

Santa Clara University

Scholar Commons

Religious Studies

College of Arts & Sciences

2003

Introduction: Teaching Freud and Religion

Diane Jonte-Pace

Santa Clara University, djontepace@scu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/rel_stud



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jonte-Pace, Diane E. "Introduction: Teaching Freud and Religion." *Teaching Freud*. Ed. Diane E. Jonte-Pace. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. 3-13.

"This material was originally published in *Teaching Freud* edited by Diane E. Jonte-Pace, and has been reproduced by permission of [Oxford University Press](#). For permission to reuse this material, please visit <http://www.oup.co.uk/academic/rights/permissions>.

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts & Sciences at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Religious Studies by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact rscroggin@scu.edu.

Introduction: Teaching Freud and Religion

Diane Jonte-Pace

Both education and psychoanalysis, Freud warned in “Analysis Terminable and Interminable,” are “‘impossible’ professions” in which “one can be sure beforehand of achieving unsatisfactory results.”¹ In spite of his understanding of the unsatisfactory consequences of psychoanalysis, Freud did not turn aside from his own impossible profession. Nor do the authors in this volume turn aside from theirs: all are educators; all teach psychoanalysis in some form; and, compounding the “impossibilities,” most teach courses on Freud in departments of religious studies.

The contributors to this volume are both teachers and scholars: all have contributed in significant ways to the literature on psychoanalysis and religion. This volume provides an opportunity for these teaching scholars to articulate something we seldom write about: how we teach Freud and religion; how we integrate our scholarly lives with our pedagogical lives; how we live and work with the impossibilities of our professions.

The contributors to this volume were invited to describe their courses on Freud and religion. They were encouraged to focus on the academic contexts within which they teach; to articulate their pedagogical goals, assumptions, and practices; and to explain their methods of integrating scholarship and pedagogy. The intent was to produce a volume as useful to the new professor constructing a first course on Freud in religious studies as it would be to the more seasoned professor interested in incorporating new ideas and pedagogical methods into a well-established course. The result is a collection that admirably fulfills this intention and, in fact, goes well beyond it: not only are the essays discussions of how we teach Freud but they are also scholarly contri-

butions to the “Freud and religion” literature. In addition, they are written in a style that will be accessible to students.

Each chapter is a thoughtful, informative, and often quite personal account of our courses, our departments, our students, and our universities. The contributors describe, in lively and engaging essays, their scholarly and pedagogical engagements with Freud as a critic and interpreter of religion; as a Jew in an anti-semitic milieu; as an architect of contemporary culture; as a creator of the modern, postmodern, or gendered self; and as a subject, particularly in the last few years, of acrimonious debate.

Why Teach Freud?

There are a number of reasons that scholars in religious studies teach Freud today. First, his influence on our culture is undeniable. He is clearly one of the architects of modernity. His ideas are almost omnipresent in our culture, our ideologies and institutions: our assumptions about self and society, health and pathology, gender and sexuality are infused with Freudian concepts. Freud developed a discourse of emotions, motivations, and instincts that has sculpted our sense of who we are as human beings, both intrapsychically and interpersonally. He developed the therapeutic practice to which most forms of psychotherapy and counseling trace their origins. His ideas are referenced in film, television, advertising, and popular culture. To understand our culture, we need to understand Freud: cultural studies cannot avoid psychoanalytic studies.

Within religious studies, the contributors to this volume argue, it is vitally important to teach Freud. A century ago Freud was one of the central instigators of the debate over secularism and religion in modernity. His critique of religion continues to resonate in contemporary controversies and conversations in culture at large. It is prominent as well in the current discussion of the role of religion—and the history of the study of religion—in the universities.² As we “teach the debates” (Graff 1993)³ shaping culture, the academy, and the field of religious studies, we inevitably turn to Freud, the prototypical critic of religion.

Freud was not only a *critic* of religion, he was also an *analyst* of religion. If the major thinkers in religious studies ask “What is religion and how might we best understand it?” Freud is surely a paradigmatic cartographer of that terrain. He was one of the first theorists to explore the unconscious fantasies, fears, and desires underlying religious ideas and practices. As scholars of religion we cannot ignore him. We read him not merely as an historical or methodological relic of early twentieth-century scholarship—a grandparent of religious studies, as it were—but rather as a theorist who continues to articulate pressing questions about how to understand religion today.

