

## Book Reviews

### 1. PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

**A Psycho-Analytic Dialogue. The letters of Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham. 1907-1926.** Edited by HILDA C. ABRAHAM and ERNST L. FREUD. Translated by BERNARD MARSH and HILDA C. ABRAHAM. London: Hogarth Press. 1965. Pp. 406. Price 63s.

To put pen to paper was one of Freud's pastimes. He liked to write not only for the sake of recording his thoughts and psychoanalytic discoveries, but also to engage in an epistolary conversation with his many correspondents. Three volumes of his letters have recently been published. This is the fourth volume, and it contains the exchange of letters between him and Karl Abraham. Out of nearly 500 extant letters, the editors have chosen more than 180 from each correspondent. Abraham belonged to the small group of able disciples who gathered around Freud in the early and heroic days of psychoanalysis. They were a sectarian group whose teaching met with the entrenched disbelief of a hostile world. The history of sectarian groups in such situations commonly shows that their existence can be more decisively threatened by internal dissensions than external animosity. Abraham, as his letters reveal, often saw this threat more clearly than Freud. When, for instance, in 1908, he doubted Jung's devotion to the cause, Freud countered with a diagnostic reproof: "I fear you have a rather excessive mistrust of him, a trace of a persecution complex." But five years later Freud realized that his diagnoses of the characters of both Jung and Abraham had been at fault. Jung, he grumbled, "is following in Adler's wake without being as consistent as that pernicious creature". Thereafter, Freud soothed his disappointment with a witticism: "Jung's bad theories do not compensate me for his disagreeable character." But there was no despair, only the clarion call of all threatened sectarian groups. "There is the cause," he wrote to Abraham, "and we shall sacrifice ourselves for it without complaint." To which Abraham replied by return of post: "I always have the feeling that I cannot really do enough for our cause."

They certainly worked hard. Ten or eleven hours of analysis were only a prelude to further work in the evening. As Freud put it: "I have to recuperate from psychoanalysis by working [that is, writing], otherwise I should not be able to stand it." But that can hardly have been the whole explanation, for even on

holiday Freud always found time for his recreation of writing. From Rome, for instance, he reported in 1913 that he had "in his free time between museums, churches and trips to the Campagna finished a foreword to the book on totem and taboo, an expansion to the congress paper and the sketch of an article on narcissism". To say nothing, of course, of his daily ration of writing letters and cards.

It is interesting to see how both Freud and Abraham succumbed to the wave of patriotic enthusiasm at the outbreak of the First World War, though it halted their psychoanalytic work. But as the war dragged on in spite of the glorious victories reported, and as life became more miserable through shortages of food and fuel, Freud's patriotism began to ebb. He was dispirited; even the pleasure of writing had palled. "I am at daggers drawn," he writes in December, 1917, "with writing, as with many other things. Included among them is your dear German fatherland." He adds his opinion of the two warring sides, quoting an anal-erotic German variant of "a plague on both your houses". "I have definitely adopted the viewpoint of Heine's Donna Bianca in the disputation at Toledo: '*Doch es will mich schier bedünken...*'" Donna Bianca's viewpoint after listening to the interminable disputations of a rabbi and a monk on the respective merits of their religions may perhaps be translated into English like this:

'But the truth is that I think  
of the rabbi and the monk  
That it's both of them who stink.'

There are in this most enjoyable book many endearing and intriguing glimpses of the life, work and world of both Freud and Abraham. The editors deserve our thanks for having made these letters available.

F. KRÄUPL TAYLOR.

**Psychoanalysis and Current Biological Thought.** Edited by NORMAN S. GREENFIELD and WILLIAM C. LEWIS. Madison and Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press. 1965. Pp. x+380. \$8.00.

This volume contains the 16 contributions made to an interdisciplinary research conference held in 1963 at the Wisconsin Psychiatric Institute. This is by no means an introductory book containing as one might suspect lofty overviews from various aspects, but on the contrary all the contributors move on a

very high level of academic sophistication and go very much into the details of their respective fields. Though this makes for difficult reading, the reader is compensated by the advantage of gleaning into a wealth of recent research and theoretical discussion.

