

Freud and his followers pronounced all religion anathema not because it was opposed to what they did but because it was too similar. (A decade ago, Bruno Bettelheim demonstrated that Freud's works in the original German are full of references to the soul, all of which were excised from the English translations.) Early in this century, psychoanalysis was popularly lumped with mesmerism, Christian Science, phrenology, and other fads that cloaked religious concerns in scientific trappings. For psychoanalysis, such trappings are no longer necessary, Kakar argues, because even the hardest sciences have moved beyond simple positivism. (Quantum physics, for example, challenges the positivistic notions of causality.) Someone without interest in religion might well read *The Analyst and the Mystic* as a primer of current trends in psychoanalysis, showing how the discipline has moved from a science of instinctual drives to being a study of the mental representations of relationships.

From his perspective in India, Kakar sees how even the most dissimilar analysts of the past decades—Erik Erikson, Donald Winnicott, Wilfred Bion, and Jacques Lacan, for example—share a “common antireductionistic agenda.” All have been unwilling to reduce the varieties of human behavior to underlying scientific paradigms. Kakar himself discusses the 19th-century Indian saint Sri Ramakrishna—a lovable, wise, and childlike mystic, in many ways like St. Francis—without any scientific condescension. Earlier, Ramakrishna—who passed into ecstatic trances for days at a time and who sometimes went naked or wore women's clothing—would have had every diagnostic label imaginable pasted on him. (Even the venerable Buddha had, within the psychoanalytic literature, the various diagnoses of melancholia, catatonic ecstasy, schizophrenic dementia, and apathy applied to him.) Yet here Kakar argues that Ramakrishna, with his capacity for love and work, more than passes Freud's test for mature well-being.

Representing perhaps the most complete reconciliation of religion and psychoanalysis to date, Kakar's book aims to expand the therapeutic understanding and techniques available to practitioners and laymen alike. But Kakar might have mentioned where the old scientific impulse in psychoanalysis has gone. If “rela-

tional models” represent one great trend in post-Freudian psychiatry, psychopharmacology is surely the other. Many doctors and therapists now hold that chemistry is at least as good as talk for treating most psychiatric complaints. The division that Freud struggled to prevent between humanistic psychology and science—between, as it used to be put, “salvation” and “salves”—apparently has come to pass.

MICHEL FOUCAULT. *By Didier Eribon.*

Trans. by Betsy Wing. Harvard. 374 pp. \$27.95

Michel Foucault (1926–84) is widely regarded as one of the 20th-century's more innovative thinkers. Eribon's biography, a best seller in France, has all the fascination of Foucault's own “archeologies,” which sought to uncover the relationships between self and culture.

Not only critics but even Foucault's friends have often read his work as a rationalization of his life. “I have suffered and I still suffer from a lot of things in French social and cultural life,” Foucault admitted. The young philosopher is shown here in his twenties making “several attempts at or stagings of suicide,” and all his life Foucault's psychological balance remained fragile. No wonder, then, that in *Madness and Civilization* (1961) he criticized society for defining itself in contrast to those it castigated as mentally different and labeled “mad.” Foucault was gay in a culture that understood homosexuality as a perversion. So of course he would write a *History of Sexuality* (3 vol., 1976–84) to argue that what passes for natural is, in fact, a social construct. But to relate Foucault's work to his life in this way is, as Eribon points out, a very un-Foucaultian way to approach it.

For Foucault, as for Nietzsche (to whom he is indebted), there is no pure knowledge or truth independent of social context. An individual's knowledge is largely an unconscious mimicking, through ideas, of the existing power structure. The intellectual's task, as Foucault defined it, is thus somehow to break out of the “hegemony” of knowledge, to reveal “the economic and political role it plays.” Foucault himself investigated the history of schools and asylums, medical clinics and prisons—the institutions that embodied, in Nietzschean terms, the social will to power—that determine what we believe

is natural or normal.

In his life, too, Foucault attempted to break out of the self-contained social circle in which power and knowledge reinforce each other. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu described Foucault's project as "a long exploration of transgression, of going beyond social limits." To break from his native country, Foucault took teaching positions in Sweden, Poland, Germany, Tunisia, Brazil, Japan, and the United States. In 1966, his *Order of Things* became a best seller ("Foucault Selling like Hotcakes" ran the *Nouvel Observateur* headline), and in 1970 he was appointed a professor at the Collège de France. By then he had succeeded Jean-Paul Sartre as both the reigning French philosopher and the leading militant opposed to "courts, cops, hospitals, asylums, school, military service, the press, television, the State."

Foucault's story is not without its ironies. The man who challenged the entrenched orthodoxies was rewarded with international fame. Two thousand people attended his 1983 lecture in Berkeley on "The Culture of the Self;" indeed he was well on his way to becoming the new orthodoxy. A sadder irony is that Foucault, who had made a principle of transgressing limits, died of AIDS in Paris on June 25, 1984. "But couldn't everyone's life," Foucault once asked, "become a work of art?" Eribon suggests that Foucault's life, despite its fragility and sadnesses, was proof of that possibility.

Science & Technology

ECOCIDE IN THE USSR: Health and Nature under Siege. By Murray Feshbach and Alfred Friendly, Jr. Basic. 376 pp. \$24

Embarrassed by Russia's backwardness, early Stalinist planners embarked on one of the great romances of history in their embrace of industrial progress. Propaganda posters in the 1930s depicted smokestacks bathed in ethereal orange and yellow soot as the very image of beauty. Open-pit mines became symbols of growth, prosperity, and, above all, hope.

A half-century later the former Soviet Union stands on the brink of ecological disaster. Feshbach, a Georgetown University professor of demographics, and Friendly, a former

Newsweek Moscow bureau chief, estimate that three-fourths of the commonwealth's surface water is polluted. Toxic chemicals, used to compensate for inefficient collective farming (to which the Soviets were committed ideologically), have turned most drinking wells into carcinogenic cocktails. "Mother Volga" is an open sewer, as are the Dniepr and Don rivers. As "the greatest single, man-made ecological catastrophe in history," Feshbach and Friendly point to the shrinking of the inland Aral Sea through relentless irrigation projects. Storms now carry toxic salts from the Aral's dry beds across Central Asia. Exposed to the virulent pesticides used in the irrigated cotton fields, mothers in the Aral region cannot breast-feed their babies without running the risk of poisoning them. The mind-numbing toll goes on and on: Half the young men who reported for military duty in 1991 were unfit to serve. The ecological crisis has in turn engendered a health-care crisis: Clinics and hospitals lack the trained staff and medical supplies (or sometimes even the plumbing) needed to deal with the sick who queue up in long lines.

How to make sense of this catastrophe? Some observers claim that Russia fulfilled its own propagandistic description of an evil imperial power: Moscow treated the peripheral republics like colonies, exploiting them for Mother Russia's benefit. Feshbach and Friendly reject this interpretation, pointing out that the ecological ravages within Russia are no less severe than in the other former republics. Instead, they blame Marxist theory, which held that labor created all value: Nature was neutral, merely indifferent raw material, for humankind to use however it saw fit. "We cannot expect charity from nature," ran one Stalinist-era slogan, "we must tear it from her."

The writer Pyotr Chadayev long ago lamented that it was Russia's fate to serve as an example to the world of how not to live. The authors think that the tragedy of Chernobyl—to which the Soviets officially attributed 31 deaths, and which one

