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**FREUD: DER ÜBERMENSCH UND DER PHILISTER:  
(Freud: The Superman and the Philistine)  
HE SHOULD KEPT HIS MOUTH SHUT**

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**Readers: An Amazing News Flash!!!**

NEW ACCESS TO FREUD MURDER EVIDENCE FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, GAVE US PHOTOGRAPHIC ACCESS TO A PREVIOUSLY EMBARGOED ORIGINAL LETTER BY FREUD. A BONAFIDE CASE CAN BE MADE THAT THE LETTER CONTAINS A CODE CONFESSING TO, ONCE AGAIN, THE SECRET MURDER OF JOHN, HIS HALF-BROTHER. THE LETTER IS WRITTEN TO HIS MOST INTIMATE FRIEND, WILHELM FLIESS, HIMSELF ALSO A PERVERT WHO WAS AN INTIMATE COLLABORATOR WITH FREUD AND "CREDITED" BY FREUD AS THE "GODFATHER" OF FREUD'S FAMOUS BOOK, *INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS*—WHICH ITSELF FEATURES A CONFESSION OF A DESIRE TO MURDER FLIESS HIMSELF!

As the reader can see in the photocopy (displayed on our home page) of Freud's letter of December 3, 1897, the below accurately presents, (as readers can themselves verify by careful inspection of the featured photo) what Freud actually wrote and the way he wrote it. The copy we discuss begins at the 5<sup>th</sup> line from the top of the photo. The underlined words are the words Freud himself underlined in his letter, as the photo shows.

***Freud's actual text of his letter (see photo), as given with underline:***

das beste, was du weisst,  
darsft du den buben doch nicht sagen.

***My Translation:***

the best, thou [already] know'st  
thou can't never tell the jacks [Johns]

***Goethe's actual lines:***

Das Beste was Du wissen kannst  
Dar'ft Du den Buben night sagan.

***The Bayard Taylor Translation***

The best thou learnest in the end

Thou dar'st not tell the youngsters—never!

**Another English Translation by George M. Priest** (Encyclopedia Britannica *Faust*, Great Books, 1952)

The best that you can know with all your labour  
You dare not tell the striplings raw

As can be seen, in the above English translation, the second line gained in fidelity as to a crude “Jack” with “the striplings raw” but lost the “nicht sagen” imperative of “Never Tell,” “Must tell—never!,” Or, perhaps, “must be told to knaves, never!”

### **“Jacks/Johns” is *literal* translation of “Buben”**

The word “Buben” has popularly been translated “boys” or “guys” or “youngsters” (as the abidingly popular *Faust* of Bayard Taylor has it), but all these words fail to convey the “word color” that a “Jack” is a low class person and carries with it the connotation of being of limited intelligence, an epithet, as is particularly emphasized in Priest’s translation, although somewhat awkwardly as “striplings raw.” Perhaps the term “Philistine” is a good overall translation for “Bube,” at least in its slangish “cultural sense” and Freud himself frequently refers to the intellectually or culturally limited (to which, of course he is superior) as “Philistines.” In Goethe’s context, however, “rouge” probably comes pretty close.

*The New Cassell’s German Dictionary*, 1958, gives the following for Buben”

Bub-e (*South German Bub*) *m* (en, en) boy, lad; rogue, scamp; knave *at cards*). –**enstreich**, *m.*, –**enstrück**, *n.* boyish trick, piece of villainy.

The etymological roots seems to connote, if not denote, the “knave” in the common “Jack” quality of the word:

**Büb-erei**, *f.* (**-en**) roguery, villainy. –**isch**, *adj.* knavish, villainous.

“Bube” is also the name of a card in the card game of “Jacks” or “Buben” the Jack, of course, is the well known card right below the Queen in value. As I indicate in my Chapter One of “Murderous Fire Brand: SS Freud (Serial Killer),” “Jack” is the nickname for “John.” It also means a “lower class” person—as the etymology of the Oxford English Dictionary proves. The first definition for Jack in the OED is:

1. (*As proper noun*) A familiar by-form of the name *John*, hence a generic proper for any representative of the common people.

It is also worth noting that Freud was an inveterate card player and was certainly also well acquainted with the common “game” of “Jacks.” i.e., “Buben.” In his letter to Fliess, he is obviously playing his own unique “game of Jack,”—i.e., his “John game.” with Fliess. Freud was constantly playing “word games” in his letter to Fliess—and even did the same with his earlier juvenile correspondents, as his early letters to his boyfriend’s Fluss and Silberstein prove.

### **“Jack” & “Bub”**

Before passing on to the next point, I should like to register that it is only now, as I was writing this new text, did it dawn on me that “Bub” and “Jack” were both alive and thriving and I and a friend have been in a joking manner using the name “Bub” for each other on occasion for years—from our mutual Iowa roots, perhaps, and I *without realizing that my Iowa “Bub” was exactly the German “Bub”—and for “Jack” and John.* A Jack of all trades and a master of none! An expression, by the way, of which, in German, brings us back to John, or Hans, in other words, Johann Freud—“Hans Dampf in allen Gossen” (i.e., “A Jack of all Trades”).

