

★ In his face the agony of an age of faith put to death by torture.

## THE FACE OF FREUD

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For sixteen years cancer ate relentlessly at Freud's lip, gums, jaw, and palate. Eating became a torture, speaking an agony. Pain was never more than a swallow away.

If pain and courage reside in the jaw, purpose is found in the eyes. Here are eyes that look inward — a direction no human eyes had wholly turned to before, nor looked at so long, nor seen so much.

Never until Freud had a personality been excavated so systematically, never had there been so relentless an attempt at self-confrontation. The search was on alien difficult ground, unfriendly, unhappy, dirty. And as the hunt reached its climax, it was almost as though the body rebelled against Freud's intellectual inquisition and tried to draw attention away from the soul to the jaw, from emotion and memory to the tangible terrors of

death reproducing itself in his flesh.

Freud was not easily subdued. The struggle added compassion as it deepened the lines that are etched just below the corners of the nose down to the sides of the mouth.

Freud knew that Man had always had the power and the wish to destroy himself and this knowledge cut deep, deep, deep into the furrows across the forehead, the ridge across his nose. In his famous letters to Einstein on the inevitability of war, Freud's pessimism is reluctant, resigned, pervasive.

He had faced rejection on every side. The medical profession disowned him. Close family friends deserted him. Collaborators faltered and disappeared. News papers called him "that evil Viennese." Anti-Semitism dogged him much of his life. Rather than fight these outside

forces, he made himself inaccessible. There was struggle enough inside.

If there is no contempt, no vengeance in the face, there is also no sentiment, no soft humanity. In one sense, Freud strides with those intellectual giants who stripped Man of his dignity as they increased the sum of human knowledge.

If Copernicus made Man less than a speck in the universe, if Darwin anchored man in slime, it was Freud who brought a truth even more difficult to accept: beneath the outer crust of Man's civilized personality Freud pried open the volcanic cauldron of violent, possessive, unreasoning, and primitive impulses which he insisted are Man's real nature.

But if Freud stripped Man of his illusions and dignity, he offered a way of earning them back. Through self-knowledge, courage, growth, the barbarian could be pacified, the primitive harnessed,

the civilized fortified.

Freud himself refused to be misled into the hopeful belief that the victory would be easy, that larger freedom could be readily attained. His life and work rang down the curtain on the nineteenth century, on the age of optimism and the inevitability of progress.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries held that Man was good, only his institutions needed changing. The institutions *were* changed — Man remained as he always was.

In Freud's face is the agony of an age of faith put to death by torture — an age that had begun with Man's supreme faith in himself and his works, that ended with mass destruction and the birth of total tyrannies.

History wrote the tragic closing lines in the drama of his life. A refugee from Nazism, he died in London, on September 26, 1939. — *The Saturday Review*.