

**“To Bury Freud on Wilson”:
Uncovering *Thomas Woodrow Wilson, A Psychological Study*,
by Sigmund Freud and William C. Bullitt**

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Allow Me to Introduce Myself ...

Thomas Woodrow Wilson, Twenty-Eighth President of the United States: A Psychological Study (hereafter *The Wilson Book*), by Sigmund Freud and William C. Bullitt, appeared in print for the first time in December of 1966. The basic premise of the book is that Wilson’s resolution of the Oedipus complex caused him to become exceedingly neurotic: he cast his father, a Presbyterian minister, in the role of God and himself as Christ, thus becoming the suffering servant and betrayed savior of mankind. Ultimately, for Freud and Bullitt the Treaty of Versailles as directed by Wilson was an abysmal failure because of his unmitigated and inarbitrable belief in his own divine rightness.

Freud and Bullitt first began working together not on *The Wilson Book*, but as doctor and patient, in 1925. Without doubt, a large part of Bullitt’s analysis dealt directly with his experience as Chief of the Current Intelligence Section for Wilson’s delegation of plenipotentiaries to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, an experience that would leave this formerly important political insider, at the age of twenty-eight, with no political future in sight. Bullitt’s unpublished manuscript “The Tragedy of Woodrow Wilson,” produced while he was in session with Freud during the years 1927–1929, attests that his experience at Versailles was central to his analysis.¹ It is actually a play that dramatizes Wilson’s failure in Paris, and in 1930 Bullitt, still in session, proposed following it up with a politico-historical account of the major characters involved with the production of the Treaty of Versailles. In his foreword to the resulting book, Bullitt remembers that when he mentioned the project, Freud’s “eyes brightened” (Freud/Bullitt v).

In this foreword Bullitt recounts how collaboration came about: Freud was “dissatisfied by his studies of Leonardo da Vinci and of the Moses statue by Michelangelo because he had been obliged to draw large conclusions from few facts, and he had long wished to make a psychological study of a contemporary with regard to whom

thousands of facts could be ascertained” (vi). Bullitt recalls Freud declaring that “he would like to collaborate with me in writing the Wilson chapter of my book” (v–vi), but with such a collaborator, Bullitt’s proposal was transformed into a study devoted entirely to Woodrow Wilson. As Bullitt comments, “To bury Freud on Wilson in a chapter of my book would be to produce an impossible monstrosity” (vi). Essentially complete by 1932, the manuscript was shelved in light of Bullitt’s resurgent political prospects and would not be brought out again until 1964 when Bullitt, dying of leukemia, was no longer concerned with any potential harm to his political career.

Many commentators on the published work have remarked that what Freud and Bullitt actually produced is in fact just that, “an impossible monstrosity.” Shortly after its first printing in December 1966, an eruption—something like a critical Vesuvius—buried *The Wilson Book*. Paul Roazen, a participant in the critical outrage of 1967, tried to explain it at least partially in his 22 April 2005 *Times Literary Supplement* article entitled “Oedipus at Versailles.” He notes that he and his contemporaries failed to “look at Wilson through the eyes of those in the interwar period”: “From Versailles to Pearl Harbor, American revisionist historians were convinced that US intervention in the First World War had been mistaken. Only after America entered the arena for the second time in 1941 was there a major increase in popular American respect for Wilson’s memory” (13). This wave had not broken by 1967 and, with the simultaneously growing popular dissent against Freudianism, it guaranteed that *The Wilson Book* would be received into an intellectually hostile environment.

Moreover, the Freud estate worked to ensure a complete refutation of *The Wilson Book* by comprehensively denying—fraudulently—Freud’s involvement in its authorship. In particular Freud’s daughter, Anna, claimed that her father had not actually collaborated in the production of the manuscript, but was merely a passive participant, acting as a sounding board for Bullitt’s ideas. Playing on Bullitt’s tarnished reputation in the post-World War II period, Anna Freud labelled the text just another “frightfully arrogant” manifestation of Bullitt’s big mouth (see Brownell/Billings 324). Following her lead, Freudians everywhere began to question and censure *The Wilson Book*, even as early as September of 1966, months before its publication.

The main argument of the Freud estate was that *The Wilson Book* could not possibly be a product of Freud’s famously meticulous construction. The psychological components of the text were condemned as poorly written, oversimplified, and unnecessarily repetitious, and the work as a whole was excluded from the Freudian canon. Bullitt was accused of completely revising any text that Freud may once have written, either without his consent or after his death, and even of outright bullying him into signing his name to the manuscript in exchange for safe passage out of Austria.