Common to all contributors is a devotion to psychoanalysis, which, however, does not preclude them from being critical, particularly as far as the theoretical edifice of psychoanalysis is concerned. The development of theoretical concepts in psychoanalysis is subjected to a thorough scrutiny and their compatibility with recent findings in strictly biological but relevant fields is being examined.

Permeating the book is a strong feeling of regret about the now historic turn Freud took, away from his original "Project for a Scientific Psychology" of 1895 which came to light only as late as 1954 through the Fliess letters. There was the nucleus of a science which had all the prospects of becoming a purely biological one because it was couched in the spirit and in the terms of neurophysiology in which Freud had been trained. The historic turn came about in 1900 with Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* bringing in models of psychological conceptualization which were already then out of date. No wonder there are some who look back to the beginnings—in spite of remarkable developments since—as to a paradise lost, and others again who advocate a *rapprochement* with biology proper and who would even like to introject into psychoanalysis the appropriate methods of experimentation and documentation.

Fortunately, bridges do exist, as this volume sets out to demonstrate, and more can be envisaged. Historical irony decreed, and the genius of Freud provided for it, that in many of his concepts there was germinally something which today comes to be seen as an affinity to present biological concepts. For instance, the periodical volleys of rapid eye movements about which Snyder reports in the context of his sleep research are now proved to be connected with what Freud called "dream work". Speisman again, in the context of his research on autonomic response to psychological stress, demonstrates that this response varies with the defences developed by various types of personality. Other chapters are equally stimulating.

STEPHEN KRAUSS.

**The Existential Core of Psychoanalysis: Reality Sense and Responsibility.** By AVERY D. WEISMAN. London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1965. Pp. xii + 268. Price \$7.50.

The central theme of this book is the endeavour to discern those pillars in the edifice of psychoanalysis

which can be said to be most relevant to human existence. Two are accorded prominence: reality sense (a term used differently from "reality principle") and responsibility. "Reality sense" is the vital force which permeates the person at all levels of existence and enables him to cope with reality, a sort of "*élan vital*" (Bergson) or, more simply, intuitive apperception and action.

In spite of the outstanding erudition and penetrating acumen which have gone into the writing of this book, it cannot be adjudged a success. Any author who becomes oblivious of the didactic task which every book has to fulfil does so at his own peril, because without this *raison d'être* a book is liable to degenerate into a solipsistic exercise. The author needs scores of pages pedantically to hammer out his own terminology and system of thought, and only after long circuitous sections does he return to take up the thread again. Though clinical experience is reflected in some passages, it is never used properly for inductive reasoning. Most of the book reads like a philosophical tractate and bristles with categorical statements. Little gems abound, like the following: "Reality sense as explanation includes both the reality sense of explanation and the explanation of reality sense" (p. 60).

The choice of just the two above-mentioned essentials for the existential core of psychoanalysis is not very intelligible. It is even less so in the case of "responsibility" because it introduces a value-laden term into a discipline which is traditionally held to be value-free. It is in the realm of mental conflict that the author fails most decisively. Though he very well recognizes its central rôle and sails towards this reputedly difficult shore hopefully, fortified by his very own terminology, he founders on the rock. The reviewer may be permitted to mention that ever since he has dealt with the problem of mental conflict in his early book (*Mental Conflict. Its Psychology and Existential Significance*. Stuttgart, 1933), he has felt that conflict will be the touchstone for any consistent and far-sighted thinking in psychology and psychopathology. It remains to be said that the reader can derive no additional enlightenment on the conflict problem from the book under review.

A worthwhile book on the existential core of psychoanalysis could well be written, but it would have to be a different book. A pioneer unmentioned by the author, the late Alfred Storch, a scion of the Heidelberg (or Jaspers) school, has dealt with the author's theme much more successfully (*Pathways to the World and Existence of the Mentally Ill*. Edited posthumously, Stuttgart, 1965). This collection of works published over the years shows that one can deal with such problems and remain at