

BOOK REVIEW

Jean Clair, ed. *Freud: Du regard à l'écoute* (Exhibition, Paris, Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, 10 October 2018–10 February 2019). Paris: Gallimard & MAHJ-Musée d'art et d'histoire du judaïsme, 2018. 335 pp. €39. ISBN: 978-2-07-280223-2.

It is often claimed that France is the country with the highest number of practicing psychoanalysts per capita in the world. And yet no exhibition dedicated to Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) had ever examined this incongruous idea. Now the damage has been repaired and beautifully so. On display at the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, in the splendid seventeenth-century Hôtel de Saint-Aignan in the Marais district of Paris, this exhibition is completed by a guidebook: *Freud: Du regard à l'écoute*, edited by Jean Clair, a member of the Académie française and curator of the exhibition. With this beautiful 335-page book, visitors will refresh their memories, and those who have not seen the exhibition will discover the multiple facets of the personality and work of Freud through a number of explanatory texts and a very rich iconography.

Clair immerses us in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Vienna at the end of the nineteenth century, a hub of creative intelligence, especially of Jewish thought, and an Eastern European counterpart to Paris in the West. Clair sees Vienna as the cultural milieu that led to Freud's fascination with the lessons of Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893), which he attended during five months starting in October 1885. This distinguished Viennese anatomopathologist of the nervous system, who had a talent for drawing his microscopic observations, transformed his practice by inventing a new philosophy centered on language, between what is said and not said. As Clair puts it, "Psychoanalysis is this effort to understand and bring together what has meaning and vitality from the past."

In one chapter of this new volume, Laura Bossi shows how the architects of evolution, Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919), who influenced Freud—and the latter of whom formulated the concept that "ontology recapitulates phylogeny"—also provided one of the cornerstones of the psychoanalytic edifice. For example, Freud, in his 1905 book *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, established the history of the development of libido as a recapitulation in humans of sexual development in animals. The illustrations, taken from the books of Haeckel, provide ample and edifying justification of Freud's thought.

Based on letters Freud wrote to his fiancée, Martha Bernays (1861–1951)—one of which is transcribed in the book—Andreas Mayer, a historian of science, describes Freud's visit to Paris in the context of mounting conceptual tensions around hysteria between the Salpêtrière School and the Nancy School, the latter led by Hippolyte Bernheim (1840–1919). Passing over the role played by Georges Gilles de la Tourette (1857–1904), at the time senior resident under Charcot and Freud's guide in Paris, Mayer illustrates how the didactic treasures in the Charcot library (which he anachronistically terms a museum) influenced a student who was only one among so many others. The many works of Paul Richer (1849–1933), Charcot's resident artist, enrich this book, which includes reproductions of the original drawings preserved at the French National Beaux-Arts School in Paris (ENSBA).


With his vast knowledge of art history, Philippe Comar, a professor of morphology at the ENSBA, was able to decipher the "ruse of image"—that is, what is seen and what is suggested, what is demonstrated and what is hidden—to build a parallel between graphic representation and Freud's unconscious mind. This gives readers a chance to see Gustave Courbet's painting *l'Origine du monde* and the magnificent sketch that André Masson (1896–1987) made of it on

the sliding door of a wooden box behind which Jacques Lacan (1901–1981), the owner of the painting at the time, kept it.

Another chapter of the book explores the influence of Judaism and the Bible on Freud's personality, revealing the role of the iconography and the "geography of the page" in the Bible of Ludwig Philippson (1811–1889) published in 1839, which enables simultaneous reading in German and Hebrew.

The invention of psychoanalysis led the quality of Freud's anatomopathological research to be forgotten. This book offers reproductions of the fine drawings found among Freud's observations, including those of lamprey nerve roots. The drawings are juxtaposed with those of Cajal and Bois-Reymond for comparison and appreciation of these three skilled artists. In the corresponding chapter, we learn that Freud was a student of Theodor Meynert (1833–1892), who founded a psychiatric approach "on solid scientific and anatomical foundations" and promoted a new concept of cerebral localizations, in particular the idea of the "psychic apparatus." A rich and beautiful iconography illustrating hypnosis and hysteria reminds readers that Freud spent six months at La Salpêtrière. The influence of Darwin and Guillaume Duchenne de Boulogne (1806–1875) on Freud's understanding of the mechanisms of the facial expression of emotions is also brought to the fore by the quality and number of pictorial works.

The birth of psychoanalysis, the pseudoscience of dreams and sexuality, had a strong influence on the surrealists. The anthology of works selected to illustrate this is both surprising and unexpected and bears witness to the knowledge and taste of Jean Clair, Laura Bossi, and Philippe Comar, who organized this exhibition and put together this beautiful book, both artistic and learned, and highly recommended.

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