### **Important Note: Freud’s Message**

It will be recalled that Freud gave his made-up or reconstructed quote from Goethe’s *Faust* immediately after his statement that gives other clues about Jack (John, Han, Johann, etc.) – so it’s not like we are changing subjects! We are still on subject, the subject of Freud’s letter explaining his “deeply neurotic” longing for Rome (German, *Rom*). He wrote, *immediately preceding* his bastardized quotation from Goethe given above (i.e., 12/3/1898) :

Thus the dream I had fulfilled my wish to meet you in Rome rather than in Prague. My longing for Rome is, by the way, deeply neurotic. It is connected with my high school hero worship of the Semitic Hannibal, and this year in fact I did not reach Rome any more than he did from Lake Trasimeno. Since I have been studying the unconscious, I have become so interesting to myself. A pity that one always keeps one’s mouth shut about the most imitate things.

das beste, was du weisst,  
darsft du den buben doch nicht sagen.

But Freud didn't keep his mouth shut to Fliess. It needs to be noted that only a few letters earlier (10/3/97; 10/15/97), Freud had told Fliess about the fact that his war-like relations with Hannibal reflected his love-hate relations with John (Hann, of course, as in Hannibal, is another Carthaginian name for John!). And Freud specially linked his "deeply neurotic" "longing for Rome" also to John in the *Interpretation of Dreams*—in the section where he discusses his longing to murder John. So that the coded, underlined message, clues Fliess to the fact that he already knows about John and why he has to keep his mouth shut about his murder makes perfect sense. Freud's *main* changes in Goethe's text are given below:

"weisst" (**already know**) is UNDERLINED

"buben" (**Jacks** nickname for **John**) is UNDERLINED

By destroying the underline for "weisst," Masson, the Harvard University Press editor/translator of Freud's letters to Fliess (1985) cleverly robbed Freud's entire manipulated couplet by Johann (John) Goethe unintelligible. It seems highly probable that Masson *intended* to protect against anyone searching out what message the two underlined words gave in concert—just as it was intended for Fliess' eyes. And, it is, indeed, contextually the subject of the very thing one has to "keep one's mouth shut about."

Masson, it seems, is also someone else who knows this, which is why he tries to skillfully conceal the hidden message by his manipulation of his translation. Masson's translation of the two lines of the poem at issue gives the below, with an attached footnote number 1:

Das Beste was Du weisst,  
Darfst Du den *Buben* doch nicht sagen<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> "Goethe, Faust, Part 1, scene 4, where the text reads, "Das Beste was Du wissen kannst." Here the meaning is "The best you know, you may not tell to *boys*."

Of course, the actual quotation, which Masson "waters down" does not give us Masson's bland "may not" but "must never" ("doch nicht sagen")! In Goethe's lines there is an imperative injunction to *never tell*. Not Masson's polite "may not tell." And Masson does not even note that *Buben* is "Jacks." Masson knew better as I told him, before publication of his translation of the Freud Fliess letters, that the subject of John was critical to understanding Freud because Freud had killed him. Masson didn't want to hear that and apparently was himself pledged to "never tell" the "best" that he knows of. [in a piece to come I deal with Masson's own "Das Beste wissen. . .]

**Achieving A False Effect:  
“Cleaning Freud Up”: Masson’s “Mop Up” Translations**

To achieve his corrupt translation (of the two lines “quoted” by Freud from Johann Goethe’s Devil in *Faust*, Masson capitalizes the “D” in “Das”, when it is not so in Freud’s original letter; he capitalized “B” in “Beste” when it is not so in the original; he leaves out the comma after “Beste” when it is not so in the original; he capitalized the “D” in “Du” which is not in the original; he failed to underline *weisst* (i.e., weisst); he capitalized “D” in *Darfst* in the second line, when it is not so in the original; he capitalizes “D” in “Du” in the second line, when it is not in the original; he capitalizes “B” in “Buben,” when it is not so in the original. About the only thing he did right was italicize *buben* (to note the underline emphasis in the original).

Masson gives nine errors in two lines of poetry that only has twelve words (i.e., Freud’s actual written “quote”).

It is the murder of JOHN that is the BEST thing Freud has to tell in his cornucopia of knowledge about the inner sanctum of the human psyche--hence his universal murder theory (i.e., his so-called Oedipal-complex)—based on his murder of John. That we are on the right track is further borne out by the fact that Freud further continues, *immediately after* his “coded message” with the following remark

Breslau also plays a role in my childhood memories. At the age of three years I passed through the station when we moved from Freiberg to Leipzig, and the gas flames which I saw for the first time reminded me of spirits [*sic.*] burning in hell. I know a little of the connections. My travel anxiety, now overcome, also is bound up with this. Today I am not good for anything. All I can do is *Feilen packen*, as the late Dubois Raymond put it.

Farewell, and let me soon have a sensible answer to this *meschuggene* [i.e., crazy, insane] letter.

