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Foreword to *Topsy*  
by Marie Bonaparte

[1980]

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Political events such as wars, overthrows of governments, and social revolutions not only determine on a large scale the fate of nations and individuals; they also intervene, as side effects, as it were, in long-established occurrences and bring what had been deemed unalterable customs to a sudden end.

The inhabitants of Berggasse in the ninth district of Vienna had for decades been accustomed to see doctors and scientists from foreign countries appear and disappear. They somehow understood that this was connected with the professor who lived in their street and from whom

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Written in German for the new edition of *Topsy: Die Geschichte eines goldhaarigen Chows*, translated into German by Anna and Sigmund Freud in 1938. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1981. It is here published in English for the first time.

apparently something new could be learned. What this was was of little concern to them. What impressed them far more was the regularity of these coming and goings, a punctuality that could be relied on with greater certainty than their clocks. It was this routine, by then a matter-of-course, which, like many other things, came to an end with Hitler's march into Vienna. With the appearance of a swastika and a National Socialist flag at the door of number 19, the foreigners disappeared and, like a flock of startled birds, returned by the next planes to the countries of their origin.

For Freud, the disappearance of his analysands meant a period in which he unaccustomedly found himself without work. Walks or drives through the streets of Vienna were in view of the new uncertainties not advisable. The threatening times and the questionable future were not conducive to scientific work; and plans were still too unsettled to prepare for emigration. In this state of loneliness and irresolution it was easier to revert to an old occupation, the work of translation, which had played a role at the beginning of his scientific career. Freud was a gifted translator, who could effortlessly read off a page of a foreign-language text in German, without having to search, like others, for the correct words and sentence structure. Moreover, a French author was present — Marie Bonaparte, whom Freud was only too eager to do a favor in gratitude for her unflagging helpfulness. A text presented itself: Marie Bonaparte's book on her dog.

Today we may assume that it was not only the person of the author but, above all, the topic of the book which influenced Freud's choice. What at that time, perhaps as

never before, made for disappointment were people. Even the destruction of illusions during the First World War could not measure up to the impressions of unrelenting brutality and blind lust for destruction which no one could escape. Instinctual manifestations which, according to Freud, should have been banished to the unconscious and warded off by the higher agencies of the personality, suddenly emerged, unleashed and unrestricted in their search for gratification. In these circumstances it became easier to look away from one's fellowmen and turn to animals.

Freud's interest in the world of dogs was a late acquisition. It began in the twenties of this century as a relationship, built on mutual respect, with a large, not undangerous Alsatian dog that for more than ten years had shared the life of the family. This relationship deepened and grew more tender, in the affectionate care for his own animal which had been procured for him in Paris. Yo-Fie, a female Chow, in bearing and appearance not unlike a little lion, soon became his daily companion, accompanied him on excursions, patiently participated in all analytic hours, sat next to him at mealtimes. After the tragic loss of Yo-Fie, Lun-Yu, a Chinese dog of the same race, assumed the same role and later also accompanied him in the emigration. What Freud valued in his dogs was their gracefulness, devotion, and fidelity; what he frequently stressed and praised as a decided advantage over men was the absence of any ambivalence. "Dogs," as he used to say, "love their friends and bite their enemies, in contrast to men who are incapable of pure love and must at all times mix love and hate in their object relations."

Marie Bonaparte's love for her Chow was evident in

*Topsy*, a feeling that apparently touched a responsive chord in Freud. The work of translation he devoted to the book should at the same time be regarded as part of the gratitude and indebtedness which he endeavored to repay to Yo-Fie and Lun-Yu for many years of friendship.