Such accusations have allowed the academic community to ignore *The Wilson Book*, but now, with the opening of the The William Christian Bullitt and Anne Moen Bullitt Papers at Yale University, the extent of Sigmund Freud’s participation in its writing can be established. Among Bullitt’s papers are Freud’s original psycho-

logical treatment of Wilson, which became the basis for the first two chapters of *The Wilson Book*, including handwritten revisions and several typewritten drafts. These are all in German, but English translations are also there, including handwritten revisions on each page by both Freud and Bullitt, both writing in English and German. Each of the men's handwriting is distinctive, so it is clear that both were competent in both languages. The archives also contain several typewritten drafts of Freud's introduction to *The Wilson Book*, edited and annotated in both English and German, along with numerous other letters, notes, editorial remarks, commentaries, and so on. Clearly not the mere passive participant of Anna Freud's account, Freud was in fact a full-fledged collaborator; and what's more, he was proud of *The Wilson Book* and approved of its every page, as evidenced by his use of the book for instructional purposes with his students in the early 1930s (see Roazen, *Freud: Political and Social Thought* 300–01).

The Wilson Book is important because it was conceived of and discussed during the same stage in Freud's career that he was concocting his truly seminal works, *Die Zukunft einer Illusion*, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, and *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion*. It was during this final strophe of Freud's life that he turned from the analysis of the individual's discontent with civilization to the analysis of civilization as composed of individual discontents. This development is evident in *The Wilson Book*, where Freud analyzed an individual whose catastrophe came when he attempted to create a civilization.

Researching the publication history of the manuscript and the critical response to it also reveals new, disconcerting facts about Anna Freud's attempt to control Freudianism in general and the psychoanalytic movement in particular through rather devious management of her father's texts. Her machinations are already known through her curious and even dishonest editing of several editions of his letters. The early editions of the Freud/Fleiss correspondence and the letters published with Ernest Jones's biography of Freud were all edited for content by Anna Freud, and she attempted to remove some passages from Freud's letters to Jung before that correspondence was published. With *The Wilson Book*, too, she attempted to edit out anything she regarded as too personal, and when her edits were rejected by Bullitt, she began to campaign against him and the text by lying to the publisher, Houghton Mifflin, and inflaming the Freudian community with misinformation.

I. A Twisted Vendetta, or "Out of all Proportion"

On 24 October 1966, shortly before the *The Wilson Book* was to go to print, Houghton Mifflin executive Benjamin C. Tilghman wrote to Bullitt, "There is already a considerable amount of interest in the book. It now seems to us certain that there will be strongly conflicting views. Such a situation is by no means always detrimental. It is, though, important to prevent further doubts about the book's authenticity" (Brownell/Billings 327). Tilghman was attempting to alleviate the growing cloud of critical concern regarding the extent of Freud's participation in the text, which

he himself shared. After a September meeting with Bullitt, Tilghman had regretfully noted in a memo, "I could not establish in any graphic way the fact and nature of Freud's participation" (326). Still in a quandary in late October he wrote to Bullitt, "I am afraid that if speculation on that point continues, the result will be reviews which will obscure your clear look at Wilson and the importance of the book" (327). Bullitt responded with a phone call on 26 October during which Tilghman informed him that the "opposition forces [are] gathering; they now include Erik H. Erikson, the famed Freudian psychologist at Harvard, and Barbara W. Tuchman, the renowned historian" (326). In his report on the conversation, Tilghman noted that Bullitt replied "that he did not think that gasps from people like this were worth anything."

In the 28 January 1967 issue of *The New Republic* in an article entitled "A Bullitt to Wilson," Harvard psychiatrist Robert Coles wrote: "The book can either be considered a mischievous and preposterous joke, a sort of caricature of the worst that has come from psychoanalytic ideologues, or else an awful and unrelenting slander upon a remarkably gifted American president" (28). Coles went on to defend Freud on the basis that the book was "overwhelmingly Bullitt's work: the style, the use of words, the content, the tone, everything is unfamiliar," and concluded with a bit of conspiracy theory: "Perhaps [Freud ...] trusted some of his friends too much—because it can be argued that William Bullitt's twisted vendetta against Woodrow Wilson may actually be an underhanded assault on psychoanalysis and Sigmund Freud" (30).

Likewise, in an article called "The Strange Case of Freud, Bullitt, and Woodrow Wilson I" in the 9 February 1967 issue of *The New York Review of Books*, Erik H. Erikson stated boldly that for himself "and for others it is easy to see only that Freud could have 'written' almost nothing of what is now presented in print" (3). He went on: "There are good reasons to conclude that with the exception of the Introduction, all of Freud's original contributions [...] have been lost [and] the text now printed must be ascribed to Bullitt, because he either transcribed or wrote, translated or caused to be translated, every word of it" (4), deploring the idea that Freud could "knowingly collaborate in a psychoanalytic belittling of any person, great or small" (5). Perhaps Erikson realized that his reaction was out of proportion to the situation at hand, for when he reprinted this same review in his 1975 book *Life History and the Historical Moment*, he removed his categorical rejection of Freud's involvement in *The Wilson Book* but without comment. Consequently, Erikson's original view has had the "most lasting influence" (Roazen, "Oedipus at Versailles" 12).