It is curious, is it not, that immediately after commenting that it’s a pity one had to keep one’s mouth shut about the most intimate things, altering Goethe’s quote so that it reads, “The best [about me] that you already know/Can never be told to the Jacks (Johns)”, Freud then refers to traveling and fear of the ultimate judgment, flames and “souls burning in hell.” And, ah ha! It’s all bound up with his travel anxiety. Gee, maybe *that’s* got something to do with his crime, the fact that he was *traveling* at the time, or trying to flee in fear of getting caught and suffering the penalty for murder—the secret he has to keep his mouth shut about! Freud himself, echoing ancient dream-interpreters, also held that “traveling” in dreams refers to death. But, in Freud’s case, not only death but also “souls burning in hell”

Masson in a footnote claims he cannot get a meaning out of the end-of-the-letter reference Freud's quote from the "late" Dubois Raymond. Probably this is just his "clever" way of steering the readers mind on to other matters with no comment on the fact Freud himself says his letter is a crazy one. As to the Dubois Raymond matter, he must not have tried very hard to find out what it could mean. In a posting on my website, *The Song of John* (where I further deal with these matters), I made the following remarks:

["*Feilen packen*" –the editor, Masson, says the German phrase is "unclear" and says no more, but consulting Raymond's book, *Reden* (*Talk*) where the phrase appears there is no mystery at all. Freud seems to be categorizing himself as a "one-sided" [read "obsessed"] pack animal, whose nature and habits are "mechanically instinctive" as we learn from the specific context of the remark—in other words "all I can do is continue on brutishly as I am."].

In other words, Freud is not only "crazy" or "insane" (*meschuggene*) but he is also like an automaton, or a beast of burden (we *know* his burden is: i.e., how to explain his *meschuggene*) who must just continue on as he is as he is not free to do otherwise. And all this, and more, repeatedly runs through many letters, literary and mythological allusions, all relating in one way or another to John, who, Freud said (in a letter of just a few previous weeks) was "unalterably fixed in his subconscious mind" and "determined" all his future relations with contemporaries.

### **Did Fliess Really Know Freud Was A Murderer?**

The question arises: Did Freud really tell Fliess about his murder of John (and others as well?), and had such an intimate knowledge of Freud's criminal nature and doings? If we are to take Freud's word for it, the answer is "yes." On *January 1, 1898* Freud confrontingly tells Fliess if he doesn't know every intimate detail about him it's only because *he doesn't want to know*:

It is your doing if you do not know every intimate detail about me; you have surely known me long enough. Well, then, I am not aware of any preference for the left hand, either at present or in my childhood; rather I would say that years ago I had two left hands.

"Every intimate detail"! Numerous Freud scholars have commented on Freud's crazy idea about "left" meaning "evil" and being symbolic of "wrong doing" and "homosexuality," etc. "Left," obviously, is the opposite of what is "right" or "recto." Freud means by the above that when he was younger he "had two left hands," which probably simply means that he was, at that time, wholly homosexual *or* wholly given to evil deeds, or both. Even the subject of the left hand and his odd remark that

“years ago I had two left hands” [Jahren hatte ich zwei linken Händen] itself summons the subject of John or Han again, TWO LEFT HANden .

### **The Riddler Strikes Again**

Freud was consumed with “riddles,” “secrets” “conundrums,” “puzzles,” “codes,” he has “secret plans,” which he shared with Fliess. He unravels for Fliess “mysteries,” and penetrates all manner of covert meanings and prophetic signs and wonders. Not only are Freud’s letters to Fliess and others proof of this fact, but Freud himself constantly has reference to the unraveling of “secret meanings.” We must not forget that first and foremost Freud would have the world believe that it was he who “solved” once and for all the “meaning of dreams.” I have dealt with these matters elsewhere and in my next installment I will track a consistent set of coded messages between Freud and Fliess—proving beyond reasonable doubt, that Freud in fact, frequently sent Fliess secret messages.

In this context, however, it seems appropriate to mention that Freud always has the theme of punishment and murder associated with the psychological secrets and the decipherment of dreams—*his own dreams* in particular. Readers of my website (cited at the top of this page) will recall that Freud himself stated in *Introductory Lectures* that psychoanalysis was itself analogous to *the solving of a murder mystery*, with the therapist playing the role of the “detective” and the patient as the criminal. And, of course, he follows, in that, the theme of the story of Oedipus who consulted the oracle to find out the secret of the identity of the murderer who killed his father, and was told that *he himself was the answer to the riddle of who was the murderer*: the murderer was himself!

Freud loved to speak out boldly in riddles about his own murders, as serial killers are known to frequently do. He loved, as serial killers often do, tempting the fates because he believed, as he repeatedly said, that he was one of the superior ones, in essence an *Übermensch* (“Superman”), and was far ahead of everyone and that no one would ever catch up to him. Many quotations could be cited to this effect. A quote from his letter of March 23, 1900 will serve as one example among many: “I explain this by telling myself that I am fifteen to twenty years ahead of my time”

But, right after writing the above words, in this case, he adds: “Then, of course, the usual qualms [sic., “torments”] associated with forming a judgment about oneself [sic., *in propria*, a term used in law proceedings, meaning “in one’s own person”] set in.” (see Schur, p.205). Here, too, Masson corrupts the translation to “save” Freud from the effect of his own true confessional words. Freud’s own doctor, Max Schur, gives the proper German translation of Freud’s passage [indicated above in brackets].

