

SOARING ON THE WINGS OF THE WIND: FREUD, JEWS AND JUDAISM

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Freud's Jewish paradox

Sigmund Freud has a strong and lifelong attachment to his Jewish heritage and an equally powerful ambivalence towards it.

Peter Loewenberg (1971: 363)

In 1909, an inhabitant of Vienna could believe that they were living in the most important city in the world. Ruled by a stable and tolerant monarchy, the capital of a large empire in Europe and Asia, it was the sixth largest city in Europe. People came from all over the world to study its art, science, medicine and social services. The population of the multiracial city included Germans, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Ruthenians, Slovenians, Serbo-Croats, Magyars, Romanians, Italians – and Jews.

In the crowded and cosmopolitan city of *kaffeeklatsch*, opera houses, theatres and art galleries, it is conceivable that, unaware of each other's identity, two individuals who were both destined to change the world – although in radically different ways – may have crossed paths in the crowded streets. Adolf Hitler was an obscure Bohemian vagrant, festering his hate-filled dreams in a doss house while paying close attention to the political developments around him; Sigmund Freud was a respectable middle-class neurologist, attracting a small group of followers to the radical ideas he espoused on the nature of man. Freud was Jewish and one day his books were burned by Hitler's followers. Freud responded with a typical wry comment: 'What progress we are making. In the Middle Ages they would have burnt me; nowadays they are content with burning my books.'

Sigmund Freud's life as a Jew is deeply paradoxical, if not enigmatic in some aspects. In 1884, during his courtship, he chastised his fiancé Martha Bernays for her 'foolish superstition' for writing secretly to him on the Jewish Sabbath (Klein 2007). When lecturing at Clark University in the USA in September 1909, he cabled Rosh Hashanah greetings to his family (Aron 1956). Yet Freud never participated in religious activities, followed Jewish ritual or kept a kosher home. None of his children converted or married gentiles, but one of his sons had to be told to keep his hat *on* when marrying in a synagogue. Another son was a Zionist but Freud could not read the Hebrew inscriptions his father inscribed in the family bible. Despite telling Theodore Herzl's son that his father was 'one of those people who have turned dreams into reality' (Ignatieff 1986), he remained sceptical about Zionism, but sent Herzl one of his books with an inscription and was an honorary member of *Kadimah*, the Zionist organisation (Bakan 1958).

When he was young, Freud's heroes were not Jewish; he admired Alexander the Great and Hannibal (but – paradoxically – more so when he heard that the latter had Semitic origins). Referring to himself as a 'godless Jew', Freud wrote a book describing religion as an illusion.

In 'Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices', he stated that ritual and worship were infantile and primitive behaviours that retarded human development. His last book *Moses and Monotheism* questioned the origins of the Jewish religion and was slated by some as being anti-Semitic.

Yet Freud was fond of Jewish jokes, frequently used Jewish irony and his ideas and thinking are regarded as quintessentially Jewish. He never denied his Jewish roots and associated with Jews all his life (Berkower 1969). In 1903 he advised Max Graz, on the birth of his son Herbert (known to the world as *Little Hans*) to bring him up as a Jew because 'He will have to struggle as a Jew, and you ought to develop in him all the energy he will need for struggle. Do not deprive him of that advantage' (Geller 2006:). During his period of professional isolation when he was formulating the radical ideas of psychoanalysis, he would go the B'nai B'rith (a Jewish community organisation) twice a month to play taroc with Jewish doctors, lawyers and merchant bankers at the clubhouse (McGrath 1986). He was an active member from 1897 to 1907, giving a total of 21 lectures to his 'brethren' by 1917, and recruiting two new members for a chapter (Klein 2007). He would never take royalties from Hebrew or Yiddish translations of his work.

In response to a letter from the Chief Rabbi of Vienna on his 75th birthday, Freud responded:

In some place in my soul, in a very hidden corner, I am a fanatical Jew. I am very much astonished to discover myself as such in spite of all efforts to be unprejudiced and impartial. What can I do against it at my age?