In the meantime Richard Hofstadter, who wrote "The Strange Case: II," the second installment of *The New York Review of Books* two-part review, stood with Erikson's first opinion. He listed three reasons for his "irritation at this book": "its indefiniteness about the details of authorship, a certain persistent insensitivity in thought and style, and a punitive tone, which gives it the aspect of a vendetta carried out in the name of science" (6). And, not to be outdone in out-of-proportion-ness, British historian A. J. P. Taylor, in his article "Silliness in Excelsis," which appeared in the 12 May 1967 issue of *The New Statesman*, scoffed:

The book is a disgrace as a scientific exercise. The two authors had no means of analysing Wilson except on the basis of second-hand knowledge, and therefore they guessed [...]. Moreover they wrote in disillusion and hate [...] the book therefore contributes nothing to historical understanding” (653–54)

Taylor concluded, and one can almost hear him sneer, “how did anyone ever manage to take Freud seriously?” (654). If ever there were a twisted vendetta involving *The Wilson Book*, it is certainly most apparent in the critical campaign against it, which seems out of all proportion to the text itself.

“Out of all proportion”—the phrase is itself, though admittedly vague, actually a reference to William C. Bullitt, the author of this supposed twisted vendetta. It was once used by Bullitt and, especially in these circumstances, is an apt appellation for this man denounced again and again as an anti-Christ of sorts—and anti-Christ he could be if one accepts his and Freud’s theory that Wilson believed himself to be Christ. Commensurately, when Bullitt was the first US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, the novelist Mikhail Bulgakov’s view of him contributed to the depiction of the character Woland, Bulgakov’s version of Faust’s Mephisto, in *The Master and Margarita*. Quite literally, after one of the US Ambassador’s extravagant parties in Moscow, Bulgakov was left with the impression that Bullitt was Mephistopheles, presiding over a *Walpurgisnacht* all his own (see Etkind). Appropriately, “I deviled the Russians” is the phrase that Bullitt used to describe his years as US Ambassador to the Soviet Union (see Farnsworth 153). “Out of all proportion” was his description of the reaction to his public resignation from, and condemnation of, Woodrow Wilson’s delegation of plenipotentiaries to the Paris Peace Conference that ended the First World War and produced the Treaty of Versailles: “The repercussion of this letter was great, out of all proportion to the importance of the person who had written it” (Freud/Bullitt 272). But who was this person?

II. Hoof-in-Mouth Disease

In his book *Philadelphia: Patricians and Philistines 1900–1950* (1980) John Lukacs speaks very highly of William C. Bullitt, especially of his ability to know a person’s character. In other words, if nothing else, Bullitt certainly “knew” the minds of those he dealt with. Walter Lippmann, editor of *The New Republic*, regarded Bullitt’s insight as being “extraordinarily accurate” (Brownell/Billings 64). Franklin Delano Roosevelt was keenly aware of Bullitt’s gift, his knack for “knowing” others, and on that basis employed him very early in his administration, in November of 1932. FDR made Bullitt instrumental in the negotiations that would lead to official recognition of the Soviet Union, and afterward he sent Bullitt to Moscow as the first US Ambassador. Bullitt came to know the intentions of “Uncle Joe” Stalin as early as 1933 and quickly informed Roosevelt that this “wiry Gipsy with roots and emotions beyond my experience” was not to be trusted (Bullitt, *For the President* 66). He echoed this conclusion in a conversation with FDR in 1941, reminding the president

that Stalin was a “Caucasian bandit whose only thought when he got something for nothing was that the other fellow was an ass” (Bullitt, “How We Won the War”). FDR persisted in his own “hunch that Stalin is not that kind of man,” but what is most important here is Bullitt’s outspokenness. Others may have suspected the truths that Bullitt seized upon but chose, for whatever personal or political reasons, to keep their mouths shut. Perhaps they were afraid to say something that might in time be held against them, as the unabashed Bullitt would do repeatedly throughout his career.