Both Masson and Schur were/are, in my estimation, involved in the concealment of criminal evidence of Freud's murder mania. But the late Dr. Max Schur was more careful presenting Freud's true words actually used in his letters. When he wants to conceal some dark truths about Freud he just altogether omits the incriminating "evidence" and doesn't deal with it. He pretends the evidence doesn't exist. The just said statement is proved, now with the publication of the alleged complete letters of Freud to Fliess. We now that Schur had access to amazing, if not horrifying, truths about Freud contained in letters Schur claims to have read, and he amazingly passed by with "no comment." Masson, however, is more crude and unsophisticated in his complicity with concealing the true Freud from public view—he adopts bits and pieces of other's translations for his "own" and pastes it all together—as a kind of montage of mendacity and Freudian propaganda. And, of course, in my book *Passion For Murder*, I quote numerous corruptions of translated German words long before Masson came upon the scene. But, Masson, is the only one to have claimed to have held nothing back—which is a ridiculous claim.

The point of the above remarks is to link in the reader's mind, that the "murder secret" of Freud's "science" of psychoanalysis is based wholly on a crime, discovery of a crime, and his own ability to elude capture because (as a Roman Emperor Serial Killer) he is superior to everyone and they haven't a chance of catching him. And yet, upon publishing his murder confessions in *Interpretation of Dreams* (or more properly, "The Divining of Dreams", *Die Traumdeutung*) he knew if he got caught it would be all over for him—i.e., the constant fear that his Serial Killer's game of confessing his murders in codes would one day get him caught. Freud knows, also, that it would be a "fitting punishment" if he was unmasked for what he was, and the real nature of his one-time-in-history "achievements"—his insight into the nature of the "murderer" in the "normal" human being. In a mixture of half-sanity, half-insanity Freud wrote, shortly after publication of his dream book:

It is different with me. No critic (not even the stupid Löwenfeld, the Burckhard of neuropathology) can see more clearly than I the disparity arising from the problems and the answers to them; and it will be a fitting punishment for me that one of the unexplored regions of the psychic life in which I have been the first mortal to set foot will ever bear my name or obey my laws.

### **The Promised Land, Fitting Punishments & The Limp Of Jacob**

"[F]irst mortal to set foot," "obey my laws": O, why is that? Why is it that a "fitting" punishment for him that he not be acknowledged as the Emperor of Dreams, and that in his make-believe world of dreams "no laws" of his would be obeyed? Could it be that his punishment would be fitting because his miraculous discoveries were based upon a knowledge of himself and his *own* dreams *because* he himself was a murderer!

He was not just someone who had committed *a* murder, but who had an unquenchable lust for murdering people—most intensely those whom he “loved and hated” the most. He intimately knew how a murder thought, how he processed his bestial cravings for blood, how he turned his needs for concealment into “repressions,” and slips of the tongue and memory, and the understanding of every dream that any mortal ever had. But, a criminal should not profit (or “prophet”) from his crimes. In any case, Freud’s very next words he shows his fears he will not be known as “the first mortal to set foot” into the “unexplored regions of the psychic life.” Freud tells us what happened in the next sentence:

When it appeared my breath would fail me in the wrestling match, I asked the angel to desist and that is what he has done since then. But I did not turn out to be the stronger, although since then I have been limping noticeably.

One wonders, of course when the “since then” was, twice repeated in two sentences [but one cannot trust Masson to have the same sentences at all. The original must be consulted]. In any case, I think I know that “since then” refers to “since he killed John.” Obviously, we need to understand, at least a bit, of this amazing self-identification with the patriarch Jacob from the Bible. That Freud summoned a Biblical allusion to explain his situation and the “fitting punishment” that will be his due, i.e., including apparently that “his laws” will not be “obeyed” and his name not credited for being the “first mortal to set foot” into the “unexplored realms of psychic life.”

Before we examine Freud’s use of the Bible for his confession, the fact that Freud’s “riddles,” (such as the one we are exposing with publication of Freud’s quotation of “Das Beste. . .”) is borne out in a dramatic way with another literary allusion that Freud uses to reveal his murder-relation to riddles. This one comes from *the same letter of March 23, 1900*. Freud confesses that “No one can help me in the least with what oppresses me; it is my cross, I must bear it; and heaven knows in the process of adaptation my back has become noticeably bent.” So, Freud had a “cross” to bear for something that no one can help him with “in the least.” It is a burden of obvious guilt as criminals were forced to carry their cross before crucifixion, the bending of his back like his “limping noticeably” as Jacob is here “noticeably bent.” Freud himself give an obvious suggestion of what his crime was because, (Schur, p. 206). *Immediately after the just quoted passage*, Freud explains his murder-riddle, once again:

During the summer or fall, no later, I shall see you, talk to you, and then explain to you all the riddles of Count Oerindur. You will become convinced that it is merely complicated. . . Then we shall also discuss the pros and cons of nasal therapy, preferably right on the spot.

Schur, then, gives a footnote to Count Oerindur and gives the following information:

Count Oerindur was the hero of a drama entitled *Guilt* by the German poet Müllner (1774-1829). Its first performance was in 1813 [John Freud's # 1 victim was born 8/13/1855]. It contained the following stanza].

Schur then gives the German of the passage he translates from *Guilt* along with his own English translation:

Can you explain, Oerindur,  
This contradiction of Nature?  
One moment I would like to see his life disappear in blood,  
The next moment to forgive him.

