

FREUD'S JEWISH IDENTITY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS AS A SCIENCE

Ludwik Fleck, the Polish philosopher of science, maintained that scientific discovery is influenced by social, political, historical, psychological, and personal factors. The determinants of Freud's Jewish identity are examined from this Fleckian perspective, as is the impact of that complex identity on his creation of psychoanalysis as a science. Three strands contributing to his Jewish identity are identified and explored: his commitment to the ideal of *Bildung*, the anti-Semitism of the times, and his "godlessness." Finally, the question is addressed of what it means that psychoanalysis was founded by a Jew. For Freud, psychoanalysis was a kind of liberation philosophy, an attempt to break free of his ethnic and religious inheritance. Yet it represented at the same time his ineradicable relationship with that inheritance. It encapsulated both the ambivalence of his Jewish identity and the creativity of his efforts to resolve it.

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What does it mean that psychoanalysis was founded by a Jew? This is a favorite question of intellectual historians. It is now axiomatic to link Freud with Marx and Einstein and other radical Jewish intellectuals of their time. Scholars have exhaustively studied the responses of Jewish thinkers to the conditions of life in fin-de-siècle Europe, as well as the hints that Freud himself left behind. I will provide no new information about Freud's life as a Jew. My aim, rather, is to understand how his conflicts about being Jewish affected the development of psychoanalysis as a science (not a "Jewish science"). Just what did it mean to Freud that psychoanalysis was founded by a Jew?

In 1935 Ludwik Fleck, another Jewish scientist-physician from Hapsburg Austro-Hungary, published *Genesis and Development of a*

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Scientific Fact (1935), in which he maintained that scientific discovery is conditioned by social, cultural, historical, personal, and psychological factors. This landmark volume was credited by Thomas Kuhn as the inspiration for his own monumental work on scientific paradigms and revolutions. Fleck's sociology of scientific knowledge is both the warrant for my approach here (see also Richards 2006) and an instructive context for it.

Fleck was born in 1896 in Lvov, Poland. He studied bacteriology and immunology in medical school, but his ethnic background blocked him from a formal position at the University of Lvov; he completed his great opus while working as a laboratory researcher in Przemyśl. He never tells us how he applied his theories to his own life: how his Jewishness factored into his achievements and vice versa; how his contribution to sociology reflected the "thought collective," to use one of his distinctive terms, of the Jewish community in Lvov; how his own "thought style"—another Fleck coinage—reflected Jewish traditions and situations. If he had, we might have seen how Fleck's theory retained and reflected the impact of his identity, and thereby raised one individual's understanding of the Jewish experience to a new level of universality. That's what I will try to do here with Freud, who left some clues regarding how his Jewish experience contributed to his development as a scientist and to his creation of psychoanalysis as a science.

I will delineate three distinct strands in Freud's Jewish identity: his commitment to the ideal of *Bildung*; his response to the anti-Semitism of his time; and his "godlessness," his ambivalence about the religion of his family, especially his father. Drawing on the extensive scholarly literature, I will show how these strands of identity became manifest in psychoanalysis. But I will also take pains to delineate the inner tension, not to say ambivalence, implicit in these strands. I believe that it is this ambivalence (and Freud's attempts to resolve it) that led to his controversial late work, *Moses and Monotheism* (Freud 1939). It is in this work that we find the clearest answer we will ever have to the question Freud once posed to the Swiss pastor turned analyst, Oskar Pfister: Why was psychoanalysis discovered by a godless Jew?

BILDUNG

Freud was born in Freiburg in Moravia, but his family moved to Vienna when he was four. His parents both came from Galicia. Though Freud

never denied his family's provincial Galizianer origins, in his autobiographical study of 1925 he reveals that they were not a matter of indifference to him. "I have reason to believe that my father's family were for a long time in the Rhineland (later Cologne), that in the fourteenth or fifteenth century they fled east from anti-Semitic persecution and that in the course of the nineteenth century they retraced their steps from Lithuania through Galicia to German Austria" (1925, pp. 7–8). Scholars have noted that this "belief"—this genealogical romance—locates Freud's origins not in the provinces, but close to the heart of German culture. More than that, the city of Cologne was said to have been settled by Jews in Roman times, before it was settled by German tribes. Thus Freud was laying claim to a background that challenged contemporary views of the Jews as nomads, aliens, never truly indigenous. Indeed, the complexities of his Jewish identity go back a long way.

