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# Yerushalmi, Yosef Hayim. Freud's Mosses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable.

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ancient Judaism's reuse of Gnostic motifs (Altmann was among the first to appreciate Jonas's work and see its bearing on Jewish thought). "Gnostic Motifs in Rabbinic Literature" is included here (the last issue of the great *Monatsschrift* was confiscated in 1939 by the Nazis; in it Altmann's name is prefixed by "Abraham," as then required of Jewish males). As a coda to the period of loss and dispersion, Altmann chose to conclude the essays of the 1930s with a later piece from 1977, which now serves as an epilogue of hope: "Exile and Return in Contemporary Jewish Perspective."

MICHAEL FISHBANE, *University of Chicago*.

YERUSHALMI, YOSEF HAYIM. *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991. 159 pp. \$25.00 (cloth).

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's study of *Freud's Moses* is the latest of numerous articles and monographs that examine Freud and the Jewish tradition. Ernst Simon anticipated many of the subsequent works with his essay "Sigmund Freud, the Jew" (*Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* [1957]), and since then this has become crowded terrain in which biographical, psychoanalytic, literary critical, political, and historical approaches have alternately competed with and ignored one another. Yerushalmi, noted for his book *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, 1982), reconsiders Freud and the psychoanalytic movement historically. His qualified conclusion, contesting Peter Gay's *A Godless Jew: Freud, Atheism, and the Making of Psychoanalysis* (New Haven, Conn., 1987), reads, "The possibility that Freud's Jewishness was somehow implicated in the formation of psychoanalysis should not be foreclosed" (p. 116n.).

Yerushalmi's major contribution lies in his painstaking research and readable style. He retraces the history of the Jewish Enlightenment and its consequences for secularizing Jews, and he reviews the evidence of Jewish education, influences, and observances in Freud's parental home (pp. 9–15, 62–75). More original is his recourse to the unpublished manuscript of *Moses and Monotheism* (Amsterdam, 1939), dating from 1934, which reveals a great deal about this controversial book. It shows, for example, that Freud initially intended to subtitle his work "A Historical Novel" (*Ein historischer Roman*). On the basis of manuscript and epistolary evidence, Yerushalmi asserts that "the authentic history in Freud's historical novel would thus turn out to be autobiographical, the manifest historical content a fictional code" (p. 16).

The limitations of *Freud's Moses* result from the author's deliberate focus on Freud's last and most problematic book. Yerushalmi admits a wide range of biographical information, yet he seldom analyzes *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Leipzig and Vienna, 1900), and he never quotes *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* (Leipzig, 1905). Hence, Yerushalmi neglects the possible relationship between Freud's methods of dream interpretation and those of his ancient fore-runners. As I argue in *Freud's Dream of Interpretation* (Albany, N.Y., 1990), Freudian interpretation—with its obsessive recourse to puns—is marked by a midrashic influence that is constantly suppressed. Moreover, Freud's analysis of jokes reveals his familiarity with and appreciation of Yiddish and Jewish humor.

Yerushalmi does touch on certain passages from *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and he mentions in passing a possible resonance between Freud's work and the Talmud (p. 83). Yerushalmi's evidence leads to his conclusion that Freud could not overcome his "initial anxieties" (p. 98); as Freud wrote of Goethe, Freud him-

The Journal of Religion 73 (July 1993)

self was a "careful concealer" who disguised elements of his Jewish identity (p. 81).

*Freud's Moses* builds on sound foundations. One small lapsus is evident, however, when Yerushalmi discusses Freud's fear that his book on Moses might be "a statue upon feet of clay" (pp. 22, 82). Yerushalmi fails to comment that, in employing this metaphor, Freud associates his work with King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2). In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud acknowledges a measure of identification with the biblical Joseph; what does it mean for him to express his doubts about *Moses and Monotheism* by associating it with the ominous dream image that was interpreted by Daniel?

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