



Introduction

This book, a study of Sigmund Freud's correspondence as it relates to his Jewish identity, presents evidence for and argues in support of two claims. First, Freud's Jewish identity, far from being a single homogeneous reality, in fact develops in three stages—early (to 1907), middle (1907–23), and late (1923–39).¹ These periods are reflexes of one another, and they affect the presentation and content of Freud's psychoanalytic work. The late period in particular recapitulates the contents and patterns of the early period, after Freud passes through the maturational crucible of the “recessive” middle period.

Secondly, Freud's Jewish identity is built upon a dual allegiance, namely, to *Judentum* (Jewish ethnicity and a Freudian version of Judaism) and *Humanität*, German Enlightenment humanism and its liberal values. Freud affirms both his particularity as a Jew and his rightful participation in a vision of universal humanity. In this dual allegiance he is, I suggest, a model for *modern* Jewish identity, whose authenticity depends upon a commitment to such dual allegiance. Furthermore, such duality characterizes all responsible human identity in the modern period (that is, ours), in which all must affirm particular cultural and familial roots while simultaneously acknowledging the claim of the larger, global culture that has emerged as a consequence of mass communications, political evolution, and the catastrophic events of our century. Thus, this work is related not only to Jewish Studies, but also to the humanities.

The book will examine Sigmund Freud's correspondence between the years 1872 and 1939 (the year of his death), and on this basis describe the development of his Jewish identity, using his own words to elicit the images that expressed and shaped his development. Because Freud related to his Jewishness differently in different periods of his life, his

Jewish identity must be seen in chronological context in order to understand clearly both what he meant by what he said about it and how it was related to his work in founding, developing, and promoting psychoanalysis. Letters that provide such insight will be selected and interpreted in detail in the context of three major periods—early, middle, and late—that correspond to those into which Samuel Jaffe (University of Chicago) divides the development of Freud's psychoanalytic corpus.² Freud's personal and professional lives nurture and define one another in his life, and although my focus will be on Freud's correspondence, his psychoanalytic writings will be introduced at appropriate points to complement and complete the picture of his Jewish self-understanding drawn from the correspondence at a particular point in time.

Chapter 1 will introduce the topic and state the book's argument. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 will interpret Freud's correspondence in biographical and cultural context, each chapter focusing on one period in Freud's development—early (1872–1906), middle (1907–22), or late (1923–39). Chapter 2 will also include a discussion of Freud's Jewish and humanist educations to give a sense of the cultural resources in his youth from which he drew. A closing chapter will turn to a discussion of Freud's Jewish identity as a model for the dual allegiance of *modern* identity, both Jewish and human, and its implications for humanistic multicultural education.

Freud's last book, *Moses and Monotheism*, will receive special attention, on the assumption that it is Freud's mature statement of what his Jewish identity meant to him. It is then that Freud really comes to terms with the depths of his Jewish allegiance in spite of all rational considerations. Confronted with this inalienable and unavoidable depth, his own approaching death, and the political and social challenge to the value of Jewish life (i.e., the Nazis), he is driven to forge the bridge that is *Moses and Monotheism*. As Maryse Choisy writes, *Moses and Monotheism* is "Freud's deathbed confession. In it are engraved the secret hieroglyphics of the total Freud."³ A developmental picture of the evolution of Freud's Jewish identity, based on his correspondence, can provide a key to help decipher these "hieroglyphics." That understanding, in turn, may help us as moderns to shape our own lives in a more effective way, as we search for alternatives to the "melting pot." Thus this book is a historical study of a particular Jewish identity that seeks to be of use also to contemporary thinking about modern identity and cultural in general. How can particular identity and culture best be preserved and developed in a pluralistic, free, and open society under conditions of universal citizenship, assimilation or acculturation, and secularization, in order that the resources of that particular culture can make a contribution to a

larger human community made up of many such particular cultures? The question attempts to grapple with the multicultural nature of our common future in the modern world. It may be that Freud's own proud combination can offer us guidance, at least in a formal sense, in confronting this difficult question.

The Division of Freud's Psychoanalytic Corpus in Relation to His Jewish Identity

Reference has been made to Samuel Jaffe's division of Freud's psychoanalytic corpus into three periods as a framework for examining Freud's Jewish identity based on his correspondence, so a brief exposition will be helpful at this point. Jaffe sees the first period of Freud's development of psychoanalysis (1895–1906) as devoted to the development of the tools of psychoanalytic interpretation. Psychological “texts,” such as the dream, symptom, witticism, and parapraxis, are analyzed for the insights they provide into the contents and workings of the human mind, especially its unconscious depths. In this way, Freud developed his techniques of interpretation. In such works as *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), and *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), Freud explored these human phenomena and developed concepts and methods for interpreting them in order to found his science (*Wissenschaft*) of psychoanalysis. During this period, he is also actively involved in the Vienna B'nai B'rith, after the death of his father, and the consolidation of his Jewish identity parallels the consolidation of psychoanalysis as a “knowledge-craft” on its own terms.

The second period (1907–23) saw the application of these interpretive tools to larger psychoanalytic problems, such as case history and metapsychology. In this period, Freud wrote about the “Rat Man” (1909),⁴ “Little Hans” (1909),⁵ the “Wolf Man” (1918),⁶ and the Schreber case (1911),⁷ demonstrating the usefulness of his method for understanding neurosis and working for a cure. But he also began to develop the deeper theoretical infrastructure of psychoanalysis and its method, even revising his picture of the mind, as in *The Ego and the Id* (1923), and moving beyond his own earlier formulations into bold speculations about the nature of the human psyche, as in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). During this period, too, Freud's Jewish identity receded behind the advance of a universal psychoanalytic science. Secure in his Jewishness, Freud subordinated it to larger concerns.

The third period (1923–39) involved Freud in more general problems of human culture, with special attention, significantly, to religion.

