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Sommario/riassunto

"This work presents a complete history of psychoanalysis from its origins in 19th-century medical science to the end of the 20th century. The origins of psychoanalysis as well as the more immediate influences on Freud are explored, as is the way the discipline he founded has developed and changed. Joseph Schwartz first lays out the late Victorian approaches to mental illness and health and explains the context in which Freud's revolution took place. He traces the evolution of Freud's own thought, then shows how and why the rifts and shifts in the analytic community occurred. He then focuses on Freud's colleagues, rivals, successors and detractors - Jung, Adler, Sullivan, Melanie Klein, Erich Fromm to name a few. For once we see how the different schools and interpretations fit together - how they grew in response to each other, and what separate contributions each pioneer made over the last hundred years to create an effective understanding of the world of human subjective experience. Schwartz probes the relationship between psychoanalysis and the natural sciences, creatively exploring the criticism that psychoanalysis is not a 'legitimate' science and successfully reasserts its importance, not simply as a systematic attempt to describe experience, but to understand it. The real question for humans who suffer mental pain is not whether analysis produces understandings that are 'scientific' - but if they are any good. Whether you are pro- or anti-Freud, you will find this a learned, revelatory, original - and humane - book."--Provided by publisher.