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Gibbon", and, in Part II, the delightful sketch of "The Last Masque" or "Captain Hind the Highwayman". Miss Wedgwood, it is interesting to note, has herself described the latter two as "small literary diversions," "... an opportunity for the purest kind of enquiry." And she continues: "The apparent objectives may seem light and even frivolous, but the experiment in reconstructing as accurately and fully as possible a detached incident or a character *without attempting to prove any general point or demonstrate any theory whatsoever* is a useful exercise." The emphasis is Miss Wedgwood's and it perhaps serves better than all other observations to illuminate the essentially empirical nature of her concept of history.

DAVID S. BERKOWITZ

YOUNG MAN LUTHER: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History. By Erik H. Erikson. New York: W. W. Norton, 1958. Pp. 288.

Young Man Luther is about Luther as a young man, from about 1507 to about 1512, five years in his late twenties, long after infancy and childhood, well before fame, power and self-consciousness as a public figure. Erikson offers piercing glances back to boyhood and infancy, and he also looks ahead, to the Reformer, the theologian, the teacher. But the focus is upon the young man, and thus Erikson falls between traditional Freudian emphasis upon the early years—the earlier the better—and the interest of traditional history in the years of public influence.

Erikson finds that in this period, from his entrance into the monastery to the time he gave his first lectures on the Psalms, Luther underwent the decisive crisis of his life. This was his crisis of "identity". It began with his decision to be a monk; by every means he knew Luther tried to become what, so far as he knew, he wanted to be; and he failed. The triumphant conclusion to his crisis was a consequence of a breakthrough to a higher stage of self-integration, a fuller recognition of the grounds of selfhood generally. Luther discovered why he had failed; he had made a mistake about himself, and he knew how such mistakes could be made. It was this act of understanding—Luther's "revelation in the tower"—that unleashed Luther the man. Protestantism was born.

The book is phenomenally fascinating. Of course all books about Luther have the advantage of being about Luther, a phenomenally fascinating man. But it is easy to throw away much of this advantage by mistreating the sources. The fascination depends upon suppressing none of them, adding none, and refraining from confusing the historian's job with that of the judge or diagnostician. I think it well to stress the virtues of Erikson's performance in these respects, quite apart from issues about psychoanalytic history. He

knows about the treatment of sources and shows it by a critical review of the Luther scholarship. I offer only the most obviously pertinent instances.

First: every Luther scholar “knows” that Luther, who had one of the great gifts for language in history, often used frank, blunt, raw vocabulary. What is one to do when a religious leader refers so persistently to the anus? One can edit the embarrassing words away; one can deem them unimportant; one can pass over them quickly as unfortunate evidence that, after all, Luther was not perfect; one can observe that, after all, everyone talked that way in the sixteenth century. The first—the sin of sins—is clearly unacceptable; but so are the others. Who says these words are unimportant? Whoever does say so must present his principles for selection as distinctly in this instance as he would in dealing with Luther’s most edifying theology. Who says they are unfortunate? What are the historian’s credentials for such flinching? And by what principle of selection may one dissolve Luther into his “age” at one point, when the reason for writing about him is to define him?

Second: every Luther scholar “knows” that Luther had a turbulent emotional life. It is known that he himself associated episodes of this turbulence with his religious feelings and his primal religious insights. What is one to make of these episodes if one is interested in the universal meaning and validity of his religion? Perhaps they were not “merely” psychological; perhaps they were “religious,” perhaps they contained a spiritual element, revealing the activity of God. But what sort of evidence, if any, have historians learned to trust as signs of “spiritual” factors and divine activity in distinction from “merely” psychological manifestations?

This sort of adding on and dissolving away of evidence has usually been the work of Luther’s friends, his Lutheran, Protestant, religious biographers. In contrast, there has been the attitude of his judges and diagnosticians. These have insisted upon the facts, and the facts, they say, show Luther as coarse and as emotionally warped. Catholic biographers have located, at the very center of the whole Luther, a moral flaw: this “explains” everything. All of Luther is traced back and reduced to one thing. Psychiatrists have been content with a diagnostic pigeonhole: he was sick, and what he did was what his sort of sickness does. Erikson is capable of recognizing moral flaws and he is capable of recognizing sickness, but he is also aware that to invoke either flaws or sickness as “explanation” is to petrify a man. Given that flaw or that sickness, the rest of his life is merely a kind of deduction. This is to turn a man into an object for natural science, not for history.