Gresser 1991:

This paper looks at Freud's Jewish roots and identity.

The 19th century: from empire to nationalism

Having moved east in the 16th centuries to the Polish and Lithuanian Empires, Jews came under the regency of the Romanov Empire and were confined to the Pale of Settlement in what now constitutes Poland (Galicia), Byelorussia and Lithuania (Wanklyn 1940). The Pale is often contrasted with the reformist approach of German Jewry. This is incorrect; German Jewish mentality, fine as it was, did not lead to great Talmudic schools. Those came from the Litvak littoral.

The communities of the Pale are demarcated by what is known as the *Gefilte Fish Line*, passing from Lithuania, separating Galicia and White Russia (Lowenstein 1997). The Jews of the Duchy of Courland, despite adjoining Kovno, were under German sway and did not adhere to the Litvak ethos. The distinction involved not only liturgical ritual, but linguistic, social, intellectual and cultural attitudes. The Yiddish spoken had significant differences, as did the vocabulary. West of the line, the liturgical music used the major scales and the gefilte fish was sour. The pattern was to get married later: males at 30, women at 25 (Freud was 30 when he married Martha Bernays, 26). There was a rigorous intellectual attitude to the Torah, epitomised by the famous yeshivot of the region. The *Litvak* mentality was an attitude of cool pragmatic rationalism, known to the Galicians as *tseilimkopf*, referring to the implied lack of emotion (Tatz, Arnold and Heller 2007).

On the eastern side of the *Gefilte Fish Line*, a more spiritual attitude to religion prevailed, at times manifesting with mysticism and regular outbreaks of susceptibility to messianic figures, resulting in the Hassidic movement. Men and women usually married at 20. The liturgical music played on the minor chords; the gefilte fish, of course, tasted sweet.

The 19th century started with promise but ended on the most forbidding of notes for Jews. Emancipated after Napoleon, Jews sought and mostly found security in empires. This led to a stuttering progression from ghetto to shtetl to the city; in the process Jews were able to assume a role in urban life that had previously been denied to them, becoming the quintessential city dwellers. Nowhere were the Jews more successful than in the Dual Monarchy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Led by a tolerant and stable monarchy with a liberal constitutional parliament after 1860, Jews flocked to the cities. From a population of less than 5000 in 1850, Vienna's Jews grew to several hundred thousand; by 1930, there were 300,000. Austrian liberals achieved a constitutional state in 1860, and placed a statue of Athena – Freud's favourite Greek Goddess (Schorske 1993) – in front of the parliament as protectrix of the free state. During Freud's boyhood, several Jews had served in the Austro-Hungarian ministry. In Austrian education, the focus was entirely on the classics, allowing emancipated Jews to acquire a gentile culture which was not threatening as a dead religion.

Jews flourished in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna as they were to do in few societies in history. There was scarcely any field in which they did not dominate, but they were especially prominent in the arts and medicine. By the 1880s, 50% of medical students and 60% of Vienna's doctors were Jewish, as were the Emperor's personal physician and the Surgeon-General (Kramer 2006). The percentage of Jewish children in high school was 3 to 4 times higher than the general population. Around 1900, they accounted for more than half the doctors; the percentage of lawyers and journalists was even higher. By 1910, Jews accounted for 10% of the population of Vienna. Following the *Anschluss* when Jews were cleared from their positions in academia, the Vienna Medical School lost 80% of its faculty.

Some Jews saw assimilation as the continuation of Jewish identity by other means. Yet for all their success in this world, this brought its own perils; the greater the degree of assimilation, the more their degree of Jewishness imperilled this and they could never truly vanish into the gentile world.

Freud's Jewish origins

Knowledge about the origin of the Freud family, like many Jews, does not extend far beyond the 18th century. Freud stated that his family had lived in the Rhineland (Cologne) in the 14th century but fled eastward to escape persecution, ending up in Lithuania. In the 19th century, they had moved, via Galicia, to Vienna. As this progression would be typical of many Jewish families in the East, it is a credible explanation.