Such works as *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), *New Introductory Lectures* (1933), and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), indicate that Freud had moved on to consider the wider implications of his discoveries, and that he considered them profound. *Totem and Taboo*, published in 1913–14, anticipates this period in its subject matter, but the book is probably best understood as part of the split in the psychoanalytic movement, Freud making clear his difference from Jung and the Gentile Swiss in response to their “heresy.” It may therefore be considered a first intellectual catalyst, whose gestation culminates in Freud’s return to Jewish roots. His discovery of his cancer in 1923 was the major personal, existential catalyst for this return, I suggest, when the prospect of his own death and the rise of Nazism lead him to reconsider what it all means. It is natural therefore that this period culminates in a major exploration of what a Jew is, as he tells Arnold Zweig, “how the Jew has come to acquire the character he has.” Freud’s answer is *Moses and Monotheism*.

These three periods actually follow Freud’s own descriptions in his *Autobiography* (1925). With reference to the time Jaffe designates as the third period, in particular, Freud writes in a 1935 supplement to this work,

Threads which in the course of my development had become intertangled have now begun to separate; interests which I had acquired in the later part of my life have receded, while the older and original ones have become prominent once more.⁸

He speaks of having entered a “phase of regressive development,”⁹ having “returned to the cultural problems which had fascinated me long before, when I was a youth scarcely old enough for thinking.”¹⁰ He refers to the beginning of this interest “at the climax of my psycho-analytic work,” when he wrote *Totem and Taboo* “in order to investigate the origins of religion and morality,” and he says that this work was carried a stage further in *The Future of an Illusion* and *Civilization and Its Discontents*. *Moses and Monotheism* had not been published yet, but Freud refers to his new formula for religion, contained nowhere else, that he says does “better justice to it,” namely, that the truth of religion is not a “material” (*reale*) truth but a historical one.¹¹

Thus Freud himself supports the idea that the key to his later interests is to be found in his early life. Freud is speaking in his *Autobiography* about his professional work, but I will take his title seriously and extend the insight to his personal “work” as well (they are interconnected), namely, the development of his Jewish identity.

This periodization also explains Freud's focus on religion in the late period, when he becomes concerned again with his Jewish identity. By 1907, according to Jaffe, Freud had vindicated as a "text" all the elements of Jewish identity vilified in antisemitic propaganda, *except* religion: the dream, *Witz* or the joke, the slip, the symptom, neurosis, and sexuality. Each was shown to give meaningful and universal access to humanity, to truth about the mind, even to *Humanität*, in the recognition of psychological kinship. Rather than being meaningless nonsense and elements of Jewish shame, these phenomena, treated like texts to be carefully interpreted, were shown to be meaningful and so valuable, even to non-Jews.

All except religion. In his 1907 article, "Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices,"¹² Freud thinks of religion as consisting in practices and rites, rather than belief or experience. Thus, even though he may have been thinking of the ceremonial practices of Viennese Catholicism, his conception of religion could equally apply to Judaism, with its emphasis on deed over creed or inner experience. So instead of vindicating Jewish religion (certainly an antisemitic target), by implication he condemns it as an obsessive, neurotic ceremonial, devoid of positive meaning in itself, and furthermore, as unhealthy and infantile. When it comes to Jewish religion, Freud seems to agree with the antisemites.

Therefore, when faced with death after 1923, Freud must return to vindicate Jewish religion. True, he does not vindicate Jewish ritual or its theism. But he finds that religion contains if not a "material" truth, at least a historical one. And when Freud applies this formula to Judaism (from whose history he seems to have derived it, when he was writing *Moses and Monotheism*), he finds that the historical truth of Judaism shows that it is the bearer of the finest flower of mankind, namely, the psychological capacity for instinctual renunciation. Furthermore, this capacity is responsible for the progress of all spirituality in Western civilization. In this way, Freud reproduces his creative reaction to antisemitism from the early period, namely, a pattern of vindication, of the rescue of the Jewish people from its maligners.

An Exposition of the Argument

Before turning to the correspondence, it will be helpful to present an overview and discussion of the argument for the periodic development of Freud's Jewish identity. The argument for Freud's dual allegiance will be present throughout the book. Given that the "early" period extends to 1906, through fifty years of Freud's life, it is important to

observe that the early period includes a periodicity of its own, covering as it does Freud's childhood, adolescence, and early manhood. Furthermore, Freud's lifetime periodicity recapitulates the one embedded in the early period.

The Early Period, to 1906

On the basis of the obvious pride Freud felt throughout his life in being Jewish (in spite of flourishing antisemitism in his environment),¹³ it makes psychological sense to assume an original positive Jewish identification in Freud's childhood, conveyed by his parents and family. Robert Wistrich observes that Freud's personality was formed

in an East European Jewish home and then nurtured in the semi-proletarian Leopoldstadt district of Vienna to which Freud's parents had moved in 1859 from his birthplace in Pribor (Freiberg), Moravia.¹⁴

Freud's mother, Amalia, who "had never been fully acculturated" and had "retained the language [i.e., Yiddish], manners, and beliefs of her native [Galician] environment,"¹⁵ was the center of this family. Given Freud's closeness to her, she was probably the root of both his ethnic Jewish pride and the "dark emotional powers" (*dunkele Gefühlskräfte*) that Freud confessed to his B'nai B'rith brethren were at the heart of his irresistible attraction to Jews and Judaism.¹⁶ Martin Freud described her as "emotional and untamed, full of life and vitality."¹⁷ "She had a hunger for life and an indomitable spirit."¹⁸

Freud's own strength had its roots in his relation to his mother,¹⁹ who called him "my golden Sigi." A genogram of Freud's family system shows that he was very close or fused with his mother (and his daughter Anna) and *distant* from his father.²⁰ Michael Molnar reports that "Freud's sense of obligation to his mother was seen by those around him as one of the fundamental traits of his character."²¹ Franz Kobler suggests that Amalia's *Gefühlsleben* represented the remainder of her religious inheritance,²² for according to Martin, "Amalia ignored Jewish feasts."²³ If Kobler is right, then Freud would have associated such life-affirming feeling with Jewish identity even in the absence of religious practice.

