

FREUD: DICTIONARY OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

PREFACE

It is scarcely eleven years since Freud died in London. When I now read presentations of his work in books and articles, I am often reminded of a little story I heard as a boy in Vienna. The father of a peasant had died and the son, an Austrian Peter Simpleton, wished to possess a picture of the dear deceased man. The boy wandered to Vienna, found a wellknown painter and described to the artist what the father looked like, giving full details of the shape of the face, the colors of hair and eyes a.s.o.

The painter promised to deliver the picture. When the naive boy returned to the studio after a few weeks, he broke into sobs before the finished portrait and cried: "Poor father, how much you have changed in such a short time!" Reading many books and magazine articles of those last years that pretend to give a correct picture of Freud's ideas and teachings amazes us, who have known the great man: how much his thoughts have changed in such a short time! Fortunately we have the possibility to study his work in the original. To remain within the simile, he has left us a magnificent self-portrait in those thirteen volumes of his writings.

The discussion about psychoanalysis among physicians and laymen (many of the first group belong also to the second) is rather increasing than diminishing.

Everybody who has studied psychoanalysis thoroughly has, of course, the right to criticize the opinions of Freud. Nobody has the right to distort and misrepresent them. There ought to be a law!

This book will help to correct the abundant misunderstandings and misconceptions among the intelligent people interested in psychoanalysis. Presenting Freud's ideas in quotations from his own work, the editors have given a kind of dictionary which can secure authentic information on the most important topics of psychoanalysis to the student who is in doubt. Such a dictionary is, of course, not to be used as a textbook of psychoanalysis. It can rather be used to correct many textbooks, now printed.

It has become customary nowadays that the preface of a book should praise it in glowing terms, announce its publication with fanfare. (It is a custom more honour'd in the breach than the observance.) It is, it seems to me, sufficient to recommend its value to the intelligent reader. The editors of this book know, I am sure, that it is as imperfect as other scientific endeavors of this kind. They are willing, no, more than this, they are eager to augment and correct it, to fill gaps in later editions which will become necessary because the merits of such a work will soon be recognized by the students of psychoanalysis.

Greek mythology tells the story of the Augean stable wherein three thousand oxen were kept and which remained uncleaned for thirty years. The misconceptions and distortions, the falsifications and misrepresentations to which psychoanalysis was subjected in its popularization threaten to transform the magnificent house that Freud built into a stable similar to that of King Augeas. It too was not cleaned for thirty years and was, alas, frequented by more than 3000 oxen in this time. To clean it is a task compared with which Hercules had an easy job.

The editors of this book have attempted to sweep at least a corner of this wide hall. Their endeavor is worthy of sincere acknowledgment.

Theodor Reik.

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