Of course, this is *exactly* the ambivalent relationship Freud confesses to having had for John who was “unalterably fixed” in Freud’s “unconscious mind.” Unalterably fixed, that is, in Freud’s “Cain-complex”—as Schur himself called it, his “brother-murder-complex.” But, let us return to a “fitting punishment” for the great Roman Emperor Serial Killer, Sigmund Freud, which we were explaining before giving the “riddle” of murderous blood lusts Freud had for his dearly “loved and hated”—as Freud himself is here saying, *just like himself*—as Dr. Schur, Freud’s doctor confirms *is the case* in his discussion of Count Oerindur’s “contradiction of Nature.” In short, Freud himself is the homicidal maniac whose is obsessed with a blood lust, the very same he quotes from *Guilt* and which applies to himself! How much more do we need to conclude, yes, it is true Freud himself admits it, he had a lust for murder.

### **The Fitting Punishment: Quoting The Bible For His Purpose**

Much could be made of the above cited passage wherein Freud contemplated his “fitting punishment.” But we must be as careful as possible and put things in their proper context—that is, the Biblical context Freud gave—whose theme is the “punishment” of “Jacob.” Nonetheless, it must be noted that Freud has, once again, piled allusion on allusion—i.e., as any place that is “unexplored realms of psychic life” and which ought “obey” Freud’s “laws” must be something like a “promised land.” The idea of Moses being banned from the “promised land” is really not unlike the “fitting punishment” that falls to Freud after his struggle with the “angel.” In the one case, the case of Moses, we know what his “punishment” was for. No, it was not his murder of the Egyptian soldier, true, or the crowds put to death for idolatry, but in any case, Moses committed a violation of God’s commandment. And Jacob sinned by *stealing the identity of his brother*, committing, as the Biblical commentators (see Appendix below) aver, an act equivalent to a ritual murder of his brother, Esau.

And here we see, of course, “The Devil quoting scriptures for his purpose.” Throughout his life, Freud habitually quoted Faust’s Devil as noted by many scholars. Indeed, the very photo of the two lines from Goethe’s poem featured in this article is

a quotation from the Devil (Mephisto). It is the Devil who says “the best of what you know. . .” Freud carried his copy of *Faust* with him everywhere he went (as I was informed by I. Velikovsky who himself witnessed the fact; a personal communication), like a small child carrying his security blanket with him, and habitually quoted the Devil in it.

But, of course, it is Jacob from the Hebrew Bible who strove with the “angel” – as Freud says in his letter to Wilhelm Fliess, and it was this same Jacob who was victorious over the “angel”—who is elsewhere called a “superhuman being.” We wish to stay on “target” as much as possible and therefore turn to the cognate elements of *Freud’s words* about the matter, which is what we are examining, in particular, here.

Freud adopts the “persona” of Jacob (of course his “father” is named Jacob) to represent himself as he elsewhere adopts many other personifications or personas (i.e., Moses, the Devil, Goethe, etc., etc.)—again, a fact well known and endlessly commented on by the scholars. Freud’s many mythic identifications is not what concerns us here, however, but only those in the specific context of likening himself to Jacob in the Bible. That John’s Jewish name was Moses, as I claim, and Freud mythically believed himself to be a “twin” of “John” or “Moses” is another dimension of the story. I will later post my case for John having the Jewish name of “Moses.” We come to the same elements in any case. Jacob really was a twin, and he ritually “murdered” his older brother, Esau, by stealing his birthright and identity. An interpretation quite in the mainstream of theological views of the facts

### **Jacob, Like Freud, Was A “Supplanter”**

The name “Jacob” means, in Hebrew, “the Supplanter.” And, of course, this name applied to him as he was the *twin* of Esau, and not only “strove with him in the womb” but actually stole his birthright which was due to his older brother, Esau. Indeed, we learn in Genesis when his blind father, Isaac, was giving his final customary blessing. Jacob, falsely presented *himself* as Jacob’s eldest son (in German, Sohn) and lied to him about his true identity, saying, “I am Esau.” So, without going further, we see that Freud summons up the fact that he was “Jacob, the supplanter,” the one who stole the eldest son’s (Sohn’s) *identity* and *inheritance* (and in Freud’s real case his eldest half-brother’s actual life) and the one who fought with his elder brother from earliest (“prehistoric” times as Freud describes his infant relationship to John) even in the womb. This is no fanciful interpretation; these are the rock solid associative facts of the Biblical story and Freud’s own biography—the details are involuntarily summoned to mind by those who know their Hebrew Bible.

Now that we know we are dealing with a direct personal relationship with Jacob, “supplanter” of an older brother we are immediately reminded of Freud’s anonymously published autobiographical “case history” “Screen Memories” or “False

Memories,” as well as other sources, such as *Interpretation* and his letters to Fliess. I believe it is in *Interpretation* where Freud says he fought with John about an “object” and “who got there first” (i.e., born first) and he admitted that he was himself “perhaps” in the wrong. When, Freud tells us, his father, Jacob, asked him why he was hitting John, he notes that “hit” was “schlagen” in German. As Freud “hit” him supposedly when he was a “tot” (in English a very small child) John when he was a very small child was just such a tot, giving rise to, perhaps, another Freud game. A “tot” who is “slagen” gives us *totschlagen* means “to Kill”; *erschlagen* also means “kill”) we must next deal with the struggle of Jacob with the “angel.”