On the other hand, Freud's early Jewishness has a positive root in Judaism too, contrary to what is usually thought. Freud's childhood home has sometimes been described as an "enlightened" one from which religious practice was largely absent,²⁴ and the fact that Jakob and Amalia were married in Vienna by the liberal Chief Rabbi of Vienna, Isaac Noah Mannheimer, who was associated with the Reform movement, has been

taken as evidence of an allegiance to Reform Judaism. However, Emanuel Rice has pointed out that conditions in Vienna at the time of their marriage (1855) were such that Mannheimer was the only person in Vienna empowered by the Austrian government to perform Jewish marriages, so that the Freuds' choice probably reflects their desire to have their children considered legitimate, rather than being evidence of their being Reform and/or assimilated Jews.²⁵ Rice argues instead that "a continued, though somewhat weakened, Orthodoxy may well have been the true situation for the Freud family."²⁶

As will become clear from the correspondence, the major Jewish holidays were indeed celebrated in the Freud household while Freud was growing up, though the family was only "moderately pious," and therefore probably lax in terms of daily ritual practice. Freud's earliest Jewish education was at home with his father, when the two studied together using the German-Hebrew Philippsohn Bible. The use of this Bible indicates that intellectually Freud was free from the strictures of fundamentalist Orthodoxy and was taught an openness to modern developments. It is clear from later developments that this early Jewish learning was a positive experience, a deep root of Freud's Jewish identification to which he returns at the end of his life when seeking the essential nature of Jewish character. Therefore, although Jewish religion was practiced weakly in the Freud home, accompanied by Amalia's vitality and Jakob's learning (which as will be seen, was not inconsiderable), it too probably made a positive contribution to Freud's early Jewish identity. This positive sense of Jewishness is part of Freud's inheritance from his parents' Eastern European background, a subconscious knowledge of the goodness of being Jewish that is worth fighting for, in spite of all its hardships and faults. In any event, because the family's daily ritual observance was probably lax, Freud was able to assimilate into German society as he grew up in the 1860s, without the impediment of religious difference that Judaism's rituals underscore, and supported by a healthy pride in his Jewish heritage as a source of life and practical wisdom.

Thus I assume an original developmental positive coherence in Freud's Jewish identity, a naïve sense of the goodness and wholeness of being Jewish. This positive Jewish identity was learned in the home, in Freud's informal Jewish education at the hands of his mother and father, and later in school, from his teacher of Jewish religion, Samuel Hamerschlag, and from his mentor and collaborator, Josef Breuer.

As he grew older however, and entered the *Gymnasium*, Freud would have been taught the humanist, German Enlightenment ethic of *Bildung*, namely, the "self-cultivation of one's intellectual and moral faculties through a study of literature and philosophy, and the refinement of

one's aesthetic sensibilities through the arts and music."²⁷ Such an education would have prepared him to relinquish his attachment to Jewish tradition, considered to be "ill-suited to the cognitive and axiological requirements of the modern world,"²⁸ in order to make possible his "citizenship in the new era—a tolerant and humane era—envisioned by the Enlightenment."²⁹ As Paul Mendes-Flohr points out, there existed an inner affinity between Judaism and the concept of *Bildung*,³⁰ so this allegiance need not have been in conflict with Freud's Jewishness, and insofar as Jakob Freud shared this humanistic ideal, it was probably not a conflict for him. Nevertheless, as will be seen, Freud's adolescence was indeed marked by a rejection of Jewish religious tradition and its practice in favor of an "enlightened" *Weltanschauung*.

This combined experience—positive *Judentum* in the home and humanistic *Bildung* in the *Gymnasium*—laid the foundation for Freud's dual allegiance in his youth, even though at first the two resources were not balanced. Still, Freud's aggressive self-assertion against antisemitism, both in the early period and throughout his life, is psychologically based not only in his feeling of Jewish self-worth and Jewish pride, in spite of Jewish marginality, but also in his humanist patrimony, and Freud's sense of his legitimate citizenship in a cosmopolitan culture based on the Enlightenment ethic of *Bildung*.³¹ Freud retains this dual core to his Jewish identity to the end of his days: the tree grows as the twig is bent.

Born 6 May 1856, Freud grew up in the period of Austrian liberalism (roughly the 1860s). Austrian society seemed to be welcoming the participation and contributions of its Jewish citizens, assuming that they assimilated to the dominant German Enlightenment culture. Freud mentions the enthusiasm and "cheerful hopes" he felt as a Jew for politics during this period, when "every industrious Jewish schoolboy carried a Cabinet Minister's portfolio in his satchel."³² Furthermore, when Freud was "a boy of eleven or twelve" (1867–68), an itinerant poet declared that he would probably grow up to be a cabinet minister,³³ demonstrating that it was indeed a period when Jews were perceived to be more socially acceptable, or at least upwardly mobile. But on the other hand, Freud could have expected to enter Austrian society confident of acceptance and success only insofar as he would assimilate and become "truly German." Though the ethic of *Bildung* had prepared Freud for this adaptation, it would have introduced a natural ambivalence.

Eissler describes Freud's identity at the end of his adolescence:

Like a serpent shedding its confining, outgrown integument, the young Freud emerged from his *Matura* in a state of consolidation, and feeling estranged from his past.³⁴

Thus, Freud achieved a coherent humanist allegiance and identity in his adolescence, and his Jewish identifications were placed in abeyance, their relationship to this humanist consolidation unclear. So, we can understand the atheism and mockery of religion and of Jewish tradition that we find in Freud's letters to his friends Emil Fluss and Eduard Silberstein in 1870–72, for example, as expressions of this ambivalence and of the need to distance himself from Judaism in order to find his own place in Austrian society. Such distancing represented a period of Jewish recession in the early period of the development of Freud's identity.