The Freud family lived in Buczac, Galicia for four generations (Simon 1957). The surname Freud was adopted in 1787 when Jewish inhabitants of Galicia were forced to take surnames. It is derived from *Freide*, the name of the great grandmother of Shlomo, and wife of Jesucher, who lived in Buczac (Guggenheimer 1992). Freud's great-grandfather Ephraim, and his son, Rabbi Shlomo ben Rabbi Ephraim, were Chassidic Rabbis (Schneider and Berke 2000). Shlomo Freud, who became a wool or textile merchant, was the first of the family to live in

Tysmenitz, 35 kms west of Buczacz. Tysmenitz had a rich spiritual tradition, producing a number of famous Rabbis, including the Gaon Rabbi Mordechai Segal.

Shlomo Freud married Peppi Hoffman and Jacob Freud, the first of their four children, was born on 18 December 1815. Jacob Freud followed in his father's footsteps, becoming a *Wanderjuden*, travelling merchants who moved between Galicia and Moravia, in the process encountering a world that was opening up to Jews.

Jacob Freud married Sally Kanner and had two sons: Emanuel and Philip. After Sally Kanner died, he had a brief marriage to Rebekka, 20 years younger. Her fate is not known. After a year or two she is reputed to have been divorced or died, earning for herself the fate of being written out of the family history.

At 40, Jacob Freud married Malke Amalia Nathansohn, 20. It was likely the marriage, which was to produce eight children, was arranged. The wedding was conducted on 29 July 1855 by Rabbi Isaac Noah Mannheimer, an orthodox rabbi who had previously engaged in a polemic against Rabbi Isaac Bernays, the grandfather of Freud's future wife, Martha Bernays (Bakan 1958).

A formidable character, the best anecdote about Amalia Nathansohn comes from Ernst Simon (1957). When her picture appeared in the paper on her 95th birthday, she complained that it was a bad picture '...making me look a hundred.' Recalling that Freud had some tensions with his mother-in-law after he married, it is worth noting that the translation of his mother's first name is 'Queen'.

We know little of the origins of Amalia Nathansohn. She came from an orthodox background in the Hasidic town of Brody in Galicia, but the family moved to Vienna. She was a descendant of Samuel ChaRMaZ, described as a prince, leader, chief and rabbinical scholar, as well as keen-minded and a teacher of righteousness (Aron 1956). One of his descendants, Jacob ChaRMaZ was one of the 'greatest Jewish merchants' in the town.

The couple moved to Freiberg, Moravia (now *Pribor* in the present-day Czech Republic). Here, on 6th May 1856, Shlomo (Solomon) Sigismund Freud was born. He was named Solomon for his paternal grandfather, who died three months earlier. His father chose the name Sigismund after the 16th century Polish king who had a policy of tolerance towards the Jews (Grollman 1965)¹. Sigismund had a *brit milah* on the 8th day of his life, the circumcision performed by Rebbe Shimshon Frankel of Ostrau. The former locksmith's house in which he spent the first years of his life is now a museum, the street name changed to Freudova Street.

As an indication of the psychiatric culture that was to flourish, Freud was born three months after Emil Kraepelin (whom he detested - the feeling was mutual), on the same date as Julius Wagner-Juarreg and a year before Eugen Bleuler, the first psychiatrist to support psychoanalysis.

¹ A. A. Roback (*Freudiana*, Cambridge, Mass.: Sci-Art, 1957), citing correspondence with Ernest Jones, stated that the name Sigismund was a later addition and he had originally been *Shalom* (Peace). Furthermore, the surname Freud had been derived from the Hebrew word *Simcha* (Joy), derived from the holiday celebrating receipt of the Torah. Like so much that Jones wrote, Krull has shown this to be incorrect.

Around this time, the family name was tainted by Jacob Freud's brother Josef, who was jailed for currency smuggling. By the time Freud was three, they moved to Vienna where he spent much of the rest of his life. The family mostly lived in or around Leopoldstadt, a predominantly Jewish area of Vienna.

