

Book Reviews

MARIE BALMARY, *Psychoanalyzing psychoanalysis. Freud and the hidden fault of the father*, trans. by Ned Lukacher, Baltimore, Md., and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982, 8vo, pp. xxiv, 184, £12.00.

C. BARRY CHABOT, *Freud on Schreber. Psychoanalytic theory and the critical act*, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1982, 8vo, pp. 174, \$17.50. (Distributed in the UK by Transatlantic Book Service, 24 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4PX.)

One index of the continuing vitality of the myths of psychoanalysis is that writers concerned with its history get caught up in making claims concerning the *real* basis of psychoanalysis – they seem unable to avoid making claims solely about its history, but must speak to the truth of psychoanalysis. Even as proudly a historical work as Frank Sulloway's *Freud. Biologist of the mind* (1979) claims that psychoanalysis really (“in reality”) *is* – that is, it is not what it appears to be – a crypto-biology, a psychobiology (where crypto- and psycho- mean roughly the same thing), if only one can decipher its history, its texts, to discover what is hidden – the real, biology. The two books under review labour under the same necessity. Yet their aims are diametrically opposed. Balmory, working within the French psychoanalytical scene, permeated as it is with the influence of Lacan, and thus having no need to trouble itself about the epistemological status of psychoanalysis, unabashedly goes about a piece of historical-biographical-psychoanalytic detective work. She wishes to demonstrate how Freud's distorted account of the Oedipus complex is an alibi for his refusal to come to terms with the skeletons in his own father's cupboard – the second wife of Jakob Freud, only recently discovered, who appears to have disappeared some years before Sigmund was born to the third wife. Following an elegant and forceful reinterpretation of Sophocles' play and the cycle of myths, Balmory employs the Freudian methods of dream-analysis and interpretation of detail and metaphor in Freud's own writings to argue that his family secret lay at the heart of his train phobia, of his peculiar fascination (brought out here for the first time) with the stone statue in *Don Giovanni*, and the final putting into place of the headstone of his theory: the Oedipus complex. Balmory points to the sins of the father (Laios and Jakob Freud) as the cause of all the trouble, rather than the unconscious guilt and repressed desires of the sons, Oedipus and Sigmund. It is the father's fault that lies hidden, festering into neurosis and psychoanalysis.

Balmory thus betrays a nostalgia for Freud's early seduction theory, in which a neurotic symptom “really” was caused by the sins of the father. Childhood *really* is *invaded* by the perversities of adults. In line with other recent repudiations of the pre-emptive hegemony of the medical, Balmory implies a return to the discourses of blame (the father is guilty of a crime whose consequences the son suffers) rather than the discourse of excuses (in which the son's symptom is caused by his guilt at wishing to kill the father). An urgency permeates her argument: incriminate the family (especially the father) and restore the idea of the innocent victim, destroy the guilt-ridden edifice of psychoanalysis so as to restore a justified self-righteous sympathy with the suffering victims (amongst whom the first in line is Freud himself), whether they be victims of fathers, of Freud, or of analysis.

A similar urgent appeal to the causal efficacy of *real* paternal crimes was voiced by Morton Schatzman in his book on the Schreber case, *Soul murder* (1973). Schreber was not mad on account of a repressed homosexual desire towards his doctor (Freud's explanation) but rather as a result of the malpractices, indeed tortures, he suffered at the hands of his father, whose terrifying contraptions for the disciplining and enhancement of German youth were test-run on his sons. The father's sin, seen by Schatzman as the symbol of the repressive tyranny of the nineteenth-century family, and of families in general, was visited in the shape of a paranoia which itself now becomes eminently comprehensible, in no further need of reflection – his paranoia referred to the *real* practices suffered in childhood, no need to go looking for them in some complicated inner world. Instead, what should demand our attention is the brutally simple child-rearing practices of the high-minded disciplinarian father. Chabot will have little to do with this attempt to uncover the “real” truth of the Schreber case. Rather, he argues that psychoanalysis is closely akin to literary studies: “All interpretation, whether of individual texts or of patients, is essentially a textual exercise” – though, surprisingly enough, he goes on to argue that both hermeneutics must be founded on psychology. Sensitively written, careful and conscientious in

