

no one who calls himself a serious historian of psychoanalysis can afford not to be acquainted with the impact of *On Aphasia* for later psychoanalytic thought. Greenberg's book is, for now, the consummate reference on this subject.

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ON FREUD'S COUCH

Seven New Interpretations of Freud's Case Histories

edited by *Irène Matthis* and *Imre Szecsyödy*

translated by Sheila Smith

Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1998, xvii + 267 pp., \$50.00

Reviewed by Alexander Stein, M.S.Sc.

On Freud's Couch is a new English language translation of a compendium of essays, originally published in Sweden in 1994, in which six Swedish psychoanalysts offer their renditions of seven of Freud's famous case treatments from 1888 to 1914. The essays derive from a series of lectures on Freud's cases given in Stockholm in 1991 that had been initiated by the Swedish Psychoanalytical Society following its 1991 symposium on

Psychoanalysis in Cultural Life, subsequently published in Swedish as *Psychoanalys och Kultur*. Iréne Matthis, a training analyst, supervisor, and teacher at the Swedish Psychoanalytic Institute, and one of the coeditors, is the author of the preface to the original Swedish edition as well as two of the case histories—"Frau Emmy: From Catharsis to Psychoanalysis" and "Miss Lucy: One Hundred Years of Hysteria." Matthis's coeditor, Imre Szecsödy, a past director of the Swedish Psychoanalytic Institute, former president of the Swedish Psychoanalytical Society, and currently an associate professor of psychiatry at Karolinska Institutet, provides the preface to the English edition and contributes an extensive exegesis, "Dora: Freud's Pygmalion or the Unrecovered Patient of a Famous Analyst?" The remaining chapters are "Little Hans: The Dramaturgy of Phobia" by Johan Norman; "Horror at Pleasure of His Own of which he Himself is Not Aware: The Case of the Rat Man" by Rolf Künstlicher; "Senatspräsident Schreber, or Reading Insanity" by Lars Sjögren; and "Where the Horsetails Grow as High as Palms: The Case of the Wolfman" by Andrzej Werbert.

The cases of Emmy, Lucy, Dora, Little Hans, the Rat Man, Judge Schreber, and the Wolfman have an importance for psychoanalysts and historians of psychoanalysis analogous to the early Beethoven sonatas and string quartets for musicians and musicologists. Those works are a delight to spend time with and are also enriching as nearly limitless founts for discovery and exploration of, among other things, unfolding creative genius. While Beethoven's scores, however, are invariably treated as generally sacrosanct no matter how unorthodox any given performer's interpretation might be, Freud's texts are less likely to be accorded a similar respect. All too often, with regard to the writings of Freud, and in particular the case treatments where Freud the clinician is most vulnerable to critical comparisons in the light of the latest trends in clinical practice, it seems the word "interpretation" is itself misinterpreted or misapplied, and is extended euphemistically or as a pretext for some form of idolatry or, more frequently, vilification or revisionism.

There is an overall unevenness to this book—not simply attributable to its multiple authorship. The anthology’s preface announces a straightforward premise—“to allow an interested public to gain insight into the extremely special working conditions of the analyst and his or her personal way of fashioning ideas and opinions from his or her cases” (p. xv)—as well as a grand ambition—“to re-experience and restructure the history of Freud and his cases, comparable to what happens within the boundaries of the analytic situation where the individual’s history is narrated, re-experienced and restructured so that it acquires new meaning and regains old meanings that were lost” (pp. xi–xii). The course of this hermeneutic, and paradigmatically postmodern, venture is plotted by a question: “Are these ‘new’ meanings uncovered by the analyst or does the analyst inadvertently provide meanings?” (p. xii). Szecsödy is to be credited for allowing that there can be no singular reply, but he and his colleagues become mired in a host of difficulties in wrestling with the question. The six authors appear to engage with their assigned texts, to varying degrees, under the tacit assumption that there is, unquestionably, “new” meaning waiting to be uncovered. By this, I certainly do not imply that there is nothing new to be learned; on the contrary. But, as Szecsödy’s question suggests, methodology and perspective will bear on one’s relationship to whatever meaning an inquiry may yield. It is one thing to glean fresh understanding from thoughtful re-engagement with a familiar work; it is quite another to attempt to forcibly extract “new” meaning through epistemological incursion. It is this latter course generally taken, and it is the structural/conceptual fault from which the book suffers most.