Jacob Freud, who was never to have much of a career in Vienna, was typical of many Jews of his time, progressing from the traditional orthodoxy of the shtetl to the assimilated lifestyle of the city Jew. While he did not rigidly follow traditional practice, he was well versed in Jewish knowledge and continued to study the torah. They discarded Jewish dietary practices but still observed festivals. Jacob Freud could conduct the Passover *seder* in Hebrew and knew all the prayers and recitations by heart. It is recorded that the young Sigmund participated enthusiastically in the *pesach* songs and seeking the *afikoman*.

For decades, it was believed that Freud's exposure to Jewish history, language and religious texts was next to non-existent. Freud always claimed to be ignorant of Yiddish, Jewish ritual or Torah study. It is now known that Freud had extensive exposure to Jewish study during his childhood (Huttler 1999). Yiddish was his mother's *Mamaloschen*, her language of choice (Geller 2006). He went to a private Jewish School of Vienna where religious education, focussing on the Bible, especially the Pentateuch, was compulsory and he received the highest marks for his studies. He spent several hours a week for four years studying the Scriptures and received instruction in liturgy, the Torah, biblical study, Hebrew grammar and Jewish history from Rabbi Samuel Hammerschlag, of whom he spoke admiringly for the rest of his life (Miller). While Anna Freud was not aware of her father having a barmitzvah (Grollman 1965), it is difficult to believe it did not occur after having the typical barmitzvah preparations (Goodnick 1992). After that, Freud's involvement in formal Jewish practice ceased. Following his marriage, it is unlikely Freud ever went to a synagogue, unless it was to attend a memorial service.

There was a public Freud, who did not acknowledge his Jewish origins and a private Freud well-versed in Jewish customs and lore (Schneider and Berke 2008). The likely explanation is that Freud wanted to reduce his size as a target in the anti-Semitic atmosphere that prevailed in Vienna all his life.

Jewish contemporaries

Freud's wife: Martha Bernays

Freud's wife, Martha Bernays came from a distinguished Hamburg Jewish family. Their roots went back to France and the surname (Behr or Beer) was given the Francophone pronunciation of the village Bernay, from which they hailed, in honour of the French Revolution. She was descended from the prominent Philipp, Ruben and Renner families, who had been there since 1650, well known as bankers and merchants. Her grandfather Hakham Isaac Bernays, also known as 'the Chacham Bernays' (Simon 1957), was Chief Rabbi of Hamburg; the family associated with Heinrich Heine. A nephew, Edward, was the founder of the profession of public relations in the USA.

Berman Bernays married Emmeline Philip, who came from a Jewish family in Sweden. Martha Bernays, born 26 July 1861, was one of eight children; several died in childbirth, and a brother

died in his teens. Berman Bernays was a business failure – a characteristic he shared with Freud’s father – and was jailed for a year for fraud in an attempt to avoid bankruptcy. As a result, the family moved to Vienna in 1869, where he worked as secretary to a well-known economist. Emmeline Bernays had loved Hamburg and disliked the move. Martha Bernays retained her North German accent all her life.

Berman Bernays died in 1879 when Martha was 18 – of a broken heart, it was reported – and Siegmund Pappenheim became her guardian or godfather; consequently, she was close to his daughter Bertha.

Freud met Martha in April 1882. After a long courtship, Sigmund Freud and Martha Bernays were married in the family home on 13 September 1886 (Behling 2005). As this was a civil ceremony, a religious wedding was conducted under the *chuppa* with Rabbi David Hannover at the Wandsbek Synagogue and the groom crunched the glass underfoot in the traditional manner. The best man was Martha’s uncle, Elias Philip, a banker.

Martha Freud had to accede to her husband’s refusal to allow her to follow Jewish practice, such as light the Shabbat candles, but remained devotedly orthodox all her life. The first Friday night after Freud died, she resumed lighting the Shabbat candles.