Thus if we teach the debates over religion and secularism, we find ourselves teaching Freud’s critique of religion; if we examine the ways we understand religion, we find ourselves teaching Freud’s inquiries into the nature of religion. If we raise profound questions about “who we are” as cultural beings,

as gendered, embodied beings, and as psychological or spiritual beings, we find ourselves teaching Freud. Indeed, as Peter Gay (1999) has said, “today we all speak Freud.”

Although “we all speak Freud” in our self-concepts and social practices, Freud’s legacy is deeply contested. His reputation is perhaps at its lowest point since he came to public attention a century ago. *Time* magazine asked in the mid-1990s, “Is Freud Dead?” Freud’s current “archrival” Frederick Crews (1997, 1998) issues frequent barrages against psychoanalytic theory and practice. Freud is accused of sloppy scholarship, unethical practices, and pseudo-scientific claims: his critics charge that his Oedipal theory was generated in an attempt to cover up the tragic realities of incest and that his therapeutic methods and theories led to the proliferation of problematic cases of false memory syndrome. Advancements in neuroscience have thrown into question his dream theories; empirical study is unable to demonstrate the superior efficacy of psychoanalysis over other therapeutic practices; and feminists challenge his views of gender. Our students are often aware that Freud is under attack. Whether they are seminary students angry at Freud for his atheism, undergraduate students resistant to new forms of self-knowledge, or psychology majors who have been taught that Freud was wrong or irrelevant, they often come to our classes ready to reject and dismiss his views.

Indeed, how *can* we teach Freud in our religious studies courses when he is so thoroughly rejected by our students and by others? Nearly every contributor to this volume addresses in some way the contemporary critique of Freud and/or the resistance to Freud among students. Some contributors join in the critique; others express ongoing ambivalence; still others bracket the critique. Many acknowledge that some of the critiques of Freud may be legitimate—yet most maintain the significance of his insights into instincts, drives, and unconscious wishes; into the effects of the family dynamics of early childhood on later personality structure; and into the ways that psyche and culture intersect.

Other contributors defend Freud in specific ways: some suggest, in response to the attack on Freud’s scientific credentials, that he is better viewed as a theorist who borrowed the best scientific ideas of his day, rather than as a scientist manqué. Volney Gay argues that the critics who blame Freud for promoting false memory syndrome have misunderstood his notion of psychic reality. Ernest Wallwork responds to the critics concerned with Freud’s ethics by demonstrating a larger moral trajectory in his work. Kirk Bingaman articulates (through a discussion of the work of Judith Van Herik) a feminist defense of Freud, showing that his ideas contribute to the feminist project of uncovering structures of misogyny in culture. The words of poet W. H. Auden (1966), written in 1939 as a eulogy for Freud upon his death, characterize the views of many in this collection:

... if often he was wrong and, at times, absurd,
to us he is no more a person
now but a whole climate of opinion
under whom we conduct our different lives.

Freud is “a whole climate of opinion” now. He cannot be dismissed in our classrooms or our culture. We learn more about ourselves and our world when we study Freud—even when we study his mistakes.

Structure and Organization

The essays in this collection are arranged in four broad groupings. Part I, “Institutional and Curricular Contexts,” focuses on the undergraduate, graduate, and “multicultural” institutions in which the contributors teach. Part II, “Teaching Freud as Interpreter of Religious Texts and Practices,” focuses on psychoanalytic interpretations of religious figures—Ramakrishna, Jesus, and Augustine—and religious phenomena, myth, and mysticism. Part III, “Teaching the Controversies,” introduces major debates in the field: two essays address feminism, gender, patriarchy, Judaism, and ethnicity; a third explores Freud’s interpretations of ritual, mysticism, and Moses, alongside those of his challengers and successors. Part IV, “Teaching the Teachings, Teaching the Practice,” contains essays describing psychoanalysis as a powerful pedagogy of transformation and insight.