The underlying *raison d’être* of this collection of lectures is to trace the complex progression from the proposition of a set of theories through their establishment within a viable framework for clinical practice. Matthis takes this up immediately by situating the four cases of hysteria dating from between 1888 and 1893 and memorialized in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) coauthored with Breuer. She considers these works as constituting “the prehistory of psychoanalysis” inasmuch as they predate the “invention” of what

would later be codified as the psycho-analytical method. Matthis writes, “[T]his circumstance, however, makes them more interesting from our point of view since we are going to attempt to shed light on the transition from catharsis to psychoanalysis” (p. 2). She explicates the historical particularities, first with regard to Frau Emmy and then in chapter 2 with Miss Lucy, such that their place and importance as components of a transitional process are clear. Given the obvious but oft overlooked fact that something can be properly considered “transitional” only in retrospect, it is thus an exemplar of good history writing. It is also representative of what the worthwhile portions of this book can contribute to educating a wider audience in the history of psychoanalysis.

Matthis all too quickly abdicates her position as historian, however, to take on the role of defender of the women about whom Freud is writing, asserting that “their significance for Freud as the creator of psychoanalysis has been underestimated” (p. 4). Matthis appears to view this theoretically formative time more in the nature of a collaboration between Freud, whose “creative intellectual achievement,” she writes, “lies in his conceptualization of their words and expressions, nervous coughs and half-smothered screams” (p. 5), and his female patients. There can, or should, be little doubt at this late date that feminist readings (and not only) of Freudian theory or psychoanalytic thought in general are of immeasurable importance. As with the psychoanalytic process itself, it is not by constricting or omitting certain avenues of inquiry that insight is acquired, but rather the opposite. But such is not the case in the instance of an inquiry undertaken with a secondary purpose, as here, apparently, to oppose and attempt to redress the objectionable gender prejudice in, as Matthis writes, “the theory [which becomes] the law of sexual difference, written by the pen belonging to a position of authority and power” (p. 49).

To write about the case of Dora is to traverse a path not merely well-trodden, but veritably trampled. Particularly when composing in the shadow of such dazzling treatises as are contained in *In Dora's Case* (Bernheimer & Kahane, 1985), a trove of perspicacious and original thought, Szecsödy's task is indeed daunting. His os-

tensible goal, “to try to reflect how Freud has presented Dora’s story, how he has made her incomplete history into the history of psychoanalysis and has made her story into a story of the central role of childhood sexuality in the origin of the hysterical neurosis” (p. 58) is, however, never achieved. He writes, “to a great extent my reflection will be a grid on which I choose and partly distort the case history in line with my own assessments and experiences. I will, however, retain the possibility of letting Freud—at least partly—own his history” (p. 58)! There follows a pedestrian recitation of the case, culminating in the presentation of ersatz process notes that purport to recount a fictional supervision session in which Freud plays Szecsödy’s supervisee.