Freud’s mentor: Joseph Breuer

No one, it can be argued, more exemplified the Jewish virtues in medicine in Vienna than Joseph Breuer². The son of a famous religious leader and teacher in Vienna, Josef Breuer married Mathilde Altmann in 1868, and they had five children. His daughter Dora later committed suicide rather than be deported by the Nazis.

Breuer had a distinguished research career - he discovered the role of the vagus nerve in breathing (Hering-Breuer reflex) and the semi-circular canals in balance. Spurning further success in academia, he turned to practice as an internist. In the standard of his work and his devotion to his patients, he was known as ‘the doctor’s doctor’. Breuer treated the rich and the famous, including the patient known to the world as *Anna O.* (Bertha Pappenheim), the first person to be treated by psychoanalytic means (Zangwill 1987).

Breuer first encountered the young Freud as a struggling researcher who had gone into medicine to establish himself financially and marry. He encouraged him, lent him money without requiring the loans repaid and collaborated on research. Something of a mentor until they fell out (or rather, Freud spurned him), his terse response to Freud’s question whether he should convert to Christianity was ‘too complicated.’ (Simon 1957).

Freud family friend: Bertha Pappenheim

Bertha Pappenheim, whom we know as Anna O., came from a wealthy family. Her paternal grandfather, Wolf Pappenheim, a descendent of Rabbi Nathan, came from the town Pappenheim in Bavaria, from where the family name was derived. Later he inherited a fortune from his wife [néé Calman] and moved to the Pressberg Ghetto. He had two sons, Kalman and

² And, it is a matter of considerable regret that his life and work, overshadowed by that of Freud, has been woefully neglected.

Siegmund, Bertha's father. Siegmund Pappenheim settled in Vienna as a wealthy grain merchant.

The Pappenheim marriage in 1848 had been arranged, as was often customary at the time. Recha Goldschmidt, Bertha's mother, was born in Frankfurt on the Main. Her family were prominent, with connections to many well-known Jewish families, including the Hombergers, Warburgs and Rothschilds. Among her antecedents were Heinrich Heine and the acclaimed diarist, Glückel of Hameln.

The family lived in the Leopoldstadt Jewish Quarter before moving to Liechtensteinstrasse in 1880. A practising Jew, Siegmund Pappenheim contributed to the Schiffshul synagogue building fund. Bertha's brother Wilhelm practiced law in Vienna. He was described as 'an accomplished gentleman' with the most complete library on socialism in Europe.

Bertha Pappenheim's father became guardian to Martha Freud after the death of Berman Bernays, an indication of the close-knit Jewish community in which Freud, his colleagues and patients lived.

Like Emmeline Bernays, Recha Pappenheim always maintained her German links and was happy to move back to Frankfurt after her husband died, accompanied by her daughter. Bertha Pappenheim founded and directed a home for orphaned Jewish girls and led an international campaign against prostitution involving young Jewish women. She is considered the founder of social work in Germany and was honoured as a pioneer social worker with the issue of a stamp by the West German Republic.

Ludwig Wittgenstein

Of all of Freud's contemporaries, Ludwig Wittgenstein was the one who came closer to matching him in eminence. Wittgenstein bore a strong resemblance to Freud, if not many other Central European Jews who were directly or indirectly exposed to Jewish culture and Talmudic logic. He called himself a Jewish thinker, but was acutely aware and deeply ambivalent about his Jewish heritage. A fellow philosopher described him as the nearest to a prophet he had ever known (Abramovitch 2006).

Ludwig Wittgenstein's great-grandparents had assumed the family name from their princely employer. A relative was President of the Prague Jewish community. His grandfather converted to Protestantism and had 11 children; his father Karl was the only to marry into a Jewish family. Wittgenstein, whose family had converted to Catholicism, had three grandparents born as Jews who only later converted to Christianity.

Wittgenstein came from one of the richest families in Austria. His father made a fortune building railroads and retired at 52 to devote himself to culture. Brahms, Mahler and Cassals were just some of the musicians who performed at their home. He supported the work of Gustav Klimt, who painted the wedding of Wittgenstein's sister – who was analysed by Freud.