Erikson, in short, has advanced Luther scholarship on the most elementary of tests: he does not mistreat the sources. But has he turned up any “fresh” data? Has he gone to untapped sources? It is, to put the matter bluntly, a register of the theoretical bankruptcy of history to note just how frequently this question is used as a measure of professional competence. Biography of a man like Luther shows why: new Luther sources will always be welcome,

but there is plenty of room for progress for anyone who knows how to use the basic, available sources. Erikson's book is based, not on fresh data, but upon data refreshed, rescued from suppression, from invention and from reduction.

In studying the mature Luther, Luther the Reformer, can we assume that Luther knew what he meant in speaking and acting as he did? Can we assume that, if he did know, he chose to make it clear? Can we assume that we can tell what he meant, even supposing that he knew and tried to make it clear? One of the reasons why Erikson's book about Luther as a young man should have great appeal for historians is that he shows that Luther's crisis pivoted exactly on this problem of knowing what is meant. Certainly, in their pursuit of explanations, historians routinely explore what a man got from his education, his culture, and, in an old-fashioned sense, from his mother's side and his father's side. These debts may very well be unrecognized; a faulty education may prevent a man from realising what he owes his culture; and he may therefore not know why he means what he means, or even, what he means, because he is ignorant. But this has nothing to do with Luther's problem. Luther was concerned with "sincerity". As Erikson formulates that concern: what is "The Meaning of 'Meaning It' "? How can a man know he means what he says he means, what he thinks he means, what his actions appear to indicate he means? To put it somewhat ludicrously but usefully: how can a man leave documents for historians which they can believe? In 1507 Luther thought he meant to be a monk; but he found later he had been mistaken. Luther was preoccupied with the unconscious, not with ignorance. His historical significance is rooted exactly in his sensitivity to the evidence that he himself had prevented himself from truly meaning what he thought he meant. Luther was, in effect, one of the great psychoanalysts in history.

There are many fruitful ways to study Luther besides Erikson's; Erikson explicitly intends his method not to monopolise Luther but to make those other ways still more fruitful. Possibly the most valuable in the last fifty years has been the restudy of Luther's theology by Swedish scholars. But one compelling result of this theological study is that it points time and again at one question: how did the "meaning" intended by this theology come to be meant? The Swedish motif-research makes it plain that Luther's theology cannot begin to be exhausted in study of various logical problems coming to a head in medieval thought, or in consideration of its political, social, economic roots and ramifications. In every facet of the Swedish findings a drastically existential consciousness is indicated at work, and it is this consciousness which then becomes the central phenomenon for historical explanation. How did it come to be?

It is here that psychoanalysis makes its decisive offer to history. Freud's

concept of the unconscious, his concepts of the id, ego and superego, and his emphasis upon sexuality doubtless are the most famous features of his psychology. But these do not comprehend his importance to historians. Psychoanalysis is the most radically historical psychology: this is its basic challenge to all other psychologies, and it is only in terms of this challenge that historians can finally evaluate its usefulness to them. In liberating themselves from grossly nonhistorical principles of explanation—gods and demons, dialectical materialisms and idealisms, etc.—historians have come to see their task as that of understanding the interactions between the human agents of history with their environment. But this has not safeguarded them from neglecting their main task: to incorporate those human agents themselves fully into history. Freud made the most radical effort to explain the existence of these agents—“mind”, “spirit”, “soul”, “instincts”, the “individual”, the “self”, “human nature” itself—in exclusively historical terms. The alternative to an historical psychology must be at some point simply to postulate the existence of something standard, normal and even normative that “behaves” in history, and to do this, simply to postulate it, is to surrender the historical method.