Johan Norman’s chapter on Little Hans presents this familiar and much-interpreted case from a novel perspective. He commences with an exploration of the man Little Hans grew to become, Herbert Graf, an opera director with the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and then muses on the extant biographical information in reverse with reference to and in the context of Freud’s analysis of Herbert Graf, the boy, also known as Little Hans. Norman’s discussion of the young Graf’s childhood phobia in relation to his later professional work is fascinating. But the strength of Norman’s otherwise sophisticated meditation in that vein is eventually diminished by the inclusion of a section that, in effect, largely attributes Little Hans’s difficulties in negotiating the vicissitudes of childhood sexuality to lamentably bad parenting. While hypothesizing the ontogenesis of Hans’s fantasies of sexuality in relation to his parents is certainly a constructive path of inquiry, I found Norman’s excursus ultimately unpersuasive. The centrality of Hans’s parents in their son’s pathology and, especially the father’s function within the analysis, are of course crucial elements to exploring the contours of this case. Norman’s address of this tends to emphasize the manifest material, stressing empirical links of cause and effect, as if to suggest that, if only Frau Graf had fully answered her son’s insistent questions about widdlers and where babies come from, that would have been the end of the story.

Most successful is Künstlicher's chapter on the Rat Man, which, while critical of many of Freud's clinical as well as editorial decisions, at least does not implicitly or explicitly denigrate him for his transgressions; it is more investigative journalism than a polemic. Künstlicher endeavors to illuminate the complexity of this case and to educate his readers in some of its more obscure historical details. This is achieved through a close textual reading of the case juxtaposed with a comparative analysis of Freud's unpublished notes, the interposition of which enables Künstlicher to question certain of Freud's theoretical and clinical conclusions.

Of all the chapters in this book, Lars Sjögren's brief presentation on the case of Judge Schreber is the most straightforward. There is relatively little in the way of "interpretation;" it is primarily a synopsis of salient biographical information about Schreber and of Freud's treatment of Schreber's book. Sjögren's main thrust flows from the question, "How can a book be a case if a case history relates a meeting between two people?" (p. 164). He implies but does not actually enter into the debate surrounding the distinctions and similarities between clinical and applied psychoanalysis. But perhaps appropriately enough given that he considers this case to be an analysis of a text, not a man, and thus more properly catalogued with Freud's papers on da Vinci and Jensen's *Gradiva*, Sjögren spends considerable time engaging with the texts of other authors who have written extensively on Schreber, most notably Zvi Lothane's *In Defense of Schreber: Soul Murder and Psychiatry* (1992), regarded as one of the most comprehensive contributions to the Schreber literature.

The final chapter is Andrzej Werbert's 64-page, 2-part exploration of Freud's 1918 essay, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis"—the case of Sergej Konstantinovich Pankejev, the Wolfman. Werbert makes clear his intention "not to present a new discussion of the case, still one more re-interpretation, or to present sensational new revelations...[but] to provide an orientation to some of the pivotal themes of psychoanalysis as they were formulated by Freud" (p. 187). He provides an exhaustive accounting of the case, opining along the way but really offering clarification

more than interpretation. I found his writing style a bit too breezy, and occasionally patronizing. But these are minor and superficial quibbles, especially in comparison to how intrusively the majority of his colleagues deliver their reinterpretations.

It is not entirely clear to me for what audience *On Freud's Couch* is designed. There is a good bit of interesting historical material, but because these are such subjective readings, it seems poorly suited as an introductory work. And I believe those who open this volume with at least some prior knowledge seeking to be invigorated by fresh insights will, notwithstanding moments of unencumbered merit, ultimately find themselves feeling unsatisfied.

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FREUD AND THE LEGACY OF MOSES

by *Richard J. Bernstein*

New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, xii + 151 pp., \$59.95; \$18.95 paper

Reviewed by Richard A. Friedman, Ph.D.

Richard J. Bernstein's *Freud and the Legacy of Moses* is a major contribution to the rapidly growing literature on Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* and on Freud's Jewishness. Bernstein starts from a passage in Freud's introduction to the Hebrew edition of *Totem and Taboo*: "If the question were put to him [Freud]: 'since you have abandoned [observant Judaism, knowledge of the Hebrew language, and Jewish nationalism], what is there left to you that is Jewish?' He would reply: 'A very great deal and probably its very essence'" (p. 1). Bernstein takes on the task of demonstrating that the essence of Judaism as Freud understood it is in the pages of

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