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“The Wild Analyst”.

**Erich Fromm Review of K. M. and S. Grossman
First published in English in Contemporary Psychoanalysis,
New York, Vol. 2 (1966), pp. 83-4.**

This book describes the life and thoughts of Georg Groddeck, one of the most creative and least known figures in the history of psychoanalysis. Groddeck, a disciple of Bismarck's personal physician, Schweninger, discovered essential elements of psychoanalysis all by himself. With little knowledge of Freud's work, he found the unconscious, psychic reality in patients who were suffering from all kinds of illnesses and succeeded in curing them by uncovering the repressed psychic content. He was the real founder of psychosomatic medicine. He developed a theory which follows more in the Romantic German tradition from Carus to Jung, than the Enlightenment tradition of which Freud was a part. For Groddeck, the unconscious, the Id, was life, and our consciousness was only a thin layer above it. Man was lived by the Id, and especially somatic processes were seen as the direct manifestations and symbols of the Id. While this theory had been formulated in the middle of the 19th century by Carus, Groddeck was the first one to apply it systematically to somatic illnesses. Groddeck's relation to Freud was a most peculiar and interesting one. After he had made his great discoveries, he became more familiar with Freud's work and learned that he had made some basic discoveries which Freud had already anticipated. He considered Freud his master and begged to be considered as one of his pupils. Freud was always sympathetic but somewhat critical, and the relationship between the two never assumed the form of personal friendship that Freud had with his favorite disciples. When Freud, after the First World War, developed new theories which were to culminate in the theory of the life and death instincts, and which were more closely related to the romantic concept of the un-conscious, the affinity between the thinking of the two men became even greater. Nothing is more symptomatic of this theoretic compatibility than that Freud borrowed the important concept of the Id from Groddeck--{84} giving him credit for it. Yet Groddeck never became fully integrated into the psychoanalytic „movement.“ Most psychoanalysts did not appreciate Groddeck because he had little use for abstract and overcomplicated speculations. They thought him naive and paid little attention to what he had to say. Only very few, especially Ferenczi, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, Lou Andreas Salomé, and Karen Horney, were among his ardent admirers. There were still other reasons for the estrangement between Groddeck and the majority of other psychoanalysts. One was that he did not share the belief in the patriarchal overevaluation of the male, current among psychoanalysts. He was impressed by the significance of the mother, by man's fear of women, and by man's wish to be a woman--facts which did not fit at all into the Freudian concept of the relationship between the sexes. Another reason was Groddeck's fierce sense of independence and his aversion to a bureaucratically controlled science. Just as Groddeck was a rebel in the field of conventional medicine, he was also a rebel against any attempt to make psychoanalysis a movement controlled by an official bureaucracy.

Aside from his extraordinary qualities as a therapist and as an original thinker, Groddeck was a man of outstanding human qualities. Not only was he a man of remarkable courage, independence, and integrity, he was also one of the kindest and most tolerant human beings I have had the privilege to know. The authors of

this book have succeeded in presenting a brilliant picture of the man and of his work, and, at the same time, they have explored most intelligently his relationship to Freud, and his position within the psychoanalytic movement.

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Their book is of considerable importance for anyone who is interested in the history of psychoanalysis. Copyright © 1966 by Erich Fromm Copyright © 2004 by The Literary Estate of Erich Fromm c/o Rainer Funk, Ursrainer Ring 24, D-72076 Tuebingen Fax: +49-7071-600049, E-mail: frommfunk[at-symbol]aol.com.

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Volver a publicaciones de Georg Groddeck