Freud spoke of himself “as Jacob” struggling with an “angel.” Jacob, it will be recalled, was *on his way back to his homeland*, Canaan (i.e., he was a traveler visiting foreign lands and returning home). “In German *englische* means both angelic and English.” – we are informed by the editor of Freud’s letters to his friend Silberstein, in reference to Freud’s letter of August 16, 1873 (and in reference, by the way, to Freud telling his friend that he had made a misunderstanding about something he said, that the “angelic glances” he wrote about longing for were “English glances” and not those of his sisters!

The point here is that the above mentioned, “struggling with an angel” phrase could easily have had the connotations for Freud (as the cited letter proves) for “struggling with an *Englishman*” (Genesis, while it recounts the story about Jacob’s wrestling with a “man,” in the Book of Hosea an “angel” is specifically referred to—which is, then, conclusive that Freud was referring to Hosea, not Genesis in his example. More precisely, he was selectively using both sources, as shall be demonstrated below. Here, too, as noted above with “Jacob” and “Moses” and even “Christ” (if one adds the cross he carries) Freud conflates or piles on one literary or Biblical allusion over another. Nonetheless, it is clear that Jacob’s Adversary was an Angel/English man, actually his Other self.

So, Freud, the “supplanter” who in his “prehistory” (i.e., in the “womb”) is struggling with the “English” “angel” who is a “man” from “Manchester” (England) and he *prevails over him, the Heavenly creature, if not God himself, or the Sohn* (“Son”) of God (as various authorities would have it). But, Freud then says something remarkable in regard to his analogy with Jacob:

When it appeared my breath would fail me in the wrestling match, I asked the angel to desist and that is what he has done since then. But I did not turn out to be the stronger, although since then I have been limping noticeably.

“I asked the angel to desist and that is what he has done since then.” So, the “angel” no longer fights with our “Jacob.” He, the angel, has “desisted”—or should we perhaps read “deceased”? The next sentence in Freud’s passage gives us another clue.

“But I did not turn out to be the stronger. . .” What in the world does that mean: he did not turn out to be the stronger? In the Biblical story Jacob, certainly turned out “to be the stronger.” That is why the angel desisted! And, in Freud’s own-invented mythology about his relationship with John, it was he himself who “turned out to be the stronger.” After all, John, was totally “supplanted.” He himself became the “eldest Sohn”

But, is there something wrong with Masson’s translation? It doesn’t sound right, the last sentence: “But I did not turn out to be the stronger, although since then I have been limping noticeably.” “But. . . although then. . .”? In any case, as it were, Freud reports that he “did not turn out to be the stronger” and yet, since then,” he had “been limping noticeably.”? Well, of course, it was just when he did *turn out to be the stronger* that he was wounded in the thigh and developed a life-long limp thereafter. So much we know. Now, let us address the issue of “punishment.” What was the “punishment of Jacob”? Freud states, as quoted, that “it would be a fitting punishment” for him if he was not credited for being the first human being in all of human history to understand the human mind and the meaning of dreams, and if *his* laws were not obeyed. . . The immediate question arises, is this, too, an analogy with Jacob—i.e., the theme of “Jacob’s punishment”? In the very Biblical text where it is indicated that Jacob “strove with a godlike being; So he strove with an angel” it is stated, beginning at Hosea 3:

The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah,  
And will punish Jacob according to his ways,  
According to his doings will He recompense him,  
In the womb he took his brother by the heel,  
And by his strength he strove with a godlike being;  
So he strove with an angel, and prevailed;  
He wept, and made supplication unto him;  
At Beth-el he would find him,  
And there he would speak with us.

Again, it is stated, that Jacob, unlike what Freud said was true of himself, “prevailed.” Freud failed and he was left only weakened by his struggle with the “angel.” Freud, too, claims that, like the story of Jacob, he was left with a limp due to his battle with the “angel.” The reader who has read our web-positings will recall Freud was left with a wound on the lower left side of his face on his chin. In any case, the following synopsis of the story we have specific interest in as it is the story Freud alludes to:

When the assailant sees that he cannot defeat Jacob, he touches him on the sinew of his thigh (the *gid hanasheh* - השנה דיג). As a result, Jacob develops a limp (Genesis 32:31); and because of this, "to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket" (Genesis 32:32).

From the quoted text above it is clear that Freud received a HANasheh wound, or a thigh wound, like Jacob, he develops a limp. Did Freud know Hebrew enough to know that *gid HANasheh* contained also the name of John, in German, HAN? And was he aware that the word "face" or "Face" as in the name of the temple Peniel, which means *The face of God*:

As is well known to Hebrew Bible specialists, the word *face* (Hebrew *panim*) in some form occurs six times in this passage. Some of them, as isolated occurrences, would simply belong to colloquial expressions and so would carry no special meaning. However, taken together, they form a kind of litany that prepares the way for Jacob's struggle with the Adversary at the spot that he would name Face of God.