It was Bullitt’s penchant for saying the things that no one wanted to hear, for telling the truth even when the truth was unwelcome, that got him exiled from political life during the 1920s. At age 26 Bullitt was the head of the Washington bureau of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*. In Washington, with well-placed friends, such as Woodrow Wilson’s chief adviser Colonel Edward M. House, with whom he enjoyed the luxury of a private telephone line, “Bullitt began to get hold of exclusive stories which aroused the envy of rival reporters” (Farnsworth 8), who finally hired a private detective to tail Bullitt, “hoping to learn—unsuccessfully, as it turned out—how he was able to beat them on story after story” (Brownell/Billings 66). By October of 1917, Bullitt’s blunt use of confidential information even caught the attention of President Wilson. After Bullitt published information on a proposed interallied war conference, information that Secretary of State Lansing specifically requested remain secret, Wilson wrote to the *Public Ledger*, “insisting that a man who ‘would do what Mr. Bullitt did’ should not be trusted with as responsible a position as he occupied in Washington. We can ‘never trust to his discretion again,’ the President concluded. He demanded Bullitt’s immediate removal from his Washington post” (Farnsworth 9).

Bullitt had been campaigning vigorously for a position in the Department of State beginning after his return from Germany and Austria-Hungary in the autumn of 1916, where he had honeymooned with his new bride, with a little investigative journalism on the side. The articles and interviews he published upon his return were a great success, but he had a great deal of information that he could not publish and thought might make him a valuable asset to his government. Indeed, “as of early 1917 [Colonel House] was receiving from Bullitt advice on future events in Europe” (Brownell/Billings 67), hence the Bullitt-House phone line. In July of 1917, having just left a position with George Creel’s Committee on Public Information after only three thoroughly unsatisfying months, he wrote a letter to House, by then an intimate friend, requesting a position in “some service to which he could give everything in him for twenty-four hours a day. Would Wilson perhaps need another personal secretary, a young man [...] ‘used to keeping his mouth shut.’ There is no reply to Bullitt’s request in the House papers at Yale” (Farnsworth 8). There is, that is, no printed reply beyond the fact that the good Colonel underlined the words “keeping his mouth shut” and punctuated the phrase with a question mark.

Despite Wilson’s attempt at eviction, Bullitt remained in Washington in October 1917, certainly due to the “eagerness with which prominent men came to Bullitt’s

defense” (Farnsworth 9). One such defender was Secretary of State Lansing, whose call for secrecy Bullitt had not heeded and yet who “declared himself personally convinced of Bullitt’s innocence” because Bullitt was a “man of integrity who would not knowingly violate a confidence.” Perhaps Lansing sought to bring the errant Bullitt back into line with this testimonial, but his confidence would be violated for a second time by Bullitt, namely before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the Treaty of Versailles on 10 September 1919 (see Bullitt, *The Bullitt Mission*). Bullitt’s testimony, which did indeed “knowingly violate” Lansing’s confidence, ultimately cost Lansing his position,² and he was neither the first nor the last to have Bullitt blow a whistle on him. Despite all this controversy, in December of 1917, just two months after Wilson declared that Bullitt could never be trusted again, Bullitt became Assistant Secretary in the Office of the Secretary of State. Notably, Bullitt’s reports went not only to his official immediate supervisor, but also directly to none other than Colonel House. By the end of 1918, Bullitt was sailing to Paris with the president and his cadre of plenipotentiaries intent on creating a new world order and a lasting peace.

Bullitt’s next mouthful was his open letter of resignation from the US delegation to Paris, complete with its harsh critique of Wilson’s performance at Versailles, dated 17 May 1919, followed by his above-mentioned testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Bullitt revealed that Secretary of State Lansing had told him in conversation of his personal disapproval of the treaty, and this testimony had a dual impact. Bullitt’s revelations not only cost Lansing his position, it also served to solidify congressional antagonism to the treaty and ultimately prevented its passage through Congress. But that was not all: for the committee’s edification, Bullitt also openly discussed how Wilson had sent him to negotiate in secret with Lenin and the then fledgling Soviet Union in 1919, negotiations that, though sanctioned by Wilson at their inception, were officially ignored upon completion. This testimony created a fair amount of public outrage with both Bullitt and the Wilson Administration, and Bullitt’s washing of so much dirty laundry made his name anathema in political circles, which feared public exposure of their own soiled linen. Thus Bullitt found himself without an official position for thirteen years, until FDR, in need of his unabashed insight, called on him at the very outset of his administration.

Unabashed insight. Bullitt had complete and utter confidence in his own insight and absolutely no fear of communicating his conclusions to the world. While still serving as US Ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1935, a disillusioned Bullitt “launched a fierce campaign in Moscow against Moscow” by urging US foreign correspondents and other foreign diplomats there to “fan the flames of anti-Sovietism” everywhere (see Lansing 153). Needless to say, this campaign made Bullitt an unwelcome guest of Uncle Joe, so when the seat of US Ambassador to France soon opened, he graciously accepted Roosevelt’s offer of it. “Bullitt’s influence in Paris was to become so great he would be dubbed minister without portfolio in the revolving French cabinets” (155). Over the next four years Bullitt would repeatedly be hoof-in-mouth, speaking out-of-turn on one issue after another, and much to

Washington's chagrin, his strong and rarely withheld personal opinions would often become confused with official US policy due to his well-known close personal relationship with Roosevelt. After Bullitt's ambassadorship in France ended in 1940 with the German occupation, those not-so-poker-faced New Dealers surrounding the increasingly unhealthy Roosevelt had no time for Bullitt's big mouth, and they made sure that he would have nothing further to do with the Roosevelt Administration in the face of its upcoming crisis.