Probably the most alluring such postulation today is to be found in sociological history, with its freedom not only from theological and metaphysical assumptions but also, supposedly, its freedom from the fallacy of analogies drawn from the natural sciences as well: all shall be explained in terms of man. Here, the explanatory context of all events is a social system. Structural and functional sociology is in itself timeless and non-historical; it becomes history, supposedly, with the study of responses to disturbances in the system. These responses constitute the events which historians try to understand, and they find the terms of their understanding given them in the social system. The postulated psychology in this may be “nothing more” than that of a pure plasticity, a “human nature” capable of all the known varieties of social systems and more, capable of an infinity of “social characters” (in which case it becomes tempting to conclude that the words “human nature” have no operational meaning at all and comprise a needless concept carried over from pre-scientific habits of thought). The question for historians should be clear: suppose such plasticity does in fact describe a reality, how did *it* come to be? So far, no answer has been forthcoming from the non-historical sciences of biology, physiology, neurology, biochemistry; and short of one it is a question for history. History must comprehend its essential subject matter, human nature, in historical terms.

Previous efforts to “apply” psychoanalytic concepts to history have come to grief. These have been of two sorts. One is to seize upon direct evidence—commonly sparse—about the nature of infant experience, and then, using clinical concepts, to leap directly into explanations of the largest public, cultural, institutional life. But there are more steps in any logic that leads

from, say, swaddling to the Politburo than this sort of explanation dreams of. The second method is to infer the deepest meanings of the self from the most visible, accessible public life. The classic instance here, for our purposes, would be Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom*, in which this neo-Freudian author infers the dominant characterological contents of those who believed Reformation doctrines from the intellectual contents of those doctrines. This is neither history nor any evidence for Freudian (or neo-Freudian) concepts: if one knows what evidence to use before inferring its Freudian origins, one does not need Freud. Neither method is historical, only analogical, saying only that this seems to resemble that, therefore that explains this. In rejecting Freud's biological foundations, Fromm has said, in effect, not so much that Freud was mistaken as that Luther was mistaken. Unfortunately this leaves Fromm—and any Luther scholar—with a problem. Whatever Luther intended, he was trying to express something, to mean something, and he used anal language to do so. Perhaps he did not, despite all his heroic efforts, finally “know” what that meaning really was, and perhaps, therefore, historians will be guided to translating his language. But they can on no account whatever suppress and ignore it; that remains, except on the crudest propagandistic concept of the historian's task, the sin of sins.

But if Erikson is better than Fromm on Luther, what does that signify? We can be sure Erikson did not choose Luther to write about at random. He knew beforehand how marvelously Luther might serve to display psychoanalytic method at work. But most men—and certainly most of the historically conspicuous men—do not leave sources replete with anal or any other kind of overt body-imagery. Psychoanalytic history cannot be validated until it proves its usefulness in dealing with sources containing none of the elements overtly and classically amenable to interpretation in Freudian clinical terms. If it is going to have any relevance to constitutional history, for instance, it can hardly expect to find anal vocabulary hidden in decisions of the supreme court. The bearing of Erikson's book here is, I think, clear, though mostly implicit. It can be opened up by a simple question: is biography history? Can a biography justify Erikson's subtitle, “A Study in Psychoanalysis and History”?

It might well be argued that this catches up the entire affair, and the point ought to be made flatly: psychoanalytic history is biography-centered history. It hardly follows from this, however, that psychoanalysis, even though it might be thoroughly adequate for the study of individuals, has no relevance to those social entities—institutions, states, classes, styles, cultures, groups, parties, churches, ideologies—which historians are anxious to illuminate. It follows rather that psychoanalytic biography constitutes a perspective, or a focus, from which history can organize all its narratives, no matter how vast a range of social data these may comprehend. What do given institutions,

states, styles, churches, etc., mean for the selves involved with them? Specialized study of any of these—of the evolution of constitutional forms, of philosophical logic, of economic tools and organizations—can never be impugned: we need all such specialized knowledge we can get. These cease to be integral specialties, however, at the slightest inference, explicit or implicit, from the forms or the logic or the tools to their human meaning. At the point of such inference biography is required. Nor is the requirement for biography satisfied in the use of types, or models of social character: these have their use strictly in illumination of the structure of a social system, and it remains to establish the human meaning of that structure itself. Erikson devotes considerable attention to Luther as an organizing perspective for the study of sixteenth-century economics, religion, styles of social character, styles of family life, and, most particularly, “ideology”, comprehending in this worn term the use by the ego of various publicly available verbal patterns for its own meaningful ends. He analyzes in existential detail the meaning of institutions—such as monasteries, in one of which Luther lived out his crisis. One sees how to move out from Luther into the Reformation and into society generally.