Freud's father, Jakob, for years a traveling wool merchant, was an "enlightened" Jew, more in sympathy with the German Jewish Reform movement than with traditional rabbinical Judaism. He adopted Western dress in 1855, the year he married Amalie Nathanson, Freud's mother. By then he was speaking German instead of Yiddish, though he still read scripture in Hebrew.

In 1860 the Freuds settled in Vienna. They raised Sigmund to participate in its cosmopolitan society. Secular schooling was the main vehicle of acculturation for Jews at the time, and a university degree was the path to status and respect (Handlin 1951). Jewish educational aspirations coalesced in the idea of *Bildung*, the cultivation of intellectual and moral character, which Moses Mendelssohn, a founding father of the Jewish Enlightenment, or Haskalah, went so far as to equate with enlightenment itself. The intellectual historian George Mosse (1985) has argued that for Jews (and others) the search for *Bildung* was also a search for *Sittlichkeit*, genuine respectability understood as an ethical disposition grounded in custom. The cultural and political historian Carl Schorske reached a similar conclusion: Jews were stereotyped as less moral than the upright Germans, more governed by their passions. Acceptance into mainstream German society meant at the very least demonstrating a capacity for self-discipline, which they did in part through educational achievement. As Schorske (1980) puts it, "the virtue of learning was not as important as the learning of virtue" (p. 289).

Jakob was Sigmund's first teacher. He schooled his son on the Philippson German/Hebrew Bible, with its wonderful illustrations and thoroughly Enlightenment commentary. "My deep engrossment in the Bible story . . .," Freud (1925) would later write, "had . . . an enduring effect upon the direction of my interest" (p. 8). Earlier, in an obituary written for his Jewish religion teacher, Samuel Hammerschlag (Freud 1904), he also acknowledged the formative influence Jewish tradition had upon him. The piece is a virtual paean to *Bildung* as Jewish enlightenment: "Religious instruction served [Hammerschlag] as a way of educating towards love of the humanities, and from the material of Jewish history he was able to find means of tapping the sources of enthusiasm hidden in the hearts of young people and of making it flow out far beyond the limitations of nationalism or dogma" (p. 255). But Jewish tradition was a far more complicated matter for Freud than *Bildung* alone.

For Jakob Freud, abandoning some of the old rituals while keeping others, adopting more secular dress, and turning to the German language were adequate transitions for the sense of assimilation he sought. But his ambitions for his son—including the Jewish commitment to *Bildung* and German culture—would end up separating them. Every adoption of larger European cultural values was a step by young Jewish intellectuals away from the culture of their families. Some of them felt ashamed of the provinciality of their parents, and guilty "for being thus ashamed" (Cuddihy 1974, p. 51). Freud was not immune to such feelings.

Three autobiographical sketches over forty years reveal Freud's ambivalence about his father's world, as well as some of the ways he dealt with it. The first is a story from *The Interpretation of Dreams*: a Gentile commanded Jakob to get off the pavement, and knocked his hat into the street (Freud 1900, p. 197).

Jakob told his son this story when Sigmund was "ten or twelve"—that is, just as the tumult of mid-century was culminating in the reforms of 1867, which changed the day-to-day lives of Jews throughout the Austro-Hungarian empire, and won for the new Burger Ministerium government their undying loyalty.