The administration quietly, even deviously, replaced Bullitt with a new ambassador to Vichy. Then, to keep him under their wing and out of their hair, they unofficially considered him for several prominent positions. Apparently Bullitt told New Dealer Harold Ickes, Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior, that "the President offered the post [of Secretary of the Navy] to him before he appointed Knox" (Ickes 343–44), and then after Knox's appointment, FDR offered Bullitt the ambassadorship to London, knowing that he would decline. Next Bullitt agitated to become the new Secretary of War, "with frequent reminders to 'Missy' Lehand and Grace Tully, Roosevelt's secretaries, that the President had promised him such a plum" (Farnsworth 172), but Roosevelt's advisers and insiders would not allow Bullitt the opportunity.

And the saga continued. With so many political cards to be dealt in an election year, "Roosevelt could do nothing but assure Bullitt that he was going to do a lot of reshuffling and that he did not want him out of the administration" (Farnsworth 172). Ickes noted in his diary on 7 October 1941,

The President said that Bill had wanted to know what was to be done with him, [but ...] the President proposed to make no moves until after the election. The President scoffingly said to me: "Bill wants to be Secretary of State, and I can't do that." In explanation, he said that Bill talked too much, and I got the impression that he also thinks that Bill is too quick on the trigger. (Ickes 369–70)

Secretary of State, Secretary of War, and Secretary of the Navy were positions that the Roosevelt Administration were not about to hand to someone with such famously loose lips and finally, in 1942, Bullitt was sent as Ambassador at Large and Personal Representative of the President to North Africa and the Middle East.

Next came discussions of the Democratic nomination for Governor of Pennsylvania, which led to Bullitt's campaign to become Mayor of Philadelphia in 1943. He was publicly supported by none other than FDR himself, who strongly defended the smear-campaign-besieged Bullitt in the press, but the whole mayoral campaign was a bit of a farce in that no Democrat had been elected for sixty years or more when Bullitt was given the signal to run. The entire episode did, however, keep Bullitt away from the politics of foreign affairs, the character of which he knew so well but about which he knew not when to keep his mouth shut. Lukacs calls this his "impolitic character" (193).

So William C. Bullitt could boast an impressive resumé: he had set sail on peace missions with Henry Ford and Woodrow Wilson, enjoyed anytime-access to FDR in the White House, been betrayed and publicly denied by David Lloyd George yet retained Winston Churchill's appreciation; "Lenin trusted him, Stalin embraced him, Charles de Gaulle welcomed him, [and] Chiang Kai-Shek as well as Sigmund Freud solicited his advice and his assistance" (Lukacs 184). By the time of Truman, however, he was virtually forgotten, perhaps both because of and despite his Achilles heel. Interestingly, the name Achilles actually means "Lipless" (Graves 213n.) and was intended by the centaur Chiron as a warning to Achilles to keep his mouth shut. Right up to the end, Bullitt's critics could be sure that he would publicly say things that no one else would, and that certainly no one wanted to hear. And so we have *The Wilson Book*.

III. Estate Planning

We know from the intimately documented analysis of Hilda Doolittle, the poet and novelist H.D., that one of Freud's techniques was to instruct his students to "write it out," to construct an autobiographical narrative, so it is not surprising that Bullitt's analysis resulted in a book.³ According to Bullitt family records it was actually Bullitt's second wife, one Louise Bryant, who "was intermittently a patient of Freud while Bullitt and his daughter remained in France and Byrant was treated by Freud in Vienna" (Brownell/Billings 114). But according to the lone biography of Bullitt, *So Close to Greatness*, by Will Brownell and Richard Billings:

In 1925 Bullitt went to see Sigmund Freud, and while he would deny that he became a patient of Freud's—he insisted that his frequent trips to Vienna were for the purpose of collaborating on a book, a psychological study of Woodrow Wilson, which at least by 1930 was the truth—friends in Paris contradicted him. (113)

A friend recalled Bullitt explaining his decision to go into analysis as having to do with a strange incident on a horse, when his foot slipped from the stirrup. Bullitt, an excellent rider, explained, "It dawned on me that I had wanted to fall off my horse. Frightening. Fortunately I've read a great deal of psychoanalysis [...] and I knew [...] that there was only one man for me to see: Freud" (114). Less metaphorically Kitty Cannell, in a rather Bullitt-esque moment, commented bluntly, "The truth is that Bill Bullitt had had problems with impotence" (Gardner 256). Another friend of Bullitt's remembered that he "had a long analysis, with occasional brief returns to Paris" (Brownell/Billings 114)—long indeed, from 1925 to at least 1930 or even 1932, when *The Wilson Book* was finally finished and Bullitt was finally able to make his triumphant return to public life.

