



Freud and His Critics

Paul Robinson

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Wars against Freud have been waged along virtually every front during the past decade. Now Paul Robinson takes on three of Freud's most formidable critics, mounting a thoughtful, witty, and ultimately devastating critique of the historian of science Frank Sulloway, the psychoanalyst Jeffrey Masson, and the philosopher Adolf Grünbaum.

Frank Sulloway contends that Freud took most of his ideas from Darwin and other contemporary thinkers—that he was something of a closet biologist. Jeffrey Masson charges that Freud caved in to peer pressure when he abandoned his early seduction theory (which Masson believes was correct) in favor of the theory of infantile sexuality. Adolf Grünbaum impugns Freud's claim to have grounded his ideas—especially the idea of the unconscious—on solid empirical foundations.

Under Robinson's rigorous cross-examination, the evidence of these three accusers proves ambiguous and their arguments biased by underlying assumptions and ideological commitments. Robinson concludes that the anti-Freudian writings of Sulloway, Masson, and Grünbaum reveal more about their authors' prejudices—and about the *Zeitgeist* of the past decade—than they do about Freud.

Beautifully crafted and full of surprises, Robinson's work is a compelling defense of one of history's most original and powerful minds. *Freud and His Critics* will earn an enduring place in the raging Freudian debate.

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