



# **Freud and the Dora Case: A Promise Betrayed (The History of Psychoanalysis Series)**

*Cesare Romano*

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# Freud and the Dora Case: A Promise Betrayed (The History of Psychoanalysis Series)

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Cesare Romano revisits Dora's clinical case in light of Freud's own seduction theory. His central thesis is that Freud failed to follow through with his initial proposition of confirming his theories on the traumatic aetiology of hysteria. He also suggests a new dating for the duration of Dora's therapy, placing the beginning of the analysis within the context of Freud's concurrent and recent life events. A detailed analysis of Dora's first dream shows that Freud did not go back to Dora's first infantile traumas, but stopped instead at the period of her infantile masturbation. In analysing this dream, Romano's theory begins to take shape around the idea that Dora suffered an early trauma: possibly, a sexual abuse inflicted by her father. Drawing on Ferenczi, the author uses the notion of the 'traumatolytic function of the dream' to show that Dora, through her two dreams, was elaborating her early sexual trauma. Dora's analysis is investigated alongside what was happening in Freud's life at the time of the therapy. It was a time of upheaval, including the breaking off of his friendship and transference relationship with Fliess, and the erotically nuanced relationship with his sister-in-law Minna. Romano demonstrates how these real-life events and the experiences they entailed reflect on Dora's therapy, modulating Freud's countertransference.

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