The analysis itself, displaced intermittently over a number of years and great distances, is fortunately accompanied by an epistolary record. A letter from Freud to Bullitt dated 17 April 1927, handwritten in English, mentions a play on which Bullitt

was working: “No need to say that I am looking eagerly forward to your play on Wilson, I am sure you still appreciate him more than I do” (Bullitt Papers). Yes, the play was “The Tragedy of Woodrow Wilson,” and it survives among the Bullitt Papers at Yale University—surviving, too, in the final text of *The Wilson Book* in the form of a “Dramatis Personae.” It is interesting that according to the letter, Bullitt “appreciated” Wilson—at least more than Freud did—which seems to contradict those critics who ascribe to Bullitt’s well-known discontent with Wilson’s direction of the Paris Peace Conference and the civilization created by the Treaty of Versailles the impetus for *The Wilson Book*. Two years later, in a letter dated 1 August 1929 from Freud to Bullitt, handwritten in English, the play is mentioned again, this time as finished: “I began to read your play at once. [...] I soon was swept away by the passionate rhythm. I enjoyed the thing immensely. I see I was right for trusting your powers as a writer. Take my congratulations for your work” (Bullitt Papers).

The next steps in the development of the manuscript require a little reconstruction using previously unpublished materials from the Bullitt Papers. In a letter from Freud to Bullitt dated 12 April 1930, again handwritten in English, Freud tells Bullitt, “I expect to leave Vienna for Berlin end of this month.” In Berlin, Freud would undergo surgery, and while he recovered Bullitt could visit him and they could “have some talk.” As Bullitt explains in his foreword to *The Wilson Book*: “After a long talk we agreed to collaborate” (vi). In another letter to Bullitt dated 22 November 1930, again handwritten in English, Freud writes, “I am just through your manuscript. It is glorious. I am sure you are a great writer, but you are bound to develop into more. There is onely [*sic*] one passage where you dive into deep analysis which I would like to see omitted” (Bullitt Papers). Clearly work on the manuscript proper had begun. In the same letter we also learn that Bullitt’s analysis is apparently ongoing. Freud writes, “Now you ask for an appointment. My idea is you ought to have a short respite. [...] When we meet [...] we will fix the later [*sic*]. Don’t be impatient.”

By 9 February 1931, in another handwritten letter from Freud to Bullitt, also in English, we find new developments in the progress of *The Wilson Book*. Collaboration appears to be in full swing and Freud writes, “I am pretty well and hope to start work on Wednesday.” Then in September 1931 Freud, in his German Gothic script, writes to Bullitt,

I have finished my task sooner than expected. While I have changed some things in the general part, and written down the whole thing in German, I found there was little that needed my interference, particularly when you turn to W. himself, and nothing at all from p. 142 onwards. In fact it is excellently done, and reading it gives the strong impression that it is also correct in its essence.⁴

By 20 January 1932 Freud and Bullitt had drafted a contract regarding publication of and compensation for the book: the text was to be published first not only in English, but in the United States, at least one day before it could be published elsewhere. In

a letter dated 15 June 1932, Freud and Bullitt offered the book to the Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, Freud's regular German publisher, who in turn agreed to publish the text in accordance with the terms of the Freud-Bullitt contract; however, as we have already seen, by November of 1932 Bullitt was again a major player in a Democratic administration, and he filed the book away.

Shortly after her father's death, in a letter dated 21 November 1939, Anna Freud wrote to Bullitt inquiring as to the whereabouts of a manuscript she remembered her father had written in collaboration with him:

After my father's death I discovered among his papers two or three essays which are going to be published now as an addition to his Collected Papers. I remembered then that there is one more unpublished paper of his that he wrote as an addition to a MS of yours. [...] I seem to remember that my father sent it to you with some special messenger from Vienna when times were not very safe. (Bullitt Papers)

The letter continues: "If the MS or a copy of it is in your possession, would there be an objection against including it in my father's posthumous articles?" Yet her closing remark—"There would be [an objection], of course, if your original plan of using it still exists. In that case it would have to wait"—betrays her attempt to portray only a vague remembrance of the paper and proves a much more definite knowledge of *The Wilson Book*. Anna Freud here is coyly alluding to the contractual engagement, the "original plan," that Bullitt and Freud entered into in 1932. On 28 November 1939 Bullitt responded:

I have not only that manuscript but also the entire fat volume that your father and I worked on together, and I hope that as soon as I escape from public life it may be possible to publish the entire work. [...] We worked over all the chapters of the book so many times together and your father wrote so many portions of each of them, that in the end we both signed each chapter.