For Jakob, this was the story of a past being left behind for good; that was his point. For his son, however, the father's "unheroic" conduct was a shameful disappointment. And the tales of vengeance in which he takes refuge are not stories of the Maccabees or other biblical heroes, but of Hannibal and his father Hamilcar—Semitic figures, it is true, but from the

classical past, about whom Freud would have read in Latin, not Hebrew; figures about whom his father likely knew nothing. By the time Freud was twelve, father and son already had very different associative worlds, and when Sigmund faced a similar incident on a train, he didn't consider compliance an option. A second incident, twenty-some years later, sheds more light on the generational divide. In 1891 Jakob had re-bound in new leather the Philipppson Bible that had been Sigmund's first textbook, and gave it back to his son on the occasion of his thirty-fifth birthday. In the re-bound Bible, Jakob wrote an inscription in Hebrew—surely an indication that Sigmund could read it—lovingly rebuking his son for not keeping to the traditions. This is where Moses enters Freud's personal historical record for the first time. As Yerulshami (1991) has noted in a delicate exegesis, there was in Jakob's inscription an implicit Talmudic reference. After Moses broke the tablets of the Ten Commandments in anger, the fragments were collected and stored, along with the new tablets, in the Ark of the Covenant. This book, Jakob wrote to his son, "has been stored with me, like the fragments of the tablets in an ark."

(As context, let me note that at this time Sigmund had been in practice for five years and married to Martha Bernays for four and a half. His marriage into Jewish intellectual and religious aristocracy hadn't stopped him from discouraging his fiancée's religious practices, or from insisting on a German civil marriage ceremony instead of a traditional Jewish one. When Catholic Vienna did not recognize the civil union and a second wedding had to be arranged, it was only the friendly intervention of his mentor and patron, Josef Breuer, that induced Freud to endure the Jewish ceremony. But then he forbade his new bride to light the Sabbath candles.

The third episode was in 1904, eight years after Jakob's death. Freud, visiting the Acropolis with his brother Alexander, experienced there an acute sense of derealization. He later analyzed the feeling: "It seems as though the essence of success was to have got further than one's father, and as though to excel one's father was still something forbidden. . . . The very theme of Athens and the Acropolis in itself contained evidence of the son's superiority. Our father had been in business, he had had no secondary education, and Athens could not have meant much to him. Thus what interfered with our enjoyment of the journey was a feeling of *filial piety*" (Freud 1936, pp. 247–248). Freud read Greek; he was at home in the world of classical antiquity. Athens had a resonance for him that it could

never have had for a father who had read only *The Book and the Talmud*, works his son was leaving behind. Beneath this summary diagnosis of “filial piety,” however, shame and embarrassment may have been lurking.

Freud’s milieu was reminding him constantly that assimilation was an elusive goal. There were only three districts in Vienna where Jews typically settled; one was Leopoldstadt, home to the Freuds. “Within these districts, which were adjacent to each other,” writes the historian Marsha Rozenblit (2006), “Jews also concentrated in certain areas, so that some parts of the city were or at least seemed almost wholly Jewish” (p. 14). Moreover, according to Rozenblit, rich and poor lived cheek by jowl. Thus, guilt toward his father may have been compounded by shame about his neighborhood, and also about the neighbors from whom he could never fully separate himself—like his university friend Nathan Weiss.

Weiss was a brilliant young neurologist. Freud liked him, but had been mortified more than once by what he saw as Weiss’s aggressive self-importance—another matter on which Freud consulted his mentor Breuer. Weiss hanged himself in the aftermath of an ill-advised marriage he had insisted on in the face of the bride’s reluctance. A speaker at the funeral had referred to his friend as a “savage, merciless Jew,” Freud wrote to Martha, blaming the young widow and leaving Freud “petrified with horror and shame” (E. Freud 1960, p. 65).

As the concentration of Jews in parts of the city grew, so did the Jewish presence in the schools and in some professions. By 1880, when Freud was in his twenties, 38.6 percent of all students enrolled in the medical school were Jewish. All the *Bildung* in the world, however, could take a Jew only so far. Freud discarded his birth name in favor of Sigmund as he prepared to enter university, because Sigismund had become a popular choice in anti-Semitic jokes. In 1929 he received high praise from Thomas Mann, and in 1930 the Goethe Prize for Literature from the city of Frankfurt. But the satisfying sense of having “arrived” Freud had already described as a “short-lived illusion” (1925, p. 73). The passion—seldom satisfied—to feel fully German that marked so many Austrian and German Jews was captured epigrammatically by another great writer, the exiled Erich Maria Remarque, when asked whether he missed Germany. “Why should I?” he is said to have answered. “I’m not Jewish” (Elon 2002, p. 399).