Freud and Wagner Juarreg

No one more exemplified the paradoxical attitudes towards Jews in medicine than psychiatrist Julius Wagner Juarreg, who was to win the Nobel Prize for his discovery of malarial treatment of syphilis (Brown 2000). Wagner Juarreg was a regulation-issue Austrian anti-Semite who

joined the Nazi Party before his death. Jewish doctors who worked for him, such as Helene Deutsch, were all too aware of his attitudes, yet they spoke highly of him. Although he detested psychoanalysis, he supported Freud's application for the highly-prized and long-delayed position of Professor Ordinarius. He shared a birthdate with Freud and, to the end of their lives, they exchanged birthday cards.

Discussion

Historical forces acting on the Jews of Eastern and Central Europe occurred in three phases: the *Haskalla* (Jewish Enlightenment) in the eighteenth century; Jewish migration from Galicia during the nineteenth century, and; intellectual, cultural and political ferment in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, culminating in the *Anschluss*. Until the eighteenth century, Ashkenazi society was dominated by an elite based on the primacy of the Talmud and expertise in Jewish law (*Hallacha*), coupled with neglect of medieval Jewish philosophy and the Hebrew language. In addition, Cabbalistic followers, steeped in mystical experiences, claimed a direct connection to the heavens and magical skills. The *Haskalla* – the antithesis of traditional Hassidism – was a recognition of the intellectual paralysis, marked by neglect of rational philosophy, the sciences and Hebrew language, coupled with a sense of inferiority towards the learned men of Europe.

Characterised by a shift in intellectual and moral hegemony, the *Haskalla* became both a form of rebellion against conforming orthodoxy and a means of escape from the intolerable drudgery of shtetl life (Mahler 1985). This process of intellectual seduction was irresistible to young men seeking knowledge in the wider world (Feiner 2003). Young Jewish males, aware of the developments of the Enlightenment, were characterised by 'intense curiosity, audacity, guilt and a sense of subversion' in delving into the natural sciences, European languages, medieval philosophy and Hebrew (Feiner 2002). Enrolling in a medical school or reading a forbidden book was a weapon to demolish the tradition enclosed and self-obsessed Jewish scholarly world. The rhetoric of the *Haskalla* portrayed this in potent sexual metaphors: the opening of a forbidden book was like attraction to a forbidden woman, compared with the Torah, the legal wife with whom intercourse was permitted (Feiner 2002). In this intense, entirely inward means of intellectual escape and revolt against authority, strongly tinged with sexual morality, we see the same tensions that were to manifest in the publication by a middle-aged Viennese neurologist of a truly revolutionary book to herald the new twentieth century: *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

The power of supernatural authority waned and later broke down completely. By the end of the eighteenth century, the *kulturkampf* (to use Shmuel Feiner's term) was in full swing and the outcome was just a matter of time: the triumph of the *maskilim* over the power of the rabbis and Talmudic scholars in Jewish culture. Those who shaped morals and culture drew on human experience and reason. This led to the emergence of the modern secular Jewish intellectual, independent of the traditional Talmudic elite, deriving their knowledge from external sources.

In every aspect, they were the polar opposite of Hassidism; *maskilim* represented the rising Jewish bourgeoisie and intellectuals with education as their main goal; Hassidism the impoverished lower middle class and proletarian masses who elevated emotion to the highest religious category. Stressing their adaptability to the surrounding cultures and languages, the

maskilim were complete cosmopolitans, emerging as teachers, doctors, journalists, physicians, writers, scientists and philosophers.

Freud's paternal family arose in *Litvak* culture. After several generations at Buczacz, Freud's grandfather and father were the first in their family to leave the shtetl and become *Wanderjuden*, initiating contact with the Gentile world and adopting a more assimilated life. The contrast was even more obvious on the maternal side. Brody – from where Amalia Freud's family came – was the largest Jewish community in Galicia. It was originally a hotbed of Chasidim, strongly influenced by the spiritual, mystic apocalyptic and messianic nature of the Judaism practised there. But changing circumstances led to the emergence of Brody (with Lemberg and Tarnapol) as a business hub (Mahler 1985). The new class of businessmen, clerical employees, farmers, bankers, interpreters, music teachers and physicians rated education as being of prime importance in their goal to attain equality with the non-Jewish bourgeoisie. For them, Austria was the unquestionable 'fatherland'.