Part I. Institutional and Curricular Context

The first group of essays takes as a central focus the institutional and curricular contexts in which we teach. Diane Jonte-Pace situates the discussion of her course in the context of the Jesuit institution primarily for undergraduates, where she has taught for more than fifteen years. She describes the university, its commitment to Catholicism, its core curriculum, the place of religious studies in the core, and its students. She argues that we must ask who our students are, how they reflect or represent our institutions, and how we can speak in their language as we invite them to consider new ways of thinking about something they resist. She describes a course in which Freud’s life, ideas, and legacy are examined from four perspectives: the interpretation of religion; the critique of religion; the intersections of life and theory; and the cultural and theological responses—both positive and negative—to psychoanalysis. By speaking the language of the students—and the language of the institution in which she teaches—she initiates a conversation in which students discover not only that they “speak Freud” with some fluency but also that they know several Freuds. They discover that they themselves are participants in the deeply psychoanalytic discourse of modernity.

Jay Geller describes an introductory course in religious studies at Vanderbilt University in which attention to Freud’s Jewishness provides a way of inquiring into the multiculturalism of the American university. As a Jewish postcolonial subject of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Freud constructed a discourse that became part of normative hegemonic Euro-American ideology. At the same time, Freud’s discourse was subversive of the authority of that ideology. Geller shows that teaching students how to read *Moses and*

Monotheism and an array of accompanying texts by interrogating the anomalies, repetitions, and omissions in the texts is simultaneously a process of teaching students “how to read Freud” and “how to read culture.” He makes visible the complex forces characterizing the multicultural university itself.

Kirk Bingaman describes the resistance to Freud he encountered in a seminary course for ministry students at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. Student disinterest, apathy, and anger toward Freud, he suggests, are generated by psychical splitting and fear. Drawing from the methodological strategies of Ana Maria Rizzuto, Paul Ricoeur, and Judith Van Herik, Bingaman shows that Freud has much to offer to seminarians who choose to work through, rather than around, the complexities that arise when faith and Freud are held together in dialectical tension. Students who begin the course with anger over Freud’s atheism can sometimes move toward a Ricoeurian toleration of emotional ambivalence—such students are better prepared for ministry in a postmodern world shaped by the gendered dynamics made visible in Van Herik’s reading.

Volney Gay describes a graduate course on Freud’s ideas and methods for psychiatry residents, graduate students in religious studies, and pastoral counselors at Vanderbilt University, noting the divergent needs and expectations brought to the course by each group. Focusing on Freud’s discovery of “psychical reality,” he examines the polarizing debates over false memory syndrome emerging from the misunderstanding of the notion of psychical reality. Gay emphasizes the challenges for the teacher embodied in the nearly inevitable fear of contemplating unknown parts of the self. Comparing religious methods of embracing change and self-knowledge with therapeutic methods, he proposes that both are capable of generating a kind of optimism toward an unknown future: Freud, in particular, provided new methods and new vocabularies to carry us beyond the refusal to know. Gay outlines a series of stages in the process of developing expertise, drawing parallels between the experiences of therapist and teacher. Progress can be traced from the stage of “novice,” to “advanced beginner,” to “competence,” to “proficiency,” and finally to “expertise.” Although his essay might have been located in Part IV, “Teaching the Teachings,” I’ve situated it in Part I because of its provocative reflections on graduate teaching, the diversity of student expectations, and the stages of development in a teacher’s career.

Part II. Teaching Freud as Interpreter of Religious Texts and Practices

Part II contains essays that are interpretive: they apply psychoanalytic insights and methods to religious phenomena. William Parsons, in “‘Let Him Rejoice in the Roseate Light!’: Teaching Psychoanalysis and Mysticism,” describes a course on the psychoanalytic interpretation of mysticism. Parsons deconstructs the received view of Freud’s theory of mysticism as a regressive return to pre-Oedipal merger. He offers instead an innovative interpretation of Freud’s provocative chapter on mysticism in *Civilization and Its Discontents*,

reading *Civilization* alongside Freud's correspondence with Romain Rolland. He shows how the two theorists anticipated each of the major psychoanalytic approaches to mysticism that would be developed more clearly in later years: the reductive approach, the adaptive approach, and the transformational approach. He concludes by presenting to his students a set of psychobiographical studies of the Hindu saint and mystic Ramakrishna, encouraging the students to appreciate the diversity of psychoanalytic readings of mysticism.

