hiatus, the icecap is again receding today, however slowly.

Here is Malia's epilogue to Russia's history in the 20th century: "Only eight years after Communism's demise it is clearly too early to assert that, this time, Russia will complete her real convergence with the West. But it is not too early to assert that, in the normal course, she hardly has anywhere else to go." Assuming a clear-eyed and realistic understanding of what the West is, this may be about right.

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Freudian Mystique

DR. FREUD:
A Life.
By Paul Ferris. Counterpoint. 464 pp. $30

FREUD:
Conflict and Culture.
Edited by Michael S. Roth. Knopf. 272 pp. $26

OPEN MINDED:
Working Out the Logic of the Soul.
By Jonathan Lear. Harvard Univ. Press. 345 pp. $35

by Howard L. Kaye

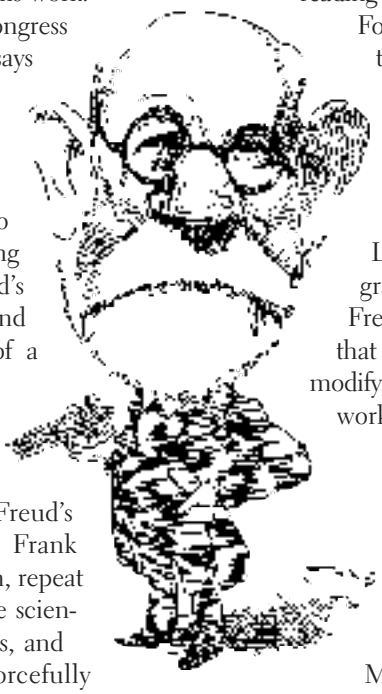
Sigmund Freud may have been the dominant intellectual figure of this century, but the last two decades have seen a serious erosion of our culture's regard for the man and his work. Once acknowledged as essential reading for an educated public and as an exemplary guide to living in a disenchanted world, Freud the therapist, the scientist, and the philosopher is increasingly met with either hostility or indifference. In light of the forceful criticisms that have been directed against Freud's character and the scientific value of his theories, how ought we now to assess the man, his work, and his cultural legacy?

In *Dr. Freud*, Paul Ferris approaches this question in the guise of a neutral bystander at the Freud Wars. Seeking neither to deify nor to vilify, Ferris, a novelist and biographer, purports to offer an even-handed, fair-minded account of Freud's life and the controversies surrounding his contributions. But this is merely a pose. Ferris's Freud is an ambitious, ruthless, unscrupulous, sex-starved (and therefore sex-obsessed) Jew. Every charge, every piece of gossip surrounding Freud's life, however implausible and unfounded, is given credence here, because, as the author acknowledges, he finds such a man more interesting and "believable." When he finally runs out of rumors, Ferris the novelist simply invents new ones, such as his fantasy of sexual temptation between Freud and his early patient "Katharina": "Perhaps his celibate state sharpened Freud's curiosity in the girl of eighteen and her sexual history. Perhaps [Freud's wife] Martha caught a hint of this. . . . It is just possible that [Freud's friend Oscar] Rie . . . saw Freud and Katharina together and wondered. . . . Rie could have used the telephone installed at the inn to send a message [to Martha] . . . that she come at once and give Sigmund a nice surprise." So what if there is no evidence to support such a story? "The truth," Ferris insists, "is what you want it to be."

Beyond crediting Freud with encourag-

ing greater openness and honesty in sexual matters, Ferris has little to say about Freud's work and its cultural impact. In contrast, these topics are the focus of *Freud: Conflict and Culture*, a collection of essays edited by historian Michael S. Roth, curator of the Library of Congress's controversial Freud exhibit, which closed earlier this year. With an impressive list of contributors, including Peter Gay, Robert Coles, and Oliver Sacks, this volume considers the development of Freud's thought, the spread of his ideas professionally and in the broader culture, and the current controversies surrounding his work.

Like Roth's Library of Congress exhibit, most of the 19 essays are essentially sympathetic to Freud as a brilliant writer, an influential cultural figure, or a respectable scientist. Even Sacks, who signed a petition protesting the exhibit, praises Freud's early neurological work and holds out the possibility of a rapprochement between neurobiology and psychoanalysis. Still, dissenting voices are powerfully present. Two of Freud's most prominent critics, Frank Cioffi and Adolf Grünbaum, repeat their oft-stated attack on the scientific status of Freud's claims, and analyst Muriel Dimen forcefully summarizes the feminist critique of psychoanalysis.