And that our Bible scholars found also that this issue of the "Face of God" also had a complex etymological roots involving atonement for murder:

The Hebrew expression "atone his face" is particularly interesting. The ordinary way of saying "appease" someone would be to "find favor in his eyes," or some expression of that order. The wording here is much more serious and fraught with tangles of meaning. The noun related to *kipper*, *kofer*, has the common signification or "ransom" or "price of exchange" (so Exod 21:30). Hartmut Gese discusses various occurrences of this root, *kpr*, and concludes that *kofer* and its Greek translation *lutron* bear the basic meaning of "means of exchange for release" (*Losegeld*), that is, "what comes in as the price of a life, what can stand in for my life." The verb then denotes to find a *kofer*, and in relation to God this means to "release from death-guilt, and from the human side only total surrender can be adequate to that."<sup>(1)</sup>

Personally, I believe that Freud knew only a few words here and there in Hebrew but I doubt he knew much more. Where is the evidence for it? It is not found in his letters or his writings that I know of. Still, a far greater authority than myself in the Hebrew language, the renowned Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, in his book *Freud's Moses* states:

In light of what we shall yet see as Jakob Freud's commitment to the Hebrew language, we may safely assume that he taught the child Sigmund to read the Hebrew text. (p.64)

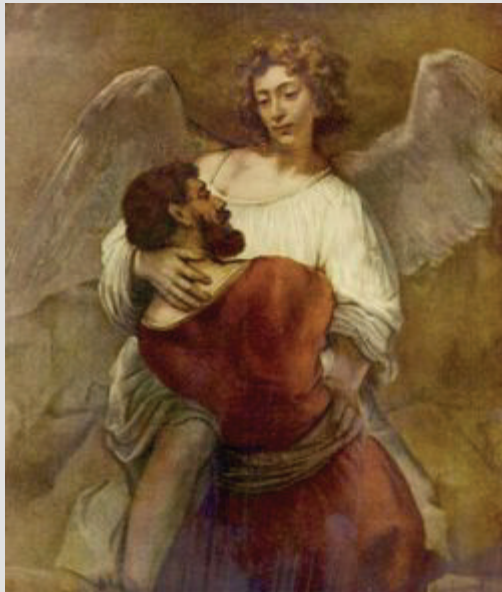
Yerushalmi may "safely assume" what he wants, but there appears little evidence for the fact. Yerushalmi has proven himself to be somewhat of an "idol worshiper" of Freud himself and obviously believes he has found a Jewish Übermensch in Freud, and is not to be trusted in much of anything he says about Freud, so far as I am concerned. (I will soon explain Yerushalmi's Freud Idol Worship in a forthcoming


essay). But, if Freud did know any Hebrew, we may expect he would certainly have gravitated to mulling over everything having to do with murder and the name of John, or Han or Johann or a thousand and one other language associations a madman can make-up. (See the following **Note & Comments** below)

### **JACOB, THE STRUGGLE WITH GOD & THE DEVIL'S LIMP**

In Hosea 11: it is stated: " When Israel (Jacob) was a child, then I loved him And out of Egypt I called My son [Sohn]." I have copied the above story alluded to by Freud from the "Hebrew version" of the story of Jacob's fighting with the "Angel" from Wikipedia.

### **Journey back to Canaan**



 Jacob struggles with the angel,  
by [Rembrandt](#) ([Gemäldegalerie](#), [Berlin](#)).

### **Was God Jacob's Adversary With Whom He Wrestled?**

When Jacob overpowers the angel he demands a blessing, and the mysterious being refuses to answer. Trachtenberg theorizes that the being (i.e., angel) refuses to identify itself for fear that if its secret name was known, it would be conjurable by incantations (Trachtenberg 1939, p. 80). Some commentators, however, argue that the stranger who struggled with Jacob was God himself, citing Jacob's own words and the name he assumed thereafter ("One who has struggled with God"). They point out that although later holy scriptures maintain that God does not manifest as a mortal, several instances of it arguably occur in Genesis, for example in 18:1 with Abraham.

## Meaning of John and “God” in German, Latin, Greek and Hebrew

It is, of course, the name(s) of God that must be kept secret in various cultures so that it cannot be “conjured” by incantations, or otherwise. Of course, the name of God in the Hebrew religion is prohibited from being spoken, it is a “secret” name—probably giving rise, in part, to theological speculation that Jacob strove with “God,” as noted above (i.e., a beings whose name could not be spoken, in other words, God)..

The name John is an English form of [Johannes](#), which was the Latin form of the Greek name [Ioannes](#), which is itself derived from the Hebrew name *Yochanan* meaning "[Yahweh](#) is gracious".

Yahū" or "Y<sup>e</sup>hū"[related Greek “Iō”] is a common short form for "Yahweh" in Hebrew [theophoric names](#); as a prefix it sometimes appears as "Y<sup>e</sup>hō-"[Greek Iō]. The below cited text from Wikipedia, recounts the view of the “being” who Jacob strove with was God, himself!

He-Jacob, contrasted with his degenerate descendants, called by his name, Jacob (Ho 12:2; compare Mic 2:7). He took Esau by the heel in the womb in order to obtain, if possible, the privileges of the first-born (Ge 25:22-26), whence he took his name, Jacob, meaning "supplanter"; and again, by his strength, prevailed in wrestling with God for a blessing (Ge 32:24-29); whereas ye disregard My promises, putting your confidence in idols and foreign alliances. He conquered God, ye are the slaves of idols. Only have Jehovah on your side, and ye are stronger than Edom, or even Assyria.

