance, my repression is coming to surface and I desire to know her Yes! All her no's, but Freud takes her and tries to find the Yes! in her. Dora's disgust, the no's! that hide all the yes's! It may not have been the Yes that Freud describes, but I can see some Yes's in her nevertheless. Freud was trying to find her Yes! to life. Did he succeed? We have the results of his efforts, and he and Dora are permanently locked together – Yes and No – a whole of some sort. (I would like to say perfect, but I don't think I mean it in that way.)

Dora says No! to men – feminists love her. Dora's body and her words try to say the unsayable, the hysteric's discourse, which is a search for the yes! She says Yes! to the unsayable, Yes! to the fact that it exists. Freud says Yes! to the unconscious. Here they both say Yes! It can be done!

Dora wants to know – she wants to know she is right about her beloved, betraying father, she wants to know her love, she wants to know what it means to be a woman (I suspect we all want to know what this means!) She wants the Yes! And so does Freud, her analyst. Both of them searching for yes's all over the place. Both of them pointing the way to what's hidden beneath the polite exchanges that suffuse our lives. Sometimes a No! does mean a Yes!

For your information (since it *is* his birthday); Freud's astrological configuration is Sun in Taurus, Moon in Gemini and Ascendant in Leo; A stable, methodical, earthy character who communicates in an extraordinary manner and yet needs all the attention to be on him, who demands the lion's share of admiration!!!

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