



# Freudian Fraud: The Malignant Effect of Freud's Theory on American Thought and Culture

*E. Fuller Torrey MD*

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During a period of prolonged cocaine usage in the 1890s, Sigmund Freud developed a theory of human behavior which asserted that early childhood experiences, especially those of a sexual nature, are crucial determinants in later personality development. The theory first came to America as part of the sexual revolution in the early years of this century, then became attached to the liberal forces of nurture in the ongoing nature-nurture debate. When Hitler resolved that debate in Europe by permanently discrediting nature, he simultaneously drove many of Freud's supporters to America, where the theory finally evolved into a symbol of liberalism and humanism in the post-World War II period.

This book is an account of Freud's rise in America and the crucial roles played by Margaret Mead, Benjamin Spock, and Karl Menninger. Others who played important roles in disseminating Freud's theory include Emma Goldman, Abraham Brill, Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict, Walter Lippmann, Mabel Dodge, Clarence Darrow, Mary McCarthy, Lionel Trilling, Edmund Wilson, Herbert Marcuse, Norman Brown, Paul Goodman, and Fritz Perls.

The book closes with an assessment of Freud's theory and its effect on America, from the perversion of child rearing, criminology, and liberal politics to the shaping of theater and film and psychotherapy for everyone, McFreud in America. Childhood experiences are now known to be comparatively unimportant antecedents of personality, and thus Freud's theory is virtually without any scientific foundation. It is acknowledged that some good has come out of it (the unconscious, humanism, psychotherapy) but that its debits are much greater (narcissism, irresponsibility, denigration of women, misallocated resources). Given what we now know, the perpetuation of the Freudian paradigm is a fraud.

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