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doing justice to Freud's text, to Schreber's text, and to a few others, less memorable, besides, Chabot balks at the prospect of writing the history of the real, whether it be of psychoanalysis or of individual texts – all he allows psychoanalysis to aspire to is the narrative history of fiction, in place of the historical reconstruction of (psychic) reality. Reading as a literary critic does, regarding Freud as the literary critic at work with texts that speak, Chabot produces a finely textured version of Schreber's memoirs, hinging his interpretation around the injustice the Senatspräsident suffered, his fear of succumbing (both mortally and sexually), and his preoccupation with domination and submission. Chabot discerns autonomy and justice as the central themes of Schreber's paranoiac system. Yet Chabot wishes to link this up with bits and pieces of psychoanalytic *theory* which mesh well with this reading – such as the American analysts Erikson's and Lichtenstein's concern with the sense of identity and self-worth. However, the small change of these concepts, enticing him into a vapid jargon, does not match his sensitive literary discernments – one cannot but feel that the second tier of his argument, that literary studies and therapeutic interpretation both depend on a psychology, does not match the subtleties of his own dialogue with the text. Chabot's book is a sensitive guide to the book that our most famous madman left behind, but it offers little in the way of providing a single foundation for literary studies and psychoanalysis, nor does it keep at bay the arbitrariness so often encountered when this or that psychological theorist tries out his hand on whatever text comes to hand. Other theorists, particularly those following Lacan, have discovered that psychoanalysis is essentially a verbal exercise, without feeling the need to underpin the new-found affinities of psychoanalysis and literary studies with a psychology of autonomy and self-determination, to which Chabot clings as the symbol of humanistic individualism. So even the discerning Chabot lets his "vulgar" psychological side dominate the central sections of the book. Where he is most stimulating is in following out the implications of the "relativistic" assumption that "for psychoanalysis, the Real is a construct, a reading . . ." (p. 147). On the other hand, Balmory urges the revision and overthrow of the Freudian myths of guilt and secret desire, so that in any given biography the causal power of the unequivocal Real may be revealed. What these two interesting essays demonstrate is that raking over the history of psychoanalysis, whether in search of Freud's lost past, or of the genuinely psychoanalytic method, requires giving an answer to the question: what is the Real of psychoanalysis? The absence of a real answer does not allow one to avoid tackling it.

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G. MALONEY and R. SAVOIE, *Cinq cents ans de bibliographie hippocratique (1473–1982)*, Quebec, Editions du Sphinx, 1982, 8vo, pp. v, 289, \$Cdn.30.00.

This is a chronological list of printed items relating to Hippocrates and the Hippocratic Corpus. It includes editions of Hippocratic texts, translations, commentaries, books and articles about Hippocrates and the Hippocratic writers. The occurrence of the name Hippocrates or derivatives thereof in a title appears to be a principal criterion for inclusion (thus polemical items which defend or attack "Hippocratic", i.e. orthodox, as opposed to Paracelsian, medicine are included, although such works often have little or nothing to say about Hippocratic texts); but it is not the only criterion, and in many cases the title alone does not make clear why a particular item is included. The work lists 3,332 items, arranged under each year. In most cases the information includes, for books, author (editor, translator), full title, place of publication and publisher, number of pages but not format; and for periodical articles, author, title, title of periodical, volume, and pagination. Sources are, apparently, existing bibliographies and published catalogues, but these are nowhere specified and the compilers give no indication of the amount of direct inspection involved or the numbers of libraries and institutions surveyed.

All of this would be fairly unexceptionable if the work were limited roughly to the period of modern philological scholarship on the Hippocratic Corpus. No checklist of such scope for that period exists, and the Hippocratic scholar should have nothing but gratitude to the compilers