

In 1926, Rank finally broke from Vienna and moved to Paris, where he continued his writings and analytic practice. After this, there are no letters.

Substantial parts of these letters concern the running of the analytic press and associated journals, the minutiae of which might sustain the interest of historians more than the general reader. It is possible to focus, as I did, on the passages that track Freud and Rank's own life stories, and the intertwined development of their relationship and work. Read in this way, it is an accessible primary source on the history of psychoanalysis. In places it is gripping, sparing nothing, bringing readers right into the sideshows that can go unseen behind the main event.

Adam Polnay, specialty registrar in psychotherapy, Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK, email: adam.polnay@nhs.net

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Hide and Seek: The Psychology of Self-Deception

By Neel Burton

Acheron Press, 2012, £12.99, pb, 248 pp.

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I was asked to review this book just before a holiday to Egypt with a group of non-medical friends, so it replaced my usual beachside reading. The title was intriguing, and Burton warns in the introduction that this book is 'not for the faint-hearted, lily-livered or yellow-bellied' – I was, therefore, ready to look into the depths of my soul to find out in what ways I had been deceiving myself. The cover raised some eyebrows among the group. If my answer to the question 'What do you do for a living?' did not induce the usual wary but curious response, this book did. Our tour guide asked what the relevance of the 'Eye of Horus' hieroglyph on the cover was, and I found myself

wondering, too. In Egyptian mythology, Horus was killed by his evil uncle Set, who also gouged out his eye. Horus offered the eye to his father Osiris (god of the underworld) in return for restoration to life. It became the symbol of power, sacrifice and protection, and was painted on sarcophagi to ward off evil.

In *Hide and Seek*, Burton provides an excellent explanation of how we use psychological defence mechanisms (instead of Horus' eye) to protect ourselves from 'painful truths'. He uses examples from current affairs, the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, and from the arts with references to Leonardo da Vinci, Oscar Wilde and Agatha Christie to explain 38 different identified mechanisms – everything from denial and projective identification, to reification and altruism. Initially, I struggled to keep reading, not because I had trouble facing up to my own 'painful truths', but because there did not appear to be much new theory for a practising psychiatrist. Non-medical friends picked it up and read with more instant fascination. But by the end, I felt I had learnt a lot; I had no idea that there were that many different defence mechanisms, and found that Burton's references to modern literature and to current affairs, for example the 9/11 tragedy, really helped put the defences into context.

The philosophy content was explained in a straightforward manner and was new to me. It would make a great present for friends interested in psychology, and a welcome change to the standard examination revision texts in psychiatry. Did I learn a lot about myself as the introduction promised? I am not sure I did. Maybe I am not reflective enough, instead intellectualising the reasons for the cover illustration. In Burton's words, 'self-deception is a defining part of our human nature' and I don't think I'm immune.

G. Alice Lomax, ST5 in Liaison Psychiatry, St Helier Hospital, South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, London, UK, email: alice.lomax@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk

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