More ambiguous and more revealing is the critical stance taken by psychiatrist Peter Kramer. Acknowledging that Freud's work inspired his interest in psychiatry, Kramer describes how his professional training and his reliance on psychoactive medications have moved him further and further from Freud. Having traveled so far from his original interests, Kramer experienced the recent attacks on Freud as a "relief," absolving him from feelings of "infidelity." He remains ambivalent, though, feeling a certain nostalgia for the admired Freud of his youth, whose works contained so "much that explained our own behavior."

While occasionally illuminating, the essays in this collection are too brief, too narrow in focus, and too varied in subject either to deepen our understanding of Freud's work or to justify our continued engagement with it. The real question worth pursuing is the one raised by Roth but left unexplored by his contributors: in light of the scientific and biological criticisms of Freud's work, what can we still learn from reading his texts?

Fortunately, this question is taken up by philosopher and psychoanalyst Jonathan Lear in *Open Minded*. Lear's lead essay, first published in the *New Republic* during the flap over the Library of Congress exhibit, grapples head-on with the Freud-bashers. Acknowledging that there is much to criticize, modify, and reject in Freud's own work and in the subsequent development of psychoanalysis, Lear still finds many of the charges brought against Freud to be unwarranted. The much-publicized claims by Jeffrey Masson (that Freud betrayed the victims of childhood sexual abuse by disbelieving their stories) and by Frederick Crews (that Freud betrayed parents by creating or reinforcing their children's imagined memories of sexual abuse) cancel each other out. More important, both claims distort Freud's true position: a recognition of the reality of both experience and fantasy, and an understanding of the power of the mind to blend the two.

Equally flawed are the efforts of Grünbaum and his followers to demonstrate the obvious: that Freudian theory is not "scientific" on the model of a hard science such as physics. Psychoanalysis faces problems of testability and falsifiability,

but so does every discipline that deals with the interpretation of human meanings and motives—philosophy, history, sociology—yet most people do not seek to dismiss the social sciences and humanities as a result.

That day may not be so far off, however, for what really lies behind the Freud Wars is, in Lear's words, a "war . . . over our culture's image of the soul." Will we manage to persuade ourselves that we are machines whose behavior is transparently driven by rational choice, social demands, or biological processes? Or will we continue to view ourselves as complex and often opaque creatures, who make and pursue meanings—both meanings that we reflect on and consciously choose and meanings that are hidden from our view? In Lear's view, Freud, as part of a tradition extending from Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine through Shakespeare, Nietzsche, and Proust, has made "the most sustained and successful attempt to make these obscure meanings [our motivated irrationality] intelligible." In doing so, Freud contributes to the human capacity to be "open-minded": "the capacity to live nondefensively with the question of how to live" and then to reshape our lives accordingly.

After locating Freud within this philosophical tradition, Lear explores some of the ways in which such Freudian concepts as transference and internalization can illuminate aspects of the work of others in the tradition, particularly Plato and Aristotle. Reciprocally, Lear then shows how works such as Aristotle's *Poetics*, Plato's *Republic*, and even Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* can be drawn on to refine and clarify problematic aspects of Freud's own work.

Lear aims to breathe new life into both philosophy and psychoanalysis by initiating a dialogue between them on the fundamental questions of who we are and how we should live. Unfortunately, the book, which mostly consists of previously published essays, falls short of that lofty goal. Nevertheless, the best of *Open Minded*—like the best of the Roth volume—makes clear that while the clinical Freud might be dead, Freud's understanding of our messy inner lives and complex cultural worlds remains valuable.

Ironically, such a view returns us to Freud's own position. The "treatment of the neuroses," he wrote in *The Question of Lay Analysis* (1926), may not be the most important application of psychoanalysis. Instead, its greatest contributions may lie in the study of "human civilization and its major institutions such as art, religion, and the social order." If Freud is to influence a second century, these are the realms in which he will live on.

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The New American Frontier

AN EMPIRE WILDERNESS:
Travels into America's Future.
By Robert D. Kaplan. Random House. 384 pp. $27.50

by Michael Lind

What if a distinguished American foreign correspondent returned home to explore and explain the United States, using interpretive skills developed by studying other societies? That is the premise of Robert Kaplan's study of the United States at the turn of the millennium, *An Empire Wilderness: Travels into America's Future*. A contributing editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Kaplan has written