Thus, Jacob-Freud, fought his Adversary, who was God or a god, with a name containing John’s own name, which has in it the etymological roots of the name for God ( Jō, which as said is equivalent to the Greek, Iō]. Where Esau was the brother twin for Jacob, John was the brother twin for Freud. Like Jacob who struggle with Esau even in the womb and was a twin, John was in Freud’s mind a twin and he, too, had a murderous relationship to his brother and killed him. Jacob *ritually* killed Esau by stealing his Face, his Birthright, his Identity.

Indeed, as Robert Graves and Raphael Patai detail in *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis* (p.229), further emphasize that Jacob’s real Adversary, that is the “angel” whom Jacob fought with was, as noted, his elder brother, Esau:

9. The prime enemy to be faced by Jacob upon crossing the Jabbok was his twin Esau, from whose just anger he had fled twenty years before. In fact, one Midrash presents Esau as Jacob’s unknown adversary [i.e., “man” or “angel”] at Peniel, an

identification based on his likening Esau's countenance to God's (*Genesis xxxiii. 10*).

And, of course, Jacob repeatedly and submissively refers to his brother, Esau, as "my Lord." Interestingly, Graves and Patai continue by accounting mythic elements in common between Jacob and the story of Moses, as noted above. "The *Exodus* account of Moses, the only other Israelite hero with whom God wrestled, curiously resembles Jacob's. They noted that Moses was fleeing from Egypt in disgrace, when he was attacked by "a supernatural being" and that also in Moses' battle the "god" refused to give its name, just as was the case with Jacob. In any case, we must remember that in commemoration of Jacob's prevailing over the angel he was given a new name, Israel, which itself means *He who strives with God*.

James G. Williams, *The Bible, Violence & the Sacred: Liberation from the Myth of Sanctioned Violence*, amazed me when I read generous excerpts from his book, attached below as the Appendix. What was so amazing was that I had formulated my identification of Esau and the "angel" and the "man" and the "Englishman" John, an identity of God, etc. *before* I read it and only after I had written all of the above, in the main. Williams and the other theologian he quotes, did not have Freud in mind, at all, regarding any of Freud's secret biographical confessions to his best friend, Fliess and their discussions of Jacob and his Adversary. Williams and the scholars he quotes are Biblical scholars:

But I agree with Fishbane on these specific points: (1) Jacob says to Esau, in effect, "Take back this blessing that I tricked from you." He thus atones Esau's face with the gift-blessing in the sense of releasing himself from death-guilt and renewing his relationship with his brother. (2) The contest at the Jabbok recapitulates Jacob's previous struggle with Esau (in the womb, for the blessing) and represents what he anxiously anticipates as a conflict-ridden, if not violent, meeting with his brother. (3) Jacob himself, perhaps by analogy to his mother carrying twins, struggles with the "Esau" he bears within him, and in successfully carrying this through he experiences "rebirth." I would want to emphasize, though, that a rebirth for Jacob is in some sense a rebirth for Esau.

Interestingly, it is so. And the same applied to Freud, the angel he wrestled with was John, instead of Esau and for whose treatment of him in his struggle he Jacob-Freud was left, wounded, crippled for life. But, also, the interested reader will see in the attached cited article in the Appendix the fact that "Face" is abundantly mentioned.

### **The Devil, Too, Had A Limp**

But we must not entirely deal only with the limp of Jacob, for Freud in identifying himself as one who has become a "noticeable" limper, with a "noticeable" bent to his

back—invites also multiple layers of allusion, piled on allusion—as was Freud’s way. The Devil was a limper and as Freud persistently identified with and quoted Goethe’s Devil in *Faust*, why should he not *also* acquire the Devil’s own *physical attributes*, that is to say, his limp? We can be well assured that Freud knew the lore of Devils, as evidenced in his letters to Fliess, as well as his habitual carping with Goethe’s quotes from his Devil. To affect Freud’s identification with the Devil, what could be more obvious than to point out that the Devil, *in particular*, him had a limp. And that Freud specifically mythically identified with the Devil, in such statements as: “Don’t you know I really am the Devil.” (see Freud Quotes, this site, [www.passionformurder.com](http://www.passionformurder.com)).

In *Faust*, Act One, Scene 5, the Devil takes Faust to a local bar, Auerbach’s Cellar in Leipzig, to show him a good time. the Devil says:

Before all else, I bring thee hither  
Where boon companions meet together,  
To let them see how smooth life runs away.  
Here, for the fold, each day ‘s a holiday;  
With little wit, and ease to suit them. . .

The Devil (Mephisto) contemptuously remarks to Faust as they enter that such folk are too dense to know who he really is:

Mephisto: Not if he had them by the neck, I vow,  
Would e’rer these people scent the Devil.

But, no sooner has Mephisto made his comment that Siebel, one of the jolly companions, notices that he has a limp and is lame—which is the outstanding characteristic by which the Devil may be identified.

Siebel: . . .[*aside, looking askance at Mephistopheles*]  
That fellow’s got a limp – look at his shoe.

That the Devil is known by his limp is widely and well known