

## Book Reviews

that data from the Lamarckian phrenologist H. C. Watson, rationalizing this on the grounds that Watson had uncovered transcendently true facts that were now free for the taking (p. 180). This, indeed, is rich material on the plight of the “outsider” in a professionalizing culture.

Adrian Desmond

JEFFREY M. MASSON, *The assault on truth. Freud's suppression of the seduction theory*, New York, Farrar, Straus & Giroux; London, Faber, 1984, 8vo, pp. 308, £9.96.

Nothing sells books like scandals. The spate of biographies and autobiographies of the Watergate culprits would be proof enough of this. But here we have a scandal in the academy. The chosen heir of the Freud Archives goes public (in the *New York Times*, no less) and claims that Freud was a fraud. Jeffrey Masson's struggle with the Freud Archives and the psychoanalytic establishment's rejection of him and his views on Freud have coloured every review of this book. It is the scandal about Masson, not the book, which has been reviewed. I come to this book with mixed feelings. On the one hand, I doubt the “truth” of *The assault on truth*; on the other, as a philologist turned medical historian, I am in great sympathy with Masson, a philologist turned medical historian.

Let me begin with what is evidently wrong with the book. Masson's thesis is, quite simply, that Freud turned away from the seduction theory for the aetiology of neurosis (a theory which Masson implies is valid) because of his transference with his friend Wilhelm Fliess. Fliess' incompetence had led to a near fatality in the treatment of one of Freud's patients. Freud wished to dismiss this and was forced to see the error in the patient's response. This pattern, once established, dominated Freud's perception of his patients' illnesses and led him to reject all “reality” as the source of neurosis and substitute “imagination”.

Masson's case is, as many commentators have pointed out, weak. First, Freud never rejected sexual abuse of children as a “reality”. As late as the 1920s, he commented on a case of sexual abuse in order to differentiate it from the fantasies of sexuality omnipresent in childhood. Freud's knowledge of such abuse, to which Masson devotes a chapter, was never in question. He, like all medical practitioners, knew the general medical and legal literature on child abuse. The legal literature was usually summarized in the back of most medical textbooks! That Freud attempted to shield Fliess is without doubt true, and here is where the material in the book is interesting. Max Schur began the unravelling of the background to the key dreams in the *Traumdeutung* in an often-quoted piece in the Hartmann *Festschrift*. Masson continues this and provides much detailed information. His chapter on Emma Eckstein is a valuable addendum to Schur. But is his interpretation right?

Schur and Masson are valuable precisely because no one else has had access to the manuscript material. We will have to rely on this interpretation until the German originals (not Masson's translation) appear. At that point we shall be able to stop reading the Freud-Fliess relationship as penitence through the interpretations of scholars with axes to grind. Here the Freud Archives have done themselves, as well as the history of medicine, a disservice. Either close the material or open it! Stop playing games with favourites, either in regard to the Marie Bonaparte material or the Freud material. Let qualified scholars use it, so that each forms a check on the others, or let no one use it and some lucky scholar born about now will uncover it long after our deaths, like the Boswell papers, hidden in the loft of the Library of Congress.

Masson's book has a specific thesis. But many scholars will mine it for quotes and innuendoes in spite of the thesis because Masson, at least, had access to the material. Masson's book is not good history of science. It is not Sulloway or Ellenberger. But it will be used. In spite of my own sympathy with Masson as a philologist turned historian I am not convinced by his argument. Indeed, I am quite appalled at his use of evidence, which is spotty and superficial, guilt by association and omission. His book is shaped by the scandal his views raised in the psychoanalytic establishment. Psychoanalysis survived Freud's mistakes and will certainly survive Masson's. The underlying truths of the psyche as outlined by Freud (not those coloured by his age and time) are not affected by his motivation. Did Galileo's fudging of his mathematical evidence to disprove Ptolemy mean that the sun *did* revolve about the earth? So too the discussion of Freud (especially when undertaken in analytic terms) does not undermine the validity of his views. Here Masson should read Juliet Mitchell in some detail.

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In general, this book is of interest because of its history not because of the history it portrays. To disagree with Anthony Storrs, it should not be forgotten (and probably will not be ignored), since it shows us the dangers of suppressing any material of value to the examination of history.

Sander L. Gilman  
Cornell University

EDWIN R. WALLACE (IV), *Freud and anthropology. A history and reappraisal*, New York, International Universities Press, 1983, 8vo, pp. xi, 306, \$22.50.

No scientific discipline outside his own gave Sigmund Freud's ideas such long-sustained and critical attention as did anthropology. Conversely, no other social or behavioural science so affected Freud's thinking over the course of his long career. This is the first full-length study to deal with both sides of the question – with Freud's influence on anthropology and its influence on him, and it is superb: comprehensive, balanced, and judicious.

*Totem and taboo* is the key work, but Wallace stresses Freud's long prior interest in anthropology and his use of it to bolster his emerging ideas on the Oedipus complex, symbolism, and many other topics. Freud's thinking was shaped by his reading of Lubbock, Tylor, and Spencer, as well as by his self-analysis, clinical work, and psychological and personal concerns. Wallace suggests that what finally drove Freud to write on the anthropological topics of totem and taboo in 1911 was not only his recent reading in Wundt and Fraser but his fear that Jung, his young disciple and emerging rival, was moving toward the same topics. If Jung would deny the role of the Oedipus complex in culture, then Freud would emphasize it all the more as both a psychological and historical fact. Freud also saw this as an opportunity to carry psychoanalysis beyond psychology and psychiatry, to make it a full-fledged social science.

Wallace sketches the recent history of anthropology from early twentieth-century critiques of the evolutionary theorists whom Freud used through cultural relativism and finally to increasing acceptance of modified and refined schemes of cultural evolution beginning in the 1940s. Anthropologists have consistently been dubious of Freud's anthropology, but they have been profoundly affected by the psychological understandings which that anthropology, in part, helped him to reach, especially his emphasis on the significance of childhood and on the universality of certain psychic mechanisms. Anthropologists in the early twentieth century were looking for a psychology rich and full enough to help them explain the phenomena of mind as revealed in various cultures. For a time, at least, they found what they needed in psychoanalysis. This book sets forth the connexions between Freud's developing ideas and nineteenth-century evolutionary anthropologists on the one hand and Freudian thought and twentieth-century cultural anthropology on the other. Together they constitute one of the more remarkable instances of the value of cross-fertilization of disciplines in the history of the behavioural sciences.

Joan Mark  
Editor for the Behavioural Sciences  
Harvard University Press

WALTER PAGEL, *The smiling spleen: Paracelsianism in storm and stress*, Basle, Karger, 1983, 8vo, pp. x, 214, illus., SFr. 153.00.

Walter Pagel's last book examines some reactions to the theories of Paracelsus and Van Helmont from the sixteenth to the early eighteenth century. Far from there being any agreed party line, opponents and defenders alike felt free to reject and accept individual doctrines or to interpret them for their own purposes. Hence Van Helmont's declaration of the spleen as the site of the vital principle, and the varying atomisms of Boyle and Leibniz. But Pagel is not only concerned with the great and famous, or even with those of the second rank, like Severinus, Campanella, Sennert, Conring, and Glisson, but also with even more obscure figures like Johann Sophronius Kozak (1602–85), the champion of the cosmic monarchy of salt, Gabriel Fontanus (fl. 1650), Ludovicus Carbon (fl. 1585), and Domenico Bertacchi (fl. 1584). The resulting mosaic is far removed from any straightforward pattern of whiggish progress, and the signposts Pagel has here erected point to exciting and almost unmapped territory.