An important psychological catalyst for Freud's reassessment of his Jewish identity also occurred during the period of political liberalism, when Freud was "ten or twelve years old" (i.e., 1866–68). At this time he felt deeply disillusioned by the story of his father's passivity in the face of a humiliating antisemitic attack, when a Christian ordered Jakob off the pavement during his "Shabbes" stroll and knocked his *Streimel* into the mud.³⁵ On the one hand, Jakob's deference in not rebuking the anti-semitic and instead simply picking up his fur hat made Freud as a boy feel ashamed of his father and of his pusillanimous Judaism. Such embarrassment would have contributed to the feeling of estrangement to which Eissler refers. But on the other hand, Freud's own aggressive or martial response to the story, illustrated in his retelling of the event, is conceived of as a Jewish response, for he relates his association of it with

the scene in which Hannibal's father, Hamilcar Barca, made his boy swear before the household altar to take vengeance on the Romans.³⁶

In this juxtaposition of the action of the "Semitic" Hannibal's father, the young Freud forges through his response a primary characteristic of his own Jewish identity. He is, as his son Martin characterizes him, a "fighting Jew."³⁷ Perhaps the fact that Freud's Jewishness emerges most strongly in *defiance*, as Peter Gay observes,³⁸ is a legacy of this memory. However, as Wistrich says, Freud's Jewish allegiance cannot be reduced simply to "a kind of defiance."³⁹ It is richer in content than this reflex.

In any event, the personal authenticity and depth of Freud's aggressive Jewish response are shown by his associations in *The Interpretation of Dreams* that follow the report of this memory. If the sequence of Freud's memories and associations is arranged chronologically, the development of Freud's personality is clear. Freud says that his response to his father's story was "a transference of an already formed emotional relation onto a new object."⁴⁰ At age three, Freud fought with his nephew John (probably not for the only time), who was older by a year. "I hit him 'cause he

hit me,"⁴¹ he replied to his father. So we see that this reaction to attack, this vigorous self-defense even against stronger opponents, was learned early at home, in relation to family members, with Jews. Jewish self-defense comes naturally and un-self-consciously to Freud because it is rooted so deeply in his past.

These struggles helped implant a "martial ideal" in the younger boy's psyche. This emotional tendency led to his boyhood identification with "Jewish" soldiers, such as Massena and Hannibal. Freud tells us that as a boy he stuck identifying labels onto the backs of his wooden soldiers representing Napoleon's marshals. He identified personally with the marshal Massena, whose birthday he believed he shared, and he gave this marshal what he assumed was his Jewish name, Manasseh. That Freud attached his self-assertion to Jewish figures points to the naturalness of his Jewish identity: the vehicles of self-assertion and self-defense are Jewish, like the self. Thus Freud's early image of Jews, or at least of himself as a Jew, is that they fight, they stand up for themselves. We can understand therefore his distress and conflict at hearing of his father's "unheroic," that is, passive and deferential, conduct when his Chassidic *Streimel* was knocked into the mud by a Christian antisemite. With this background, his "martial" response seems only natural.

Freud fantasizes an oath of vengeance in response to his father's story. How could his own vengeance be carried out? Freud tells us that this event in his youth contained a power that was "still being shown in all these emotions and dreams"⁴² so many years later. So when he tells us that his youthful identification with Hannibal and his longing for entering Rome symbolized "the conflict between the tenacity [*Zähigkeit*] of Jewry and the organization of the Catholic Church,"⁴³ may we not understand the "other passionate wishes" that he says the wish to go to Rome symbolized to include the fulfillment of the oath of vengeance, for example, by Freud's being appointed to a professorship?⁴⁴

Freud describes his appointment in a letter to Fliess by saying, "One must look somewhere for one's salvation, and I chose the title as my savior."⁴⁵ Such language probably indicates Freud's assimilation, rather than a hidden attraction to Catholicism, as Vitz hypothesizes.⁴⁶ Given Freud's association of the Catholic church and antisemitism, Freud's professorial success can be seen as the overcoming of this adversary and the fulfillment of his fantasied oath to his father.

The prediction that Freud would grow up to be a cabinet minister (which Freud connects with his ambitiousness) and the experience of being told of his father's humiliation while holding his hand (and Freud's associated oath of vengeance) occurred roughly around the same time,

during the era of Austrian liberalism. Freud's father told his humiliating story to show him "how much better things were now than they had been" in Jakob's younger days in Freiberg. Shortly before the prediction of the boy's political success, Jakob had brought home portraits of the "bourgeois ministry"—"these middle class professional men" (like Freud himself)—and, Freud tells us, "we had illuminated the house in their honor," for "there had even been some Jews among them." The family celebration must have made quite an impression on the Jewish boy, since lighting candles or lamps is a religious and festive act in Jewish tradition, marking special occasions. For Freud's Eastern European parents to have acted in this manner would have conveyed a strong feeling of Jewish triumph at successful participation in the larger culture, the fruits of Emancipation. It would certainly have given familial legitimation to liberal ideals for the future. Therefore the painful experience of his father's humiliation at just this time (as a child Freud did not perceive the old man's dignity, wisdom, and self-control) naturally produced a desire for revenge in the boy to whom antisemitism seemed such an unjust contrast to the "bourgeois ministry."

So when Freud says, "the events of that period no doubt had some bearing on the fact that up to the time shortly before I entered the University it had been my intention to study Law,"⁴⁷ it seems plausible that a ministerial career was to be Freud's chosen path to a just revenge, the full implementation of an enlightened triumph over antisemitism. However, he changed paths and chose a medical career, working in neurological research for many years (first publishing in 1877) before turning to psychology. Therefore I suggest by extension that Freud's ambitions for a professorship in neuropathology are connected with his desire for Jewish revenge for the Christian antisemitic humiliation of his father, and consequently are connected with filial piety. Note that the oath of Hannibal is sworn "before the household altar."⁴⁸ When in 1902 Freud finally achieves his "salvation" in the form of the title *Professor Extraordinarius*, after years of perceived antisemitic discrimination (whether real or not),⁴⁹ he has also fulfilled his fantasized vow to avenge his father, and in doing so he helps to consolidate his own Jewish identity towards the end of the early period, by making a peace with the past.