In a letter dated 8 December 1939 Anna Freud wrote to Bullitt, "The MS is all yours," concluding fondly, "I still remember the pleasure it gave my father to do that work with you."

Then came a 25-year hiatus.

By 23 February 1965 publication negotiations were in full swing and Bullitt was preparing the final draft of the manuscript. From his estate in Ireland, where he was staying with his daughter, he wrote to Houghton Mifflin, "I am now working on the text [...] and am correcting some errors. I hope to reach my apartment in Washington on April 2nd, and shall bring the manuscript with me." In May 1965 Bullitt decided to inform Anna Freud of his decision to finally publish, and in her reply, dated 3 May 1965, Anna Freud directed Bullitt to her brother, Ernst Freud, who was in charge of their father's copyrights. Further, she wrote, "I was very interested to receive your

letter. I have often wondered when the time would be right for publishing your and my father's book. I look forward to it." This reference is particularly interesting: in May 1965 Anna Freud had no qualms about referring to *The Wilson Book* as "your and my father's book."

After reading through a copy of the text, however, she no longer looked forward to its publication. In a letter addressed to Houghton Mifflin dated 25 August 1965, Ernst Freud stated clearly the position of the Freud estate concerning *The Wilson Book*: "My sister Anna Freud and myself feel that the manuscript in its present state is in dire need of careful editing," noting specifically that the psychoanalytic study itself was "full of unnecessary repetitions" (Brownell/Billings 324). In order to avoid any unnecessary conflict, on 14 October 1965 a Houghton Mifflin editor, Alick Bartholomew, met with Anna Freud and then reported that at least according to Anna Freud, "Sigmund Freud apparently regarded the Wilson book as essentially Bullitt's."

So by October 1965, the book was no longer "your and my father's" as it had been back in 1939. To support this position, Anna Freud stated, "There were no notes about the book amongst Freud's papers, and Bullitt had the only manuscript," claiming further that if Freud had actually contributed to *The Wilson Book*, Bullitt must have altered the manuscript, making it "a kind of parody by thoughtlessly repeating." Bartholomew's report goes on to say, "Miss Anna Freud feels most strongly that the publication of the manuscript as it is would be harmful to her father's contribution to scientific thought." Such were the clouds of smoke signalling the critical eruption to come.

In January 1966 Bullitt received a package containing the manuscript as edited by Anna Freud, and his only response was to say that if her father "had wanted her to read and alter the manuscript he would have asked her to do so in 1930–32, when the first draft was completed, or in 1938–39, when it was retyped" (Roazen 13). By July the Freud estate realized the futility of their efforts to alter the manuscript and "notified Houghton Mifflin on July 18, 1966, that they were dissociating themselves from the book" (Brownell & Billings 326). They must have realized that they were needlessly delaying their royalties, which, although they distanced themselves from *The Wilson Book*, they never declined to receive. So the Freuds retracted their edits and agreed to allow the publication of the volume in its original state. Among the Bullitt Papers is a letter from Houghton Mifflin dated 26 July 1966, which states that Ernst Freud had agreed to publication as is, and in December the first edition was in print.

IV. Executing Freud's Will

Certainly the antagonistic position taken by the Freud estate contributed greatly to the critical condemnation and academic abandonment of *The Wilson Book*, witness the interview between Anna Freud and Alick Bartholomew noted above. Anna Freud repeatedly downplayed her father's role in the authorship of the book, arguing that since there was no reference to it amongst his effects, he was not involved with

the authorship of the text. She presented this argument fully aware, as per her 21 November 1939 letter of inquiry to Bullitt, that Freud had sent to Bullitt all materials pertaining to their collaboration via special diplomatic packet after the *Anschluss*, in 1938. And the Bartholomew interview was no isolated incident. In his 1968 volume *Freud: Political and Social Thought* Paul Roazen, who had also interviewed Anna Freud in 1965, wrote that according to her, the ideas in *The Wilson Book* “were given by her father to Bullitt, but the manner of application and the style were Bullitt’s own” (303).

Anna Freud was clearly attempting damage control with the intention of minimizing the potential critical reaction against her father. Her plan was either to rewrite the manuscript or to disassociate her father entirely from the text and its thoroughly un-American thinking. She realized that *The Wilson Book* would undoubtedly be received as un-American because in 1967, as Roazen explains in his April 2005 *TLS* article, American thinking had undergone a “major increase in popular [...] respect for Wilson’s memory” (Roazen, “Oedipus at Versailles” 13). When her editing of the text was rejected by Bullitt, Anna Freud knew that she must shield her father from the critical condemnation that would assuredly greet *The Wilson Book*.