With Donald Capps's essay we turn to an imagined course on Jesus and psychoanalysis. Having just completed a book on this topic, Capps describes a course, at Princeton Theological Seminary based on the book. Acknowledging the limitations of our knowledge of the life of the historical Jesus, Capps nevertheless suggests that we can say with certainty that Jesus was "fatherless": he was not embedded in the paternal and patriarchal structures of honor that characterized his society. Capps is sympathetic to the thesis that Mary was an unwed mother and Jesus an illegitimate child. He interprets the biblical episode of the cleansing of the temple as a symbolic cleansing of the mother's body, and he finds significant Jesus' appeal to God as father (Abba) in his role as village healer of psychosomatic illnesses. Capps's psychoanalytic interpretation allows him to uncover very different patterns in Jesus' life from those proffered by scholars without psychological expertise: Jesus, in Capps's analysis, was a peasant-style "utopian melancholic," rather than an apocalyptic prophet or a social reformist. Capps is well aware of the likely resistance to his views from students, theologians, and biblical scholars. He addresses the critics, making a solid case for a psychological and sociopolitical interpretation of Jesus.

Sandra Lee Dixon of Denver University outlines a course on Augustine in which psychoanalytic concepts are applied to *The Confessions*. She introduces Freud with two early texts, *On Dreams* and *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. Her students make diagrams of Freud's analysis of a dream of his own: they encounter the concepts of free association, condensation, displacement, repression, overdetermination, and infantile sexuality, and they begin to understand the foundational topographical assumptions about the conscious and unconscious. *Five Lectures* provides her students with another central interpretive concept: the Oedipal complex. In a second unit, students read *The Confessions*, encountering Augustine's remarkable account of his life, his mystical encounters of various sorts, and his theological struggles with sin, sexuality, and the nature of God. Dixon leads her students toward a Freudian interpretation of the major episodes in *The Confessions* by focusing on the parental tensions Augustine reveals. Drawing parallels to the techniques of dream interpretation her students encountered in their earlier readings, she helps them uncover repressions, condensations, displacements, and Oedipal themes. A final unit takes psychoanalytic interpretation of *The Confessions* beyond Freud: Dixon introduces a series of psychoanalytic readings, dating from the 1950s to the 1990s, moving from Freud to Kohut and from a narrow psychological approach to an approach integrating culture, rhetoric, and psyche.

Robert Segal is the only contributor to the volume who teaches outside of America: his course on psychoanalysis and myth is offered at the University of Lancaster in Great Britain. Like many other contributors, Segal begins with his students' reactions to Freud: students typically react negatively to what they perceive as a solipsistic psychologizing of myth in psychoanalytic theory. Segal agrees with his students: through the interpretation of myth as a projection of human characteristics onto the world, Freud severs myth from the world. Segal asks his students to struggle with this central question of myth and world: placing Freud in the history of modern theorizing about myth, he traces developments back to Tylor and Frazer and forward to Eliade, Jung, Malinowski, Bultmann, and others. He focuses in particular on the Freudians: Rank, Arlow, Bettelheim, Dundes, and Winnicott. His students discover that Winnicott, through his theory of play and the transitional space, brings myth back to the world. A final unit applies these ideas to a particular cultural form: cinema. The stars of film, his students discover, are like the heroes of myth.

Part III. Teaching the Controversies

With Part III we turn directly to debates and controversies over Freud's thought. In "Rethinking Freud: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Production of Scientific Thought," Janet Jacobs, a sociologist of religion at the University of Colorado, Boulder, examines gender and ethnicity as two major social and political forces that shaped Freud's life and theory. Framing her course in terms of feminist pedagogy and critical thinking, she investigates Freud's Jewishness, the anti-Semitism of his world, his theory of circumcision, and his ideas about the female body. Contrasting Freud's texts on men and women, she uncovers a Jewish male fear of female otherness exacerbated by anti-Semitic accusations of Jewish male effeminacy. She challenges her students to understand the role of gender and ethnicity in the production of scientific ideas: Freud displaced his culture's anti-Semitism, projecting it onto women in theories of female genital inferiority. Like Geller, who examines Freud's double-edged role as a contributor to a dominant discourse *and* as a marginalized other excluded from that discourse, Jacobs teaches her students to ask feminist and sociological questions about the intersections of Freud's life and thought.