The trajectory followed by Freud's family in the nineteenth century, culminating in Vienna, was typical of many Central European Jews. In Freud, the man who was to have such a significant effect on the perception of family relationships in the next century, we see his own family life as typical of the bourgeois family, with its emphasis on the individual, the liberal state, modern economy and class structure that was to become prominent after the late nineteenth century (Davidoff 2004). Such families would keep marriages between members of their own group, often going great distances to find partners, brothers/sisters from one family would often marry brothers/sisters from another; the marriages produced large numbers of children but tended to occur late to allow capital to accumulate and there was often an intermediate generation between parents and their children. Freud married Martha Bernays when he was 30, she was 26; her brother Eli married Freud's elder sister Anna. With insertion into the capitalist economy, wives and daughters were increasingly marginalised to domestic duties, and male children were preferred for education. Family numbers tended to drop. These changes were associated with the preoccupation with sexuality which came into the province of science and medicine; religion increasingly lost its hold over morality.

Freud's life and work needs to be understood in the context of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, the 'proving ground for the world's destruction'. In every field of human thought and activity, the new was emerging from the old, the twentieth from the nineteenth century. It was the site of extraordinary flourishing in physics, literature, language, architecture, the birthplace of Zionism, psychoanalysis and Nazism, Schoenberg's atonal music, the paintings of Klimt, Schiele and Kokoshkca, the functional architecture of Alfred Loos. The revolution that changed 20th century art, modernism was an entirely Jewish phenomenon. Among such notables with whom Freud was acquainted were Gustav Mahler, Arthur Schnitzler, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Arthur Koestler and Theodore Herzl (Ignatieff 1989).

Mitteleuropa, the cultural renaissance of Central Europe, resulted from the emancipation and urbanisation of the burgeoning Jewish middle class, who adopted to the cosmopolitan environment more successfully than any other group (Reinhard 2004). In this there is an extreme paradox: the Jewish success in Vienna was a tragedy of success. Nationalism formed an unholy alliance with the middle-class fear of assimilation, if not swamping, by the lower classes. With the installation of Karl Lueger to Mayor in 1897 and anti-Semitic riots in Prague, Jews, constantly causing resentment by their success and high profile, were demonised with all the bogies that threatened those who supported anti-Semitism: Marxism, liberalism,

parliamentarianism, democracy, to say nothing of homosexuality and the liberation of women (Ignatieff 1989). With the First World War looming, there were warnings that nothing would stay in place forever, yet the threat to Jews was unclear, except in the Romanov Empire where migration continued unabated until 1914.

The Austro-Hungarian empire died with the *Anschluss*, never to rise again. Of the 300,000 Jews in Vienna in 1936, there were only 200 left when the Red Army entered it in 1945. In 1908, struggling with the issues raised by the pending break with Jung, Freud wrote: *After all, our Talmudic way of thinking cannot disappear just like that* (Loewenberg 1971). The world in which Freud, Herzl and so many others found their inspiration was irretrievably lost, leaving a small affluent country of shallow pretensions with little to offer to the world except *Sound of Music*-style tourism and periodic reminders of its deeply ingrained bigotry³.

Ernst Simon described Freud as a Gaon, a learned Rabbi of strictest observance, setting the highest standards for himself and his pupils, and taking whatever he can to improve the world, regardless however small. In poignant terms, this amounted to short term pessimism, long term optimism, the ‘secret formula’ of Jewish messianism.

Chassidism is a form of radical mysticism and the Kabala, it should be noted, is replete with sexual metaphors and there is what can be described as a proto-free association described. The Zohar expresses an attitude of tolerance for erotic experience and sanctification of deep sensual pleasure which parallels the sexual frankness (if not liberalisation) of psychoanalysis. Concepts such as bisexuality, the Oedipal complex and sublimation are all features of Jewish mystical doctrine. The Zohar has remarkably similar techniques for determining the manifest content, free association and dream interpretation.