Some of the confusion and doubt clustering at this point can fairly be assigned to faulty pioneering in psychoanalytic history itself. Efforts to transport vocabulary, to locate a social unconscious, a collective ego, a community superego, to equate social events with processes discovered by clinicians in individual dynamics, are no good; these are analogies as dubious as analogies drawn from Newton and Darwin. Just as in moving out from the hard core of pathological data used by Freud, psychoanalysis has generated the vocabulary of ego-psychology, so in moving out from the hard core of biography it will have to generate a vocabulary for discussing institutions, empires, ideologies, etc., retaining its integrity exactly as this vocabulary continues, as Erikson's does, to ground itself in biography, in the individual, in consciousness.

To say that psychoanalytic history is biography-centered history is to imply the largest challenge of psychoanalytic method. Schemes of historical interpretation have commonly been contrasted according to which among a multitude of “factors” is selected for emphasis as the primary, basic, fundamental cause of events. God? The Logos? The World-Spirit? The economic system? Human reason? Human passions? Internal contradictions in the social order? Social character? Environment? Impatient with the palpably speculative quality of many of these, positivistic historians have insisted upon limiting explanation to factors which, presumably, it does not take philosophy and certainly not religion to discern. Many modern historians avail themselves—self-consciously or dumbly—of “multi-causal” explanations, “letting the evidence speak” in each case. Psychoanalytic history contrasts with all such schemes in that “causation” is not its preoccupation at all. It is not in

the arena competing with Marxist history or liberal history, cyclical theories or unilinear theories, sociological theories or, in fact, psychological theories where these assign some special causal priority to "psychological factors". It is most compatible with the "common sense" multi-causal method, with its neo-Rankean devotion to the unique event, but its aim is different.

Though Erikson makes nothing of it, it is perhaps no accident that in Luther, so marvelously suited to showing off psychoanalytic method, he is dealing with the restorer of Augustinian perspectives in theology. Augustine attacked classical history, essentially because it could never finally grasp its true subject-matter, human consciousness. It failed in this primarily because of its preoccupation with categories of causation, even when these included various powers of man himself. The ultimate reason why men should have inhibited themselves in this way was one which deeply interested Luther, one which Freud was to echo, and one which can be discerned in Augustine. This sort of history revealed a sickness; it was the sickness of selves incapable—due to a mixture of fear and pride—of recognizing selfhood. Instead, men reached out to identify themselves with various forces which disguised selfhood. This effort produces history which oscillates perpetually between one scheme of determinism and another, and between schemes of determinism and indeterminism, each of which is as regularly discredited as partisan myth.

Erikson's biography of Luther illustrates the connection between a self-consciously historical, existential psychology and the historian's sense that his subject is in truth something that is in every case unique. In recognizing that his problem was to know what he meant, Luther was also recognizing himself as unique, since his identity problem could not even be adequately posed, let alone solved, in general terms, whether those of philosophy or biology, sociology or theology. The only adequate terms were those of his own existence, his own experience—including that which he expressed in terms of his body. As a psychology capable of doing justice to Luther, psychoanalysis points toward what Luther—and Augustine—discovered about all men: the equivalence of selfhood with the capacity for meaning, the capacity for acting (not just behaving), and the capacity to exist as an individual, as unique and as free. History is the study of the embodiments of these identities.

DONALD B. MEYER

MODERNE GESCHICHTSSCHREIBUNG: AUSBLICK AUF EINE PHILOSOPHIE DER GESCHICHTSWISSENSCHAFT. By Fritz Wagner. Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1960. Pp. 127.

This perceptive study deserves attention. Small in compass, it is large in