Anthropologist Carol Delaney describes the first quarter of the CIV (Culture, Ideas, and Values) course offered to first-year students at Stanford University. The course focuses on "Origins: Prehistory, Myth, and Civilization." A central pedagogical concern is to communicate to students that knowledge is shaped by theories: emphasizing the narratives of origin that shaped the West, she asks her students to read Darwin and Freud alongside the biblical text of Genesis, suggesting that Genesis has subtly influenced our ideas about origins, even as those ideas are secularized in Freudian and Darwinian accounts of our prehistory. She constructs a critique of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, centering attention on Freud's notion of gender, his ideas about paternity and patricide, and his Oedipal theory. She con-

cludes by suggesting that the theory of the Oedipus complex has more to do with power and authority than with familial relations and sex. Critiquing Freud from anthropological, historical, and feminist positions, she argues that Freud was wrong in claiming that religion, society, and morals are rooted in the Oedipus complex, but that he was correct in suggesting that notions of God and morality are intertwined with gender: Freud accurately perceived that God is a reification of the concept of paternity. Delaney's essay might be used in the classroom alongside Geller's in Part I, Ross's in this part, and Dittes's in part IV: each offers a dramatically different reading of *Moses and Monotheism*.

Mary Ellen Ross "teaches the controversies" in a very different way: she constructs a dialogic course at Trinity University in San Antonio, situating Freud's cultural texts alongside the writings of other classic theorists. She asks her students to read Freud's *Totem and Taboo* alongside Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* in a unit on religion as social fact. She introduces Freud's "Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices" alongside Turner's writings on the ritual process in a section on ritual. She introduces William James in a section on illusion and experience, asking students to read Freud's *Future of an Illusion* along with selections from James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. A section on mysticism pairs Freud on the oceanic feeling with Winnicott's writings on transitional phenomena, drawing upon feminist psychoanalysis to critique Freud's "repression of the mother." And a unit on Moses introduces Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* alongside Regina Schwartz's *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism*. Thus the controversies structuring Ross's course are methodological controversies of interpretation. Her course in a sense provides a segue into part IV: although it "teaches the controversies" it also "teaches the teachings." She begins and ends the course with an exercise in dream interpretation that links experience and intellect. Having introduced a reading on dream interpretation at the beginning of the term, she asks students to write psychoanalytic interpretations of dreams of their own at the end. Her course might be used in the classroom alongside Diane Jonte-Pace's in part I and Robert Segal's in part II. Jonte-Pace puts Freud in dialogue with Jung, while Ross and Segal create conversations among Freud, Winnicott, and other theorists of myth, belief, and ritual.

Part IV. Teaching the Teachings, Teaching the Practice

Part IV contains a set of chapters examining the wisdom, insights, and transformative potential of teaching Freud in religious studies. Jeffrey Kripal's essay, "Teaching the Hindu Tantra with Freud: Transgression as Critical Theory and Mystical Technique," focuses on the similarly transformative effects of psychoanalysis and tantric Hinduism in the classroom and in scholarship. Kripal, at Rice University, describes correspondence he received—both positive and negative—in response to his controversial book *Kali's Child*, a psychoanalytic interpretation of the Hindu mystic Ramakrishna inquiring into homosexual eroticism in the life and ecstatic religiosity of the saint

Drawing parallels between scholarship and pedagogy, Kripal emphasizes the way psychoanalysis and Tantra can function transgressively as social critique, sympathetic recovery, personal therapy, and mystical technique. “The discursive practice that is the psychoanalytic study of the Hindu Tantra,” he argues, “possesses the potential to awaken powerful forces within the psyches and bodies” of its practitioners, readers, and students. Kripal’s essay might be read by students alongside Parsons’s: both discuss mysticism, focusing in different ways on the Hindu saint Ramakrishna.