David Bakan believed that Freud was immersed in Shabatian mysticism, the Kabala and the Torah (Bakan 1958). He kept a copy of the *Zohar* and several Kabala books in his library. There is a considerable resemblance between Freud’s theories of dreams and the way in which they are dealt with in the Talmud (Hutter 1999). This link may have been fostered by Joseph Breuer’s father Leopold, a famed Rabbi who taught at the school he attended. Despite his superb literary style, largely unassailable rhetoric and exquisite romantic sensibility (Hutter 1999), Freud remained all his life prone to some mystical and superstitious beliefs, including extra-sensory perception, thought transference (Schneider and Berke 2000), and an odd theory about the author of Shakespeare’s work.

In 1903, Freud treated Rabbi Shalom Dov-Ber Schneersohn, the fifth Lubavicher Rabbi (Schneider and Berke 2000), known as the Maimonides of Chassidism. Freud cured the Rebbe’s depression and had a number of conversations with him about Jewish mysticism. It appears the two men got on well and Freud incorporated Chassidic ideas in his work. It has been suggested that the Rabbi’s condition had an influence on ‘Mourning and Melancholia’. Noting the subject of his last book, it can be argued that psychoanalysis was Mosaic – a new system of quasi-religious law.

³ Let alone the fact that Austria gave the world the term sado-masochism, now that the awful crimes of Joseph Fritzl have been revealed.

Paul Johnson described Freud as having claims to be the most representative of all Jews and perhaps the greatest of all Jewish innovators (Johnson 2001). If he did nothing else, Freud changed the way we think about ourselves and the world. Regardless of how unfeasible his views may be to the materialist outlook, Freud provided the most sophisticated and subtle explanation of the tensions within the modern psyche; in this regard, he is much more than merely a throwback to German Romanticism, but rather, the best example of ‘Mercurian adaptors’ to the twentieth century (Slezkine 2004).

Freud was always conscious of an inner identity and psychological familiarity that bound him to the Jewish people. Regardless of his assimilated lifestyle, Freud left no doubt what part his Jewish origins had played in his life:

I owe to my Jewish nature the two characteristics that become indispensable on my difficult life’s way. Because I was a Jew, I found myself free from many prejudices which limited others in the employment of their intellects, and as a Jew I was prepared to go into opposition.

In the introduction to the Hebrew Edition of *Totem and Taboo* (1930), Freud said if the question were put to you what is left of you that is Jewish, he would answer, ‘A very great deal, and probably its very essence.’

A noted feature of the Litvak mentality is its questioning, pragmatic and explorative nature. The Talmudic ethos percolates through this to provide rationalism, language scepticism and anti-representationalism (Steinberg 1988). A cool rational approach, it may well come to be regarded as the most important formative influence on the Jewish intellect. *Litvak* rationalism did not exist in isolation and was always set against the deeply emotive, spiritual and, at times, mystical approach of Galicia, an environment that threw up messianic pretenders at regular intervals. Jews, it seems, are addicted to regular outbursts of messianism. In the 19th century, two other great Jews, Marx and Herzl, sought to find a secular path for those who had left their religious belief (Ignatieff 1986); Marx substituted the proletariat and Herzl the Promised Land for the modern Diaspora. Only Freud took Jewish messianism and turned it inwards (Rubinstein 1967); this is the quintessential achievement of *Litvak* culture.

When Freud was 35, his father gave him the family bible, with a lengthy Hebrew inscription dedicated to him, including the prescient lines:

Thou has seen the vision of the Almighty. Thou has listened and ventured and achieved, soaring on the wings of the wind.

From the father to the son – it could not have been better stated.

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Dedicated from the weeping heart to the source of my own *Wanderjüden*, the inhabitants of Sedova and Beisegola, destroyed by the Nazis in 1942.

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