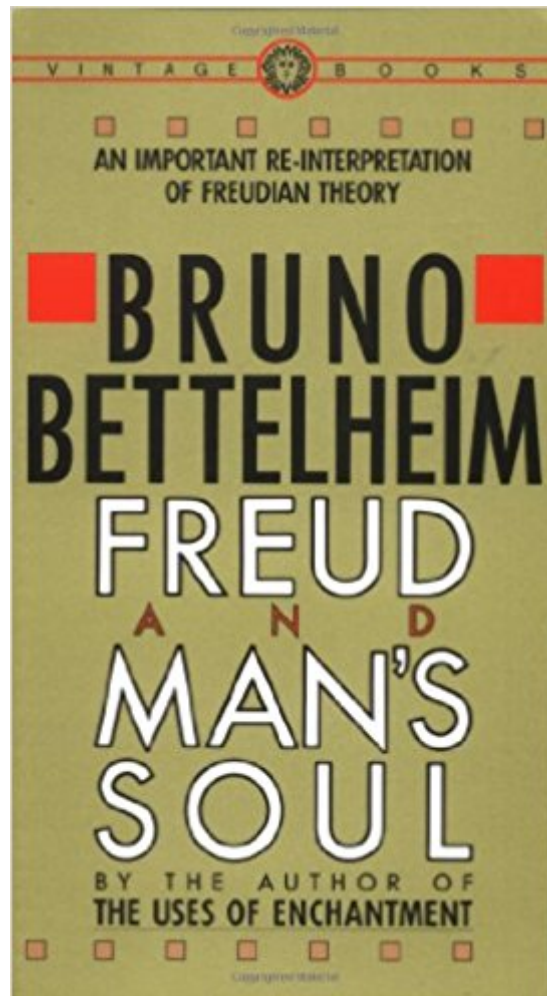




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# Freud And Man's Soul: An Important Re-Interpretation Of Freudian Theory



## Synopsis

Has Sigmund Freud been seriously misunderstood? The author of *The Uses of Enchantment* argues that mistranslation has distorted Freud's work in English and led students to see a system intended to cooperate flexibly with individual needs as a set of rigid rules to be applied by external authority. This provocative argument cuts through the myths to reveal a greater, more compassionate and also far more disturbing figure. "VITAL...an eloquent attempt to reclaim Freud's reputation in America." *THE NEW YORK TIMES* "Lucid and provocative." *THE LOS ANGELES TIMES BOOK REVIEW*

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## Customer Reviews

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Argues that mistranslation has distorted Freud's work in English and led students to see a system intended to cooperate flexibly with individual needs as a set of rigid rules to be applied by external authority.

Bettelheim, raised in Vienna and therefore having a feel for Viennese German, fled Hitler's Austria for the U.S. and became a psychiatrist. He was appalled by the bad translations of Freud's writings which changed English speaking practitioners' understanding of Freud's basic intentions. Freud's

reputation and that of psychoanalysis suffered as a consequence. This short book is a fascinating look at what misunderstandings can result from translators who are not sensitive to connotations of a word and who put their own prejudices at work when choosing a translation - which is then copied endlessly from one book to another. An example is the choice of the word Ego as a translation for Ich (I) thus endowing this important concept with a mechanistic impersonal meaning rather than the "myself" meaning which Freud intended. The central intention of Freud to help a person know himself is turned into a 'science' and a 'therapy', ignoring Freud's basic attention to the soul - another problematic translation of the German term Seele (or Geist?). Should be read by all practicing analysts and anyone interested in today's neuroscience findings which seem to support Freud's theory of the unconscious.

This quick read provided a much-needed modification to the way I had learned to view Freud up to this point. Written by someone who walked in Freud's shoes, both culturally and educationally, Bettelheim applies the lens of the appropriate time and culture in which Freud composed his theories and works to the general ideas behind them, shedding much new light on the inaccurate translations of Freud's works into English, which we are all asked to read in school. If you have read Freud, or if you have to for school, trust me--read this important, controversial work. Of immense value to the psychoanalyst, therapist, or anyone studying Freud, especially the contemporary psychology student who has been fed the dry, westernized treatment of Freud. This book will change everything, trust me.

Dr. Bettelheim brings an unusual perspective, since he read Freud as a countryman, essentially, and understood what Freud was saying. The message was simple and direct. The concept was very easy for anyone to understand, being expressed in everyday non-technical language. Too bad the translation of the central basic concepts of structure of the unconscious elements of the mind was so greatly distorted. It is understandable that Americans misunderstood the gist of the 'theory of the unconscious' and the whole approach to psychoanalytic treatment. A very good example of someone exercising their pseudo-intellectual approach to psychoanalysis appears in the movie, "Five Easy Pieces." The book is short and well written. It remains a must read for anyone interested in psychoanalysis or the theory of the unconscious.

An admirable book to read by all English-speaking analysts. For me, the most important author's message is his critique of an awful Strachey's translation, this "authorized version", that falsified

Freud, whilst it had to be a relatively easy task of translation from one Germanic language into another. But, alas, the English-speaking world got an improbable hellenized and latinized mistranslation, with highly narcissistic pretension of being smarter than Freud. Methinks, this terrible mystification is unrepairable during the life of a generation or two. And, despite the efforts of actual new translator, just liberated from copyright slavery, Freud's perception in the English-speaking intellectual world would remain the same: as a one more abstruse and aloof psychology without soul.

Very important read - gives alternate view of Freud through previous misinterpretations of his work

I would wonder if it is the most valuable book written in regards to 'who Freud actually is/was' as an analyst; person, humanist, philosopher, independent thinker / leader, insightful being whose ideas have been condensed into limited versions of his thoughts. This book single handedly changed my thoughts about Analysis & I have shared these ideas with many since.... Very inspiring....

This was a great book... did not know much about Freud but this book made him more real and valuable. The sadness of misinterpretation is a universal problem in the telling of history.... no difference here... This book is worth the read...Victor

Wonderful book. Sheds important light on misunderstandings of Freudian thought.

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