Ernest Wallwork, a practicing psychoanalyst and professor at Syracuse University, begins his class not with theory but with practice: he introduces Freud’s therapeutic strategies. Through several “live demonstrations” in the classroom—of, for example, free association—he shows students how psychoanalysis actually works. He articulates his own “audacious ambition” going beyond standard academic goals: he invites students to change themselves. He proposes, in other words, that they engage the course material both intellectually and existentially. Like Dixon and Ross, he draws on Freud’s writings on dreams. A unit on dream interpretation explores Freud’s famous “Irma Dream” to demonstrate the mechanisms of dream work. Students subsequently write interpretations of their own dreams. Drawing from *Civilization and Its Discontents*, he turns to the “deep ethic that informs Freud’s interpretation of religion and morals,” an ethic of passion, reflection, and a “special kind of tolerance for self and others.” His final unit moves beyond Freud to highlight developments in the evolution of psychoanalytic theory and their implications for the study of religion and morality. Here he includes such thinkers as Jung, Fromm, Horney, Erikson, Kohut, Tillich, and Levinas.

In the final chapter in the volume, James Dittes of Yale Divinity School criticizes the “detours” often taken in teaching Freud in religious studies: we ask unproductively whether Freud was Jewish or not, and whether he was religious or not. We inquire unnecessarily into Freud’s social, historical, and cultural contexts. In his view, we engage in a “conspiracy of dishonesty in our religious studies classrooms” with the pretense that students are not drawn to our courses through their own personal religious questioning. Dittes, on the other hand, prefers to explore the legacy Freud wanted to transmit on “how to aspire to an abundant life.” He offers insightful readings of two cultural texts written in the last decade of Freud’s life: *Civilization and Its Discontents* and *Moses and Monotheism*. Both are “metapsychical homilies struggling to convey Freud’s best wisdom about the strategies for living,” yet they offer different “takes” on human vulnerability and limitation. *Civilization and Its Discontents* represents, in a sense, a defense against vulnerability while *Moses and Monotheism* embraces vulnerability. Dittes’s chapter represents both an affirmation and a critique of this volume itself: he is refreshingly honest about his sense of illegitimate paths and the detours often taken in teaching Freud; he is critical of the assumptions of many of the contributors to this volume. He offers a profoundly existential affirmation of Freud’s teachings. It is fitting that the book, which endeavors to “teach the debates,” concludes with Dittes’s affirmation and critique.

Conclusion

Although the chapters are divided into the four categories described above, their themes and foci transcend their groupings. They overlap at many points. Others besides the three authors in part III, “Teaching the Controversies,” address the contemporary debates over Freud’s legacy (Bingaman, Jonte-Pace, Gay, and Geller, for example). Many contributors analyze, interpret, or attempt to resolve student resistance to Freud (Kripal, Jonte-Pace, Bingaman, Gay, Segal, and Delaney). Several incorporate feminist perspectives (Jonte-Pace, Jacobs, Delaney, Ross, Bingaman). Several focus, at least in part, on Freud’s Jewish background (Jacobs, Geller, Jonte-Pace, and Delaney). Two comment on the use of films in teaching Freud (Jonte-Pace and Segal); and several show how dream interpretation can productively be used in teaching Freud (Ross, Dixon, Wallwork). All integrate teaching and scholarship; all attest to the vibrant state of religious studies in the academy.

The invitation to contribute to this volume was extended to scholars of religion and psychoanalysis teaching at public universities, private non-affiliated institutions, and religiously affiliated schools. Interestingly, most of those who were able to contribute essays to the volume however, teach at institutions with religious affiliations. The courses described in the volume that are taught at universities *without* religious affiliation tend to be taught in departments other than religious studies: Delaney’s course at Stanford is in anthropology; and Jacobs’s course at the University of Colorado is in sociology and women’s studies.