As mentioned above, Jaffe argues that Freud creates psychoanalysis by the "vindication" or revaluation of "texts" that were identified by antisemites as typically Jewish, such as the dream, wit, parapraxes, and neuroses such as hysteria and neurasthenia.⁵⁰ Freud reinterpreted texts that had been seen as valueless and insignificant in such a way as to show not only that they were meaningful and highly significant on their own terms, but also that they were valuable as an access to a new

Humanität and a new view of man. Freud's rescue of these "Jewish" texts is consistent with his personal response of aggressive Jewish self-defense. As he dreams Theodor Herzl tells him, "Something must be done to save the Jewish people."⁵¹ Psychoanalysis is for Freud at this time that "something," and it will save them by contributing to the creation of a new cultural whole.⁵²

But after his *matura*, estranged from and embarrassed by Judaism, Freud went beyond his father's passivity by assimilating to German nationalism when he entered the University of Vienna in the autumn of 1873. It was in that first year that he joined the *Leseverein der deutschen Studenten Weins*, "a radical student society wholly committed to the German nationalist cause."⁵³ As is often the case in adolescence, Freud was "trying on" identities to see if they fit. How German was he? As he writes in his correspondence and in his *Autobiography*, the rise of antisemitism at the university,⁵⁴ including in the *Leseverein*, helped answer this question, for now German *Kultur* had excluded him, betraying its own Enlightenment ideals. Being Jewish seemed to exclude him from equal participation in society.

This conflict continued into the next decade as Freud sought to find a balance, with antisemitism acting as "a catalyst in Freud's growing inner affirmations of Jewish identity during the mid-1880s."⁵⁵ In fact, Freud's vigorous self-defenses against antisemitism at that time may have been part of his attempt to resolve his ambivalence. He defended his Jewishness against any implication that it made him inferior.⁵⁶ Still, he describes his heart in a letter to Minna Bernays in 1885 as "German provincial."⁵⁷ At the same time, in 1882 he can write the "Nathan" letter (see chapter 2), in which his identification with Jewish tradition (even if qualified by humanist allegiances) is clear and proud.

The death of his father (in 1896) and his subsequent self-analysis pushed Freud toward the resolution of this ambivalence. As Dennis Klein shows in his *Jewish Origins of the Psychoanalytic Movement* (1981), Freud's disillusionment with liberal assimilation after the period of antisemitism in the 1880s caused him to withdraw into Jewish self-assertion, but he did not abandon the liberal ideals of his youth. Instead he found for them a Jewish context of social support and personal expression in the Vienna B'nai B'rith. When Freud joined B'nai B'rith on 29 September 1897 (the earliest possible opportunity after his father's death in October 1896), he found that the humanist ideals of his youth could be expressed *through* his Jewish identifications. That is, his particular Jewish identity could be the vehicle for an expression of his commitment to the universal, humanist values of the Enlightenment, and perhaps *Judentum* could even be an instrument for *Bildung*.

Freud's active membership in B'nai B'rith, furthermore, contributed to the formation of a cultural expression for these liberal ideals in the psychoanalytic movement. His "vindication" of "Jewish texts" can be seen as an expression of this Jewish self-assertion in the service of liberal ideals. Finding himself relegated to the margins of society by the collapse of political liberalism and the concomitant rise in antisemitism, Freud responded to the breakdown of the coherent Jewish-humanist identity of his youth by both identifying with the humanism that minimizes Jewish difference and at the same time by proudly asserting his Jewishness as a member of the community of nations (e.g., to Giles de la Tourette in 1886).⁵⁸

Rothman and Isenberg describe three strategies for coping with marginality: assimilation, universalism, and nationalism.⁵⁹ They argue that psychoanalysis is Freud's universalistic strategy.⁶⁰ I would go further. When Freud discovers his own marginality in adolescence and at the University of Vienna after a youth full of the confident expectation of influential participation in Austrian society, he responds with versions of the latter two strategies. Freud's humanism continues the universalistic agenda of political liberalism, whereas his identification with the Jewish people and with Zionism (though initially with a universalistic emphasis) demonstrates a nationalistic strategy. McGrath points to the complex elements of Jewish tradition, such as Freud's identification with Joseph and with Moses, that Freud was struggling with in his dreams and in his thinking at this time.⁶¹ It is not coincidental that Jewish figures lead Freud to his dual allegiance, because in fact access to the universal is given precisely *through* the particular. Formed *in nuce* here in the early period in B'nai B'rith, this new configuration is the shape of Freud's Jewish identity, namely, the dual allegiance of a Jew committed to liberal humanist ideals.

In August and September of 1901 Freud visits Rome, overcoming a long-standing phobia that Martin Bergmann suggests is related to Freud's guilt at honoring an old enemy of the Jewish people, a symbol of Freud's disloyalty to his Jewish past.⁶² Visiting Rome enabled Freud to take steps to acquire for himself in 1902 a prize he had coveted for many years, namely, the title of *Professor Extraordinarius*. In gaining this appointment, Freud repaid a debt of vengeance he felt he owed for the antisemitic insult to his father,⁶³ and so he cleared himself of filial guilt that could have obstructed his sense of wholeness.

This final resolution consolidated Freud's Jewish identity in a mature and confident Jewish-humanist amalgam at the end of the "early" period, after the death of his father, his active membership in the Vienna B'nai B'rith, and the publishing of the work that would create psycho-

analysis. It created the psychological infrastructure for the subordination of Freud's Jewish identity to the "liberal cause" of psychoanalysis and its launching in the larger, Gentile sea in the middle period.

The collapse of political liberalism and the rise of antisemitism in Austria gave impetus during Freud's adolescence to a withdrawal of his Jewish identification with the larger society. However, it is Freud's defiant *response* to this new configuration of personal and social challenge, namely, (1) his B'nai B'rith membership and activity, (2) his pursuit of professional advancement, and (3) the founding of psychoanalysis as a self-conscious movement (i.e., the Psychological Wednesday Society), that gives a confident and coherent shape to Freud's Jewish identity at the end of the early period.