Jewish intellectuals were stranded between two worlds. As Kafka said of the Jewish writers of his generation, "What most of those who began to write in German wanted was to break with Judaism, generally with the vague approval of their fathers. . . . but their hind legs were bogged down in their father's Judaism and their front legs could find no new ground. The resulting despair was their inspiration" (1958, p. 337).

The question for Freud in 1897 was how to free his hind legs. He hoped that his skill at dream interpretation would elevate him, like his alter ego Joseph (1900, p. 484 n.2), above and beyond his tribe. His analysis of his dreams would eventually give him a new authorial and professional self, and so sublimate "despair" into "inspiration."

So would his analysis of jokes, but not yet. For a long time Freud dealt with the Kafka dilemma by distancing himself from his Jewish background. He wrote in a 1930 letter (the year of his Goethe prize), "My education was so unJewish that today I cannot even read your dedication, which is evidently written in Hebrew" (E. Freud 1960, p. 395). In his analysis of the "My Son the Myops" dream, he lengthily cited philological authorities on the Hebrew word *geseres* (a spring that discharges steam and hot water) as if it were barely familiar to him. Yiddish, as opposed to the more scholarly Hebrew, he professed not to know at all. He had been exposed to Hebrew by his father (Yerushalmi 1991) and at the Gymnasium. Yiddish was his parents' mother tongue, and perhaps his mother's only spoken language. Freud must have spoken it with her as a child—and as an adult he visited her every Sunday until her death in 1930.

Yet he did enjoy, and publish, a good many Jewish jokes. He started collecting them after his father's death, and they helped him make his theoretical breakthrough into the realm of unconscious sexuality. Gilman (1990) points out that this was one way of leveling the playing field: "The exercise of collecting and retelling Jewish jokes, of removing them from the daily world in which Freud must live to the higher plane of the new scientific discourse, that of psychoanalysis, enables Freud to purge himself of the insecurity felt in his role of a Jew in fin-de-siècle Vienna. He exorcises his anxiety by placing it in the closed world of the book and placing himself in the privileged position of an author employing the new language of psychoanalysis for an audience newly taught this discourse" (p. 268). Cuddihy makes the related interpretation that in confronting Vienna with its unconscious, Freud demonstrated once and for all that

Germans were just as *schmutzig* as the Jews. I believe, however, that Freud's path to his later attitude about his Jewishness was more conflicted than these authors realize.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Dr. M. Grinwald, a religious Jew, gave a lecture in Vienna on *Jochanan the Prophet*, a controversial popular drama that many thought disparaging of Orthodox Jews. Freud attended the talk and the luncheon afterward. He made several jokes related to religion, and pointed out how many Jews resembled Jochanan of the play, with his shaggy coat, unkempt hair, and mysterious face. He would rather, he said, be like the man in the elegant tuxedo than the one dressed like a prophet. Grinwald reported this conversation many years later in an article in *Haaretz* (September 21, 1941) and recalled thinking to himself, "How far this man has drifted from Jewish life."

But Freud saw himself as a Jew, and so did everyone else. In the well-known preface to the Hebrew translation of *Totem and Taboo* in which he first claims his ignorance of the holy language and "estrang[ement] from the religion of his fathers" as well as his refusal to subscribe to any nationalistic ideals, he pretends to be asked, "What is there left to you that is Jewish?" His reply is: "A very great deal, probably its very essence" (Freud 1912–1913, p. xv). Rather than rejecting Jewish identity, Freud turns the question around. Who is it that lays claim to the authority of determining who is Jewish and who is not?