Several questions inevitably arise: Is it the case that more courses on Freud and religion are offered in the context of religiously affiliated universities than elsewhere? Are the tensions between religion and secularism more likely to be discussed in church-related colleges? Is it possible that professors at public institutions and nonaffiliated private universities, in their own attempts to speak the languages of their academies and of their students, are less likely to offer courses on Freud and religion than their colleagues at religiously affiliated institutions? Is religion—or even the serious critique of religion—somehow taboo in public universities? Further inquiry—such as the Lilly Endowment-sponsored study of religious studies departments in North America—has begun to address these questions. What we can say with certitude is that courses on Freud and religion are being taught with interest, passion, and success, especially—although not exclusively—at religiously affiliated universities in America and Great Britain today.

The “godless Jew” is thus studied intensely in religious, and especially Christian, contexts today. How would Freud react to the irony of this phenomenon—and of this volume? Freud objected strenuously to Jung’s effort to turn psychoanalysis into a religion. In response to a letter from Jung in 1910 proclaiming, in grandiose and mythic terms, a “far finer and more comprehensive task for psychoanalysis,” Freud responded with these cautionary words, which will be discussed again in this volume: “You mustn’t regard me as the founder of a religion. My intentions are not so far-reaching. . . . I am not thinking of a sub-

stitute for religion; this need must be sublimated."⁴ Similarly, he was, at best, amused by Swiss Pastor Oskar Pfister's accolade, "a better Christian there never was!"⁵ I suspect that Freud might feel some discomfort at the essays in the final section of this volume, "Teaching the Teachings." Yet I believe he would be delighted to know that his texts are being read and his ideas discussed, even in departments of religious studies.

A final word: as editor of this volume I want to acknowledge my gratitude to the contributors. As I read and edited these essays I found myself wanting to take each class, to apprentice myself to each of my colleagues, to experience the challenges, critiques, wisdom, and transformations offered by each course. I would like to dedicate this volume to the colleagues, contributors, and students who have taught me new ways to read Freud, to read culture, and to read myself.

Notes

1. "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," *SE* 23: 248. The third "impossible profession," according to Freud, is government.

2. See the recent publications by George Marsden, D. G. Hart, and James Burchael. Stephen Haynes (1997) offers some interesting reflections on this issue as well.

3. Attesting to this new attention to pedagogical questions in our field is the recent proliferation of publications focusing on teaching. Two examples are the special 1997 issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* devoted to "Teaching and Learning in Religion and Theology," and the new journal *Teaching Theology and Religion*, initiated in the late 1990s.

4. McGuire 1974, 178–179.

5. In Meng and Freud, eds. 1963, 63.

References

- Auden, W. H. 1966. *Collected shorter poems: 1927–1957*. New York: Random House.
- Burchael, James. 1998. *The dying of the light: The disengagement of colleges and universities from their Christian churches*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.
- Crews, Frederick. 1997. *The memory wars: Freud's legacy in dispute*. New York: New York Review of Books.
- , ed. 1998. *Unauthorized Freud: Doubters confront a legend*. New York: Penguin.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1964. Analysis terminable and interminable. In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, translated and edited by James Strachey. Vol. 23, 209–53. London: Hogarth Press.
- Gay, Peter. 1999. Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud: Great minds of the century. *Time*, 29 March, 64–69.
- Graff, Gerald. 1993. *Beyond the culture wars: How teaching the conflicts can revitalize American education*. New York: Norton.
- Hart, D. G. 1999. *The university gets religion: Religious studies in American higher education since 1870*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Haynes, Stephen. 1997. Teaching religion at a church-related college: Reflections on professional identity and institutional loyalty. *Religious Studies News*, February, 18–19.

Marsden, George. 1997. *The soul of the American university: From Protestant establishment to established non-belief*. New York: Oxford University Press.

———. 1998. *The outrageous idea of Christian scholarship*. New York: Oxford University Press.

McGuire, William, ed. 1974. *The Freud/Jung letters*. Translated by Ralph Manheim and R. F. C. Hull. Princeton, N.J.: Bollingen/Princeton University Press.

Meng, Heinrich, and Ernst Freud, eds. 1963. *Psychoanalysis and faith: The letters of Sigmund Freud and Oskar Pfister*. Translated by Eric Mosbacher. New York: Basic Books.