Thus, the early period of Freud's Jewish development moves from naïve identification, through ambivalent questioning and distance, to a proud commitment to a Jewishness that expresses humanitarian ideals through particular Jewish allegiance, defined in both ethnic and intellectual terms. The periodicity of Freud's Jewish development over the course of his lifetime recapitulates this pattern.

Freud's first mature consolidation of his Jewish identity enabled him in the middle period to promote the development and expansion of the psychoanalytic movement so that it became international and worldwide. During the early period, Freud married, fathered six children, experienced the death of his father, and formed a deep friendship with fellow Jewish physician Wilhelm Fliess. He also joined and played an active role in the Vienna B'nai B'rith, even helping to found a new chapter.

The social and personal support for these achievements came from fellow Jews, for Freud felt increasingly isolated from professional and academic society, which was either non-Jewish or whose Jewish character—for example, in the medical profession—he did not perceive as a support. Freud's personal social circle consisted entirely of Jews, from his lawyer to his fellow tarock card players. The roles that his teacher of Jewish religion, Samuel Hammerschlag, his Jewish colleagues Josef Breuer and Wilhelm Fliess, as well as his brethren in B'nai B'rith, played in the formation of Freud's secure Jewish identity were crucial. Thus it is in this early period that Freud is confirmed in his ethnic solidarity with other Jews—*Zusammengehörigkeit*—independently of any adherence to religious belief. Until 1906, when Jung became part of the movement (meeting Freud personally in 1907), all seventeen members of the psychoanalytic movement were Jewish. Furthermore, "the analysts were aware of their Jewishness and frequently maintained a sense of Jewish purpose and solidarity."⁶⁴ These Jewish contexts contributed to the clar-

ity of Freud's own Jewish identity as psychoanalysis moved out into the larger culture.

It is worth noting too in this connection the Jewish elements of the series of "Rome dreams"⁶⁵ from 1897 (the year following Jakob Freud's death) that Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* relates between the "bourgeois ministry" memories and that of the walk with his father, because they illustrate not only Freud's feeling of solidarity with other Jews, but also his affection for Jewish jokes, which is another important element of his Jewish identity rooted in the early period. Two of the Rome dreams prominently feature Jewish jokes in which Freud seeks Jewish help from other Jews. As Klein remarks, "The Hannibalian conquest could not be achieved without assistance."⁶⁶

One joke in particular serves to illustrate the "Hannibalian" tenacity Freud identifies as characteristically Jewish. The poor Jew in the joke perseveres in his determination to reach Karlsbad, in spite of being repeatedly thrown off the train, hoping his "constitution" (i.e., his Jewish nature) can endure the trip. In 1908 Freud writes to Karl Abraham, "Do not lose heart! Our ancient Jewish tenacity [*unsere altjüdische Zähigkeit*] will prove itself in the end."⁶⁷ Freud's sense of his own tenacious Jewish identity is firmly in place with this remark.

Another joke about "a confused Jew, alone and lost in a strange city, who received the kind of reassurance [in Yiddish] that only a fellow Jew could offer," shows that Freud recognized "how important the element of Jewish solidarity was in his psychological rebellion against antisemitism."⁶⁸ Since Freud had recently joined the Vienna B'nai B'rith, Klein interprets these dreams as the fulfillment of Freud's wish for Jewish fellowship.⁶⁹ In his quest for satisfaction against "Rome," Freud seeks other Jews to "show him the way."⁷⁰

Freud often shared the pleasure of Jewish jokes with friends, and their wisdom was a consolation at critical times in his life, as will be seen in Freud's correspondence. Theodor Reik observes that

Jewish wit was an integral part of [Freud's] universe of discourse, woven into the warp and woof of much of his thinking, a reservoir from which he draws at all times to illuminate and explain the most complex and profound of his psychological observations.⁷¹

Ernst Simon argues that in fact Freud presents in his book on humor, *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* (1905),⁷² a "theory of the Jewish soul in miniature."⁷³ So Freud's use of Jewish wit is not insignificant for understanding the "inner identity, the intimate familiarity of a common psychic structure," that he recognized in common with Jews. As

Bergmann says, Freud's book on *Witz* is that of "a man at home with the Jewish attitude toward life."⁷⁴ Furthermore,

The Jewish joke, the unique creation of the Jews, requires no adherence to Judaism in any organized sense, and can, therefore, become a vehicle for the expression of feelings of solidarity for those who have retained a sense of belonging, without religious or national affiliation.⁷⁵

Freud was just this sort of Jew, though we will have reason to explore the extent of his "religious" and "national" affiliation further. From the Fliess correspondence it is clear that Freud began collecting Jewish jokes for this book shortly after his father's death,⁷⁶ and Reik tells us that "Freud inherited his taste for Jewish wit from his father, Jakob."⁷⁷ Telling Jewish jokes may be a way that Freud expresses an identification with his father, and so relevant for understanding the son's Jewish identity.

Significantly, evidence for Freud's early identification with Moses is also clear in *The Interpretation of Dreams*:

someone led me to the top of a hill and showed me Rome half-shrouded in mist . . . There was more in the content of this dream than I feel prepared to detail; but the theme of "the promised land seen from afar" was obvious in it.⁷⁸

This dream immediately precedes the ones with Jews and Jewish jokes, reinforcing the impression that the image of Moses was associated with Freud's relation to his Jewishness and his fellow Jews. As Klein notes,

For Jews seeking to articulate a deep sense of ethical purpose [for example, righting an old injustice] and a universal vision [transcending Jewish particularity], Moses, the lawgiver and liberator of the Israelites, could serve as a supreme archetype.⁷⁹

McGrath also points to Freud's identification with the biblical figures of Joseph and Moses in the land of Egypt as role models helping to lead Freud to a satisfying resolution of the question of his Jewish identity in a foreign culture.⁸⁰