The writer Ludwig Börne captured the ironic predicament: "Some find fault with me for being a Jew; others forgive me; still others go so far as to compliment me for it; but every last one of them thinks of it." You could change your name, avoid religious affiliations, even make a significant contribution to German literature. But in the eyes of "the other," particularly the anti-Semitic other, that meant nothing.

ANTI-SEMITISM

The word *anti-Semitic* first appeared in 1860 in a work by a Jewish scholar, Moritz Steinschneider (Bein 1990, pp. 594–595). In 1880 Wilhelm Marr, a Berlin journalist and agitator, used it as a badge of honor in his pamphlet "The Way to the Triumph of Germanicism over Judaism." By the following year, this new normative sense of the term was widespread in Vienna and set the groundwork for advancing a hatred of Jews as outsiders, the "other." The aspersions were cast not on religious

grounds, but racial ones. And however deceptive and distorted that conception of race may have been, the hatred it gave rise to was real and powerful. Assimilation, *Bildung*, and even conversion proved futile against it.

This was the social background of Freud's Vienna. He said of his Gymnasium days: "in the higher classes I began to understand for the first time what it meant to belong to an alien race, and anti-Semitic feelings among the other boys warned me that I must take up a definite position . . ." (1900, p. 196). At university "I found that I was expected to feel myself inferior and an alien because I was a Jew. I refused absolutely to do the first of these things. I have never been able to see why I should feel ashamed of my descent or, as people were beginning to say, of my 'race.'" (Freud 1925, p. 9). The rise of anti-Semitism after 1880 is frequently attributed to the influx of Eastern Jews to Vienna and Germany. But as my colleague Joseph Greenberger (personal communication) suggests, it surely also reflected anxiety about competition from a rising class of educated and assimilated Jews. Freud saw Jewish colleagues subjected to insults and name-calling at the General Hospital (E. Freud 1960, p. 132). Freud's friend and colleague, Karl Koller, was abruptly called a *Saujud*, a "Jewish swine," in the midst of a technical dispute with a fellow surgeon. Both Koller and the other surgeon were reserve officers, a happenstance that made a duel (a satisfaction often forbidden to Jews) possible. Koller won. "A proud day for us," Freud wrote to Martha. His own proud day had taken place two years earlier, in 1883, when a party of anti-Semites called him a dirty Jew on a train to Leipzig. "I do think I held my own quite well," he wrote to Martha, "and used the means at my disposal courageously; in any case I didn't fall to their level" (E. Freud 1960, p. 123).

But Freud's relationship with his Jewish mentor and patron, Josef Breuer, was growing strained. After its rupture in the mid-1890s, Freud was all of a sudden, and by his own choice, on his own in an increasingly anti-Semitic city. In a 1926 letter that Gilman (1990) has called Freud's *confessio Judaica* (p. 251) he recalled the circumstances that led him to join B'nai B'rith in September 1897, eleven months after his father's death:

I felt as though outlawed, shunned by all. This isolation aroused in me the longing for a circle of excellent men with high ideals who would accept me in friendship. . . . That you are Jews could be welcome to me, for I was myself a Jew, and

it has always appeared not only undignified, but outright foolish to deny it. What tied me to Jewry was I have to admit it not the faith, not even the national pride, for I was always an unbeliever, have been brought up without religion, but not without respect for the so-called “ethical” demands of human civilization. . . . But there remained enough to make the attraction of Judaism and the Jews irresistible, many dark emotional powers all the stronger the less they could be expressed in words, as well as the clear consciousness of an inner identity, the familiarity of the same psychological structure. . . . Because I was a Jew I found myself free of many prejudices that restrict others in the use of the intellect; as a Jew I was prepared to be in the opposition and to renounce agreement with the “compact majority” [E. Freud 1960, pp. 366–367].

Around the time he joined the B’nai B’rith lodge, Freud’s focus was the new theory that would revolutionize outpatient psychiatry by substituting the new “bedrock” of sexuality for the old one of hereditary degeneration. This is a point easily lost on modern readers, who seldom appreciate the sway the latter concept held over the nineteenth-century imagination. In those days, when a clinician took a psychiatric history, it was intended to document the hereditary taint in the family and its early emergence in the patient. Moreover, the relationship between “heredity” and “race” encouraged speculation about racial tendencies to “nervousness” that were attributed to Jews by physicians both Jewish and Gentile. Freud’s new theories finessed this uncomfortable situation. The trauma theory and the fantasy theory that replaced it dismissed heredity (and therefore race) as a factor, in favor of a more controversial, but more egalitarian, alternative.

Gilman (2006) has delineated the theoretical breakthrough and its implications for racial theories of neurosis; Dennis Klein (1981) has charted the career of Brother Freud in B’nai B’rith and its implications for the about-to-be-launched psychoanalytic movement. These two developments are historically and thematically of a piece, and best viewed together. For four full years—from 1898 to 1902—while Freud was challenging the place of race in the prevailing psychiatric paradigm, all of his lectures on his nascent science were delivered to the members of B’nai B’rith. Except for his friend Wilhelm Fliess, they were Freud’s only auditors until he convened the Wednesday Night Discussion Group in October 1902. As Peter Gay (1987) notes, Freud complained to Fliess at the time that he felt like “an old, somewhat shabby Israelite” (p. 78). Further, the first nineteen members of the Wednesday night group were Jews—heirs

to and replacements for the brothers at the lodge. Certainly they were conscious of their identity as Jews. Fritz Wittels and Otto Rank wrote about it proudly; Rank even advanced the thought that the emphasis on primitive sexuality, typical of the Jews, equipped them to be “physicians to mankind” (Klein 1981, p. 107). Such triumphalism does not appear in the minutes (which do not begin until 1906); we may assume, however, that the common identity was deeply felt, all the more as their Jewishness constrained the professional prospects that many in the group were seeking to advance. If, as Cuddihy supposes, Freud’s new science was a Jew telling the Gentiles that their unconscious is as *schmutzig* as his—its cutting edge had certainly been sharpened by Vienna’s anti-Semitism. So when psychoanalysis began attracting non-Jewish adherents, a new kind of self-consciousness arose. Brabant, Falzeder, and Giampieri-Deutsch (1993) compile a description of Freud’s efforts to navigate a diplomatic minefield:

Gay (1987) notes Freud’s repeated invocations of a shared “racial kinship” in his letters to Karl Abraham together with his warnings about alienating the Gentiles and especially Jung. Freud stated that only Jung’s presence had saved psychoanalysis from becoming a Jewish national affair. On the eve of founding the International Association, Freud scolded his fellow Viennese: “Most of you are Jews, and therefore incompetent to win friends for the new teaching. Jews must be content with the modest role of preparing the ground. . . . The Swiss will save us” (Wittels 1924, p. 140). Of course, over time the alliance with the new Swiss members finally fell apart irrevocably. Gay recounts Freud offering the following advice to Ferenczi on the ensuing polemics: “there should not be a particular Aryan or Jewish science. The results must be identical, and only their presentation may vary. If these differences occur in conceptualizing objective relations in science, then something is wrong” [pp. 490–491].

This had long been Freud’s defensive stance—that science can permit no racial divides. After all, when he lectured at B’nai B’rith, he was lecturing about science. When he spoke before the Viennese group, he was talking about science. And when he cast the Swiss out, that was in the name of science too. He wrote bitterly in a letter to Ferenczi about “Jews and Goyim” separating like “oil and water,” and to Rank about having tried to unite “Jews and anti-Semites on the soil of Psy-A” (cited in Gay 1988, p. 231). Whether the Swiss were really anti-Semites or just Goyim, he recognized them as different, and against this difference “science” was his only real defense.

This was the context in which Freud wrote his essay on Michelangelo's *Moses*. Freud visited the statue repeatedly in the days flanking his final showdown with the Swiss at the Fourth Congress of the International Psychoanalytical Association in the early fall of 1913. Yerulshami (1991) hears an important echo of the birthday inscription "the fragments of the tablet" in Freud's later reminiscence of the statue, which he first visited in 1901, ten years after his father's gift of the re-bound Bible. But Freud's own analysis reveals his identification with Moses's capacity for restraint in the heat of the moment: "a concrete expression of the highest mental achievement that is possible in a man, that of struggling against an inward passion for the sake of a cause to which he has devoted himself" (p. 233). Both views may be correct. In 1901, as Yerushalmi suggests, Moses was Freud's father Jakob, chiding him for abandoning Jewish ways, for not keeping the tablets safe. In 1914, however, Moses was Freud himself in his father's place, furious yet restrained in his devotion to the "law" (i.e., science) of psychoanalysis. As on the train to Leipzig, he would not let himself sink to the level of the rabble—the naysayers, the psychoanalytic heretics. But now his heroes were no longer Hannibal and Hamilcar; over the years his associative universe was shifting back toward his father's. Later still, contemplating the coming psychoanalytic diaspora, he twice drew an analogy with Johann Ben Zakkai and his circle of students, creating the Talmud academy at Yawneh to hold the Jewish community together following the destruction of the Temple by the Romans. The more anti-Semitism he encountered, the more openly and defiantly did Freud lay claim to his Jewishness. In 1926, the same year as his *confessio judaica* to B'nai B'rith, he said: "My language is German. My culture, my attainments, are German. I considered myself German intellectually, until I noticed the growth of anti-Semitic prejudice in Germany and German Austria. Since that time, I prefer to call myself a Jew" (cited in Gay 1987, p. 139).

GODLESSNESS

The third crucial strand in Freud's Jewish identity is his utter, militant unbelief. Once the Haskalah had spread among the Jews of Europe, it was nothing exceptional to be *ein gottloser Jude*, a godless Jew. Many analysts—Abraham, Ferenczi, and Isidor Sadger were a few—wore their disbelief lightly and treated religion with simple indifference. But Freud

went out of his way to make religious belief per se a target of his new science.

His first shot was the summary judgment in “Obsessive Actions and Religious Rituals” (Freud 1908) that religion is “a universal obsessional neurosis,” an externalization of “egoistic and antisocial instincts” (pp. 126–127). Then came the cannon blast of *Totem and Taboo* (1912–1913), written and published in four installments during the climax of the struggle with the Swiss. The first paper had attacked ritual, but the target here was more clearly Christian conscience and communion. At the time, Freud trumpeted to Abraham that *Totem and Taboo* would “serve to cut us off cleanly from all Aryan religiousness” (Freud and Abraham 1965, p. 139). In 1930, in a preface for a new translation into Hebrew, he added a universalist disclaimer: that the work “adopts no Jewish standpoint and makes no exceptions in favour of Jewry. The author hopes, however, that he will be at one with his readers in the conviction that unprejudiced science cannot remain a stranger to the spirit of the new Jewry” (p. xv). By that time, of course, Freud had already published *The Future of an Illusion* (1926) and his premise that psychoanalysis gives science the tools to reveal religion as illusion once and for all by revealing its wishful sources. This claim left very little wiggle room for the next generation of analysts, as Freud wrote to Eitingon at the time: “It remains to be seen whether analysis in itself must really lead to the giving up of religion” (cited in Gay 1987, p. 12).

Psychoanalysis, like its creator, is “godless,” Freud said. But why was he so adamant? Yerushalmi (1991) concludes that “the very violence of Freud’s recoil against Jewish religious belief and ritual. . . displays an aggressive intensity that normally accompanies a rebellion against an equally intense former attachment” (p. 68)—that is, one would expect it more from a yeshiva runaway than from the secular son of a freethinking father. The Jesuit psychoanalyst William Meissner (1978) similarly concluded that the issue was personal and that its roots ran deep: He stated that Freud’s religious views perhaps more than any other aspect of his work and psychology reflect underlying and unresolved ambivalences and conflicts.

These are astute and informed assessments. However, they rest on Freud’s late behavior. The only real evidence of his early attitude appears in the teenage Freud’s letters to Eduard Silberstein (Boehlich 1991), in which he describes his disdain for the holidays and his encounters with

the philosopher Franz Brentano. In a careful reading of these letters it is possible to discern a youth who does not need a belief in God. More important, he does not yet seem to have any need for disbelief in God either; under Brentano's sway, he momentarily contemplates giving theism a whirl. His utter revolt came later.

I believe that Freud's contempt for religion emerged during his socio-psychological coming of age, and that its roots lay not in his personal or family history but in the social shame revealed in his letter about Weiss's funeral and in his comments about *Jochanan the Prophet*. His shame and frustration vis-à-vis his coreligionists was selective, and what activated it was not really their dress or their speech, but their adherence to the old religion, the old rituals, the old ways. This is why, I think, he so resisted being married under a chuppah, and why he was dismayed about his father's planned funeral service. It was observance, it was belief, that kept Jews tied to the singularities that made them obvious targets for anti-Semitic prejudice.

We can detect this dynamic in Freud's analysis of the psychological structure of conscience. I do not doubt that when he examined himself he found precisely what he proposed: inherited guilt over an inherited murder. But what makes a man believe that parricide is in him, makes him know that he is not only capable of the deed, but has in some sense committed it? In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud argued that this belief is universal. But later, in *Moses and Monotheism*, he argued that it is archetypically Jewish. The Jews' second murder, that of Moses, stained them with parricide to their very blood and bones. Can this motif not be seen in Freud's own family, where in each generation the son abandons the religion of his father and then stakes his own claim to life, with some unfathomable combination of determination, shame, regret, and perhaps sheer fury at having had to do this to survive? *Moses and Monotheism*, I argue further, also shows us something of Freud's final take on the relationship between psychoanalysis and his Jewishness. In this work all the strands of his identity are apparent. His individual sense of himself as a cosmopolitan assimilated Jew is affirmed in the act of authorship; one element of that heritage is its intellectuality. His dogged acceptance of being a Jew is embedded in the theme—the racial theme—of the Jews' unique phylogenetic heritage. His godlessness, which is simultaneously a continuation of some aspects of his Jewish identity and a reaction against other aspects, is manifest in the conviction that the father god, or the Christian God the

Father, is an inherited truth only in the sense that it recalls the primeval event of parricide. Science, Freud's bulwark against anti-Semitism, is spoken for in the book's very existence, for it is by means of his science, psychoanalysis, that Freud justifies his "historical novel" as more than traditional biblical commentary. Anti-Semitism is the historical context for the book, which culminates in a psychoanalytic explanation of Christian hatred of Jews. As Freud put it to Arnold Zweig at the time: "Faced with new persecutions, one asks oneself again how the Jews have come to be what they are and why they have attracted this undying hatred" (E. Freud 1960, p. 421). Even such a small detail as Freud's antipathy to ritual is latently here, for what figures in his account of the essence of Judaism are not the rituals, but Jewish monotheism, important as an advance over older superstitions, and, again, Jewish intellectuality.

CONCLUSION

Fleck maintained that scientific discovery is influenced by social, cultural, historical, personal, and psychological factors. *In Moses and Monotheism*, Freud gives us a sense of how and why he understood psychoanalysis to be so distinctively the contribution of a Jew. The book itself is a kind of coming-to-consciousness of a distinctive Jewish legacy. If the Jew is distinguished racially by his intellectuality and his psychological closeness to the forgotten truth of primal murder, then surely the man who uncovers this truth must himself be a defiant Jew. *Moses and Monotheism* is Freud's final testament to the Jewishness of his own creation; it is not simply another *confessio judaica*, but also a *confessio analytica*. Psychoanalysis was for Freud a kind of Jewish liberation philosophy. Fleck's insight allows us to reread Freud's discovery of his science not only as his effort to break with his ethnic and religious inheritance but also as a sign of his intractable relationship to it. Can we make the case that Freud's science was part of his effort to resolve his Jewish identity? In this sense he made something particular universal.

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