However, Anna Freud did more than that: she also attempted to direct the critical eruption entirely toward Bullitt. Her statements made separately to Bartholomew and Roazen signalled Freudians everywhere to join with her to protect her father’s reputation, hence the claims of Erikson and friends that Freud could not have written any of *The Wilson Book*. And certainly it was Anna Freud’s assertions that prompted Roazen to conclude in 1967, like Erikson before him:

The style of the book is indeed appalling, and to the extent that style makes the man, this is not a work of Freud’s. Freud’s sentences were always packed with meaning and colored by many shades of significance. Above all the brutal quality of the Wilson book, the monotonous and cold treatment of human life leaves one with the conviction that it did not come from Freud’s own hand. (303)

During an interview conducted in 1984 Bullitt’s cousin, Orville Horwitz, commented, “A lot of Freudians don’t want to believe that Freud could be so critical of an American President” (Brownell/Billings 325). In fact, Freud was extremely critical not only of a particular American president but of America in general; however, the extent of his criticism may never be known. Just as Anna Freud had attempted to edit the content of *The Wilson Book*, she also attempted—often successfully—to edit other posthumous publications of her father’s writings. And “[w]hen Bullitt rightly rejected any tampering with [*The Wilson Book*],” Anna Freud instructed the “loyal followers of Freud [...] that the way to show their devotion to the master was to disassociate him from his part in the book” (Roazen, *Freud and His Followers* 13).

Ultimately, Anna Freud’s actions raise serious questions about issues of academic integrity. As Roazen wrote, “Freud stood for the ideal of honesty. Psychoanalysis as

a therapy rests on the conviction that the truth can set men free” (13). Yet at least where her father’s legacy was involved Anna Freud was not interested in the truth, but only in control, almost as if she was certain that her father had to be protected, defended, even from his own writings. Roazen continued, “Such a defensive attitude toward Freud’s works only demonstrates a lack of confidence in his ability to withstand historical scrutiny.” Perhaps Anna Freud’s actions were motivated by an understandable desire to keep her father’s personal opinions private, but as Roazen wrote, “her generosity and tact, when they concerned her father, have bordered on historical disingenuousness” (12–13). In many ways, Anna Freud endeavored to create a fictitious Freud, an historical personage whose mind was occupied with nothing but the science of psychoanalysis.

Following her father’s death, Anna Freud exercised such control over the psychoanalytic movement that “pupils of her father routinely submitted to her copies of their manuscripts before publication; and some papers about her father have been withdrawn in conformity with her wishes” (Roazen, *Freud and His Followers* 12). The history of *The Wilson Book* certainly shows what it meant not to conform to her wishes. Roazen, too, incited her wrath. In the mid-1960s he was a political theorist exploring the interstices of politics and Freudian psychology, but he went on to become a major figure in the history of the psychoanalytic movement with a particular revisionist bent toward dispelling the mythical figure that Freud had become. Anna Freud regarded everything Roazen wrote, much of which was based on access to persons and unpublished papers that she had granted him earlier, as a menace to the psychoanalytic movement (see Holley). She had done her best to see that anything that might cast the master in an unflattering light was simply withheld. Regarding her treatment of Freud’s letters Roazen commented: “Throughout Freud’s published correspondence it is not always made clear where cuts have been made; deletions, without any marks of omission, have been introduced, and one can discern no consistent principle, such as that of medical discretion” (13).

Anna Freud’s interference in such matters as the selection of letters published with Ernest Jones’s three-volume biography of Freud and Freud’s correspondence with Wilhelm Fleiss and Karl Jung have been exposed by subsequent editions of the material in question or by research into their publication histories (see Corrigan, Paskauskas, Shamdasani). William C. Bullitt’s earlier success in resisting her revisions can now be recognized as the first successful overturning of her impositions and pretensions regarding the legacy of her father. Remembered by many for his impudence, by others for his imprudence, and rarely recognized for his courage and honesty, Bullitt deserves to be remembered beside Josef Breuer as one of only two persons to have had the distinction of being full collaborators with Freud.

NOTES

1. All unpublished writings of William C. Bullitt mentioned or quoted in this paper appear courtesy of The William Christian Bullitt and Anne Moen Bullitt Papers, Yale University Library (Bullitt Papers).
2. For the effect of Bullitt's testimony on Secretary of State Lansing's position see Lansing, esp. 268–77.
3. The title of H.D.'s book was *Bid Me to Live* (1960).
4. This particular letter has been translated in part by Paul Roazen and appears in his article "Oedipus at Versailles" (12).

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