Thus even Freud's Moses-identity "crystallized as early as the 1890s," Klein says, that is, in our early period. It was pressed into a transformed service in the middle period; as Freud tells Jung in 1909, "If I am Moses, then you are Joshua and will take possession of the promised land of psychiatry, which I shall only be able to glimpse from

afar.”⁸¹ Note the recessed Jewish role in the middle period. In the late period of course it emerged fully developed, the basis of Freud’s final assessment of Jewish identity. Freud’s Jewish identifications in the early period set the stage for his Jewish self-understandings and responses in the middle and late periods: *Die Urzeit gleich die Endzeit*.⁸²

Freud’s loyalty to his father’s memory is also expressed, ironically, in his rebelliousness against his father, to which he admits through his dreams.⁸³ Freud relates two memories of micturition at an early age (two and seven or eight) in relation to his father, and in connection with his own ambitiousness.⁸⁴ Freud’s protests against his father’s doubts (“You see I *have* come to something”) and his repeated statement that he had kept his promise to console his father (originally by replacing the bed he had wet) are linked later with the wish to avenge his father, for both reactions (protest/consolation and vow of vengeance) are based on Freud’s love for and admiration of his father. The boy seeks his father’s approval and admiration even as he himself seeks to admire and approve of his father. In order to fulfill his own ambitiousness, the boy must rebel against his father’s authority in his angry prediction (“The boy will amount to nothing”); but in order to fulfill his vow of vengeance, he must also rebel against the authority of his father’s passive example. In this way there is a “transference of an already formed emotional relation” onto a new objective. That is, Freud seeks to *win* his father’s love in the wake of the micturition scenes by proving his own worth with his success, and thereby being able to console his father. He seeks to *protect* the love he feels for his father in his reaction to the antisemitic attack, by avenging the harm done to his admired image of his father. The old man can remain heroic in the son’s eyes only if the dishonor done to his image is avenged.

Interestingly, as David Blatt notices, the second memory Freud has of deliberately urinating in his parents’ bedroom at the age of seven or eight coincides with the time when he began to study the Bible with his father,⁸⁵ a few years before the *Streimel-in-the-mud* episode. In this light, *Moses and Monotheism* may function as Freud’s further settling of accounts with his father, fulfilling his own ambition and showing Jakob that he has indeed come to something. As Freud says, “Happiness is the fulfillment of a childhood wish.”

Freud’s fulfillment in 1902 of his “debt” to his father completed the consolidation of his Jewish identity around values that he felt were Jewish, or at least were associated with Jews he admired, such as defiance in the name of self-worth, self-defence, solidarity, loyalty to oath, liberalism, humanism, and humor. This achievement paved the way for

psychoanalysis to be released from its Jewish moorings to set sail in a larger, Gentile sea. At this point the middle period of the development of Freud's Jewish identity began. As we shall see, the Jewish achievements of the late period will similarly embody Freud's fulfilment of an "oath" or mandate from his father.

Additional psychological support for the dividing line after 1906 may be found in the fact that Freud destroyed his papers in 1907, when he moved his office from the ground floor of Bergasse 19 to the apartment opposite his family's on the second floor, expanding his own home in the process.⁸⁶ Freud had literally changed his home base. He had destroyed his papers once before, in 1885, and he wrote to Martha at that time in terms that make it clear that the destruction reflected his sense of a turning point.⁸⁷ Thus we may take the second destruction in 1907 as evidence that Freud felt he had again passed through a threshold of some kind that warranted the obliteration of the past, lest it prevent him from maturing, from "thinking himself" all over again, as he put it in 1885. His move to a new "home" reflects this sense of a turning point.

The Middle Period, 1907–22

The middle period, roughly 1907–22, is characterized by the development and expansion of psychoanalysis as a worldwide, pointedly humanistic movement, and therefore Freud the humanist seeks to place his own Jewishness, clearly defined by now in his own mind, in the background, a part of his private life. As he says, psychoanalysis must not become "a Jewish national affair."⁸⁸ Even further, as he tells his followers at the Second Psychoanalytical Congress in 1910, Jews must be satisfied with "the modest role of preparing the ground,"⁸⁹ allowing Gentiles, like Jung (whom Freud had just made president of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society), to take the lead in presenting psychoanalysis to the world. That the ambitious Freud can make such a concession as a Jew shows a sense of security in his Jewish identity that is not easily threatened or shaken, an identity not dependent upon external recognition for its sense of worth. This recession of the Jewish character of psychoanalysis is not due to Freud's Jewish self-hatred, but rather to his secure Jewish self-confidence. It is a form of self-transcendence, a reflection of Jewish experience and teaching, and of course astute politics for the times. However, with Jung's defection, this strategy of deference to Gentiles seems to have failed, and like Christian supersessionism in seeing the "Old Testament" as a preparation for the New, it provokes a natural Jewish resentment. As Jewish and Gentile elements in the psy-

choanalytic movement separate “like oil and water,”⁹⁰ Freud reasserts his Jewishness, no longer content to remain in the background.

At the same time, behind the scenes in the middle period, Freud has an important encounter with the figure of Moses that has an impact on the development of his Jewish identity. In 1914 Freud writes an essay which he publishes anonymously, entitled “The *Moses* of Michelangelo.”⁹¹ In his interpretation of the statue, Freud creates for himself an image of self-restraint in the face of provocation, an ideal that he characterizes as “the highest mental achievement that is possible in a man.”⁹² Martin Bergmann argues that this vision forges in Freud a new understanding of his father’s self-restraint in response to the antisemitic attack in Freiburg, and a new mature respect.

Bergmann sees “an intrasystemic change within Freud’s own super-ego,” in which

a less destructive father figure is created of Freud. The new Moses who is not violent is a shade closer to Jacob Freud who also conquered his wrath in the fur cap incident.⁹³

Bergmann points out that in the context of organized Jewish life, Jakob Freud’s behavior was neither undignified nor cowardly, but rather noble and wise, since for the Jew the ability to control his anger was a sign of his spiritual superiority, inner dignity, and even heroism.⁹⁴ Freud’s “*Moses* of Michelangelo” essay transfers this nobility of spirit to Michelangelo’s version of the Hebrew leader, and in so doing Freud makes peace with his father, restoring his ideal. In altering his internal relationship with his father, Freud also opens himself to a new relationship with Jewish tradition.

