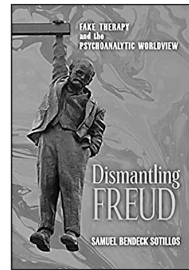


Dismantling Freud: Fake Therapy and the Psychoanalytic Worldview

By Samuel Bendeck Sotillos

Brooklyn: Angelico Press, 2020

Reviewed by Brian Welter



In *Dismantling Freud*, counsellor and traditionalist author, Samuel Bendeck Sotillos, argues convincingly that psychoanalysis is not only misleading, but extremely harmful. It does not seek the truth, but rather aims to impose its own distorted version of reality. Based on nothing but the groundless, eccentric ideas of Freud and his followers, it has little to do with the scientific method or with a religious tradition. Yet it subverts organized religion and strives to replace the resulting spiritual vacuum with itself. Given the author's citations from Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, and native American traditions, this book will appeal to readers with a traditionalist mindset. Chapter headings, which reflect the wide-ranging discussion, include: 'Psychoanalysis, the Loss of Faith, and the Signs of the Times'; 'Psychologism: The Reduction of Reality to Psychological Criteria'; 'The Couch and the Confessional'; and 'Psychoanalysis as Pseudo-Science.' Sotillos, acknowledging the very real spiritual and psychological dangers of Freudianism, successfully argues that it fits into the modern anti-traditional, anti-sacred mindset. The author also implies a way out: a return to traditional beliefs and practices.

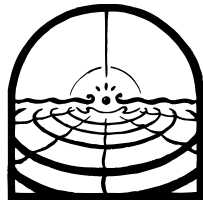
The author interweaves the chronological development of Freud's theories with a traditionalist-based analysis of the resulting errors. He also conveys a sense of Freud's character and ambitions for psychoanalysis. One of the biggest leaps forward took place in 1908, when Freudian psychology became, for its creator, 'a totalizing worldview' (2). This meant that it went beyond 'the talking cure' of the analyst's couch and started to address all matters of concern, including art and culture. It became an anthropology, a science of man. Its totalizing perspective gave psychoanalysis the task of replacing traditional religious views. The author portrays this revolution as becoming Freud's chief concern.

The typical traditionalist critique, which Sotillos follows, argues that psychoanalysis reaches down into the depths of the human psyche, embracing even evil and the demonic, without striving for higher things. It takes seriously evil and the demonic, but also psychologizes them away while belittling belief in higher things. While the founder of logotherapy, Viennese psychoanalyst Viktor Frankl, tried to establish a '*height psychology*,' he thereby strove 'to complement rather than to supersede *depth psychology*' (6). Frankl didn't express aversion to the dangers of playing with the subconscious. Sotillos juxtaposes this with Pope Pius XII's tradition-friendly solution: 'There are those who ... accentuate the opposition between the metaphysical and the psychological. A completely wrong approach! The psychic itself belongs to the domain of the ontological and metaphysical' (109). Sotillos agrees with this.

Depth psychology, including Carl Jung's analytic psychology, lacks this metaphysical dimension. Depth psychology therefore assumes and eventually produces a stunted type of human who is little more than an animal by being controlled by natural instincts and impulses. This reduces the metaphysical to merely an expression of the psyche, which is human-made and serves human purposes. Thus, even though Freud and Jung fell far short of applying the scientific method (though they both claimed to be empiricists), their depth psychologies exemplify scientism: Limiting reality to the scientifically observable.

Freud potently counterattacked his opponents by 'pathologizing' all opposition. He declared opposition to psychoanalysis as simply a neurosis in itself. This reflects his totalizing worldview: Any hesitation at accepting psychoanalysis signifies the need for more psychoanalysis. This also reflects Freud's stubborn and narrow personality, which Sotillos

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