Mortimer Ostow, responding to Bergmann, transfers this insight to the end of Freud’s life:

Freud finally understood at eighty-two what he had failed to understand at twelve, that is, that his father’s behavior had been discreet rather than cowardly, and that when you are in a physically weak position, as the Jews in the Diaspora are, physical defiance is a poor strategy.⁹⁵

Though in his younger days Freud made use of physical defiance, even as a Jew in the Diaspora, Ostow implies that later in life, Freud’s recognition of his father’s wisdom and true nobility paved the way for Freud himself to value his own Jewishness as mediated by his father. Freud

found himself in 1914 in an analogous situation vis-à-vis Jung as his father had vis-à-vis the antisemitic Christian when he was a mature man. It is as though Freud had had his “hat” knocked off by Jung (let the symbolic castration not be missed). By defining his own Jewishness in terms of self-control and self-transcendent dedication, as Freud interprets Michelangelo’s “Moses,” Freud identifies with his father, and he is able to write *Moses and Monotheism* at the end of his life, extending his view of Moses to include the Jewish people and their history, in order to make himself whole. The development of Freud’s Jewish identity is furthered by and yet is also a consequence of his work. Seeing a new Moses leads Sigmund to see a new Jewish Freud, one that will find clearer articulation in the final period. Significantly, Freud acknowledges his authorship of “The *Moses* of Michelangelo” in 1924.

The Late Period, 1923–39

The final period begins on a personal level in 1923, when Freud learns that he has cancer and his own death becomes real before him. This event triggers a return to issues of Jewish identity that parallels the psychoanalytic concern with what Freud calls the “cultural” problems, such as religion, civilization, and life and death. In addition, the resurgence of antisemitism in the 1920s and 1930s acts again as a social catalyst to trigger Freud’s Jewish return.

Freud makes many statements in this period about what kind of a Jew he is (for example those to B’nai B’rith in 1926 and 1935), and his own Jewishness is more evident to him. Even his dog, Jofie, is associated in Freud’s mind with his Jewishness. As Yosef Yerushalmi points out, the dog’s name, pronounced in German “Yofi,” sounds just like the Hebrew word meaning “beauty,”⁹⁶ and Freud corrects Arnold Zweig’s mistake in 1936, to underscore his attachment: not “Zofie,” but “Jo as in Jew.”⁹⁷ Freud takes a growing interest as well in the Zionist movement, formally becoming, at his own request at the age of eighty (in 1936), an honorary member of “Kadimah,” the student Zionist society. The late period is thus one in which Freud reasserts his Jewishness in a public way, and as such it results in a greater and more mature clarification and assessment than was possible in the early period, or during the middle period when he was not focused on the problem of his Jewish identity. As an expression of this concern with Jewish identity, and in response to Nazi threats to its survival, the final period culminates in Freud’s last book, *Moses and Monotheism*. According to Freud’s own description,⁹⁸ this work was generated by the problem of Jewish identity, both internal (or self-related) and external (or other-related).

Summary

Freud's correspondence, divided into three parts, will show that his Jewish identity developed over the course of his life in relation to both internal and external forces. Internally, Freud had a need for wholeness in the midst of dual commitments to Jewishness and humanism; externally, antisemitism repeatedly denied value to his life and work. Freud's Jewish identity became a strategy to respond to both these pressures.

His primary Jewish identification was familial and positive, strengthened (as will be shown) by his formal and informal Jewish education at home and at school, and supported by the humanist framework of the *Gymnasium*. This positive Jewish identity was threatened in Freud's youth both by Jakob's passive example in the face of antisemitism and by the collapse of the supportive liberal humanistic sociopolitical context of Austrian life, with its attendant assimilationist expectations. Freud eventually responded to these threats by a defiant affirmation of Jewish worth and a reassertion of liberal values, significantly in a specifically Jewish setting, the B'nai B'rith. This Jewish consolidation had its professional analogue in Freud's founding the psychoanalytic movement, which served *inter alia* as a vehicle for the expression of these Jewish-humanistic values.

Freud's success in becoming *Professor Extraordinarius* in 1902 gave him the degree of inner freedom from his past that he needed to enable him in the middle period to move psychoanalysis beyond its Jewish moorings without threatening the coherence of his own Jewish identity. At the same time, a reencounter with the image of Moses enabled him to develop below the surface a more mature relationship with his father's Jewish identity, and so too later with his own. Freud's psychoanalytic return to the issue of Jewish identity and its redefinition and reassessment at the end of his life in the late period is related both to the shock of his own mortality and to a repetition of early provocation, namely, antisemitic attack, both of which trigger a renewed identification with his father, Jakob, and an attempt to vindicate *Judentum*.

As mentioned above, the periodicity of Freud's Jewish development over the course of his lifetime recapitulates on a larger scale the pattern established in the early period. Thus the early period as a whole corresponds to Freud's early or first identification with Jewishness, expressed in stable form through his B'nai B'rith membership. The middle period corresponds to Freud's rejection of Judaism in his adolescence in favor of the assimilation of German Enlightenment humanism. Finally, the late period involves a resolution of the repressed conflict and resentment introduced by the suppression of Jewish identity in the middle

period, but in a higher key, a more mature configuration or coherence than was possible at the close of the early period. At that time, Freud was satisfied with the successful vengeance he had been able to visit upon the "enemies of his people," who represented the antisemite who had attacked his father. The discharge of filial debt freed Freud to accept the liberal Jewish-humanist compromise of the B'nai B'rith and commit himself to it as a Jewish "son of the covenant."

In the late period, Freud needed something more mature than vengeance; he needed to give, to make a Jewish contribution to truth, progress, and reconciliation. He needed not to win another battle, but to make peace. *Moses and Monotheism* represents his best effort, though it is an ambivalent reconciliation. We moderns too need not to win battles against those who are different from us, but rather to build a larger whole with their help. We will see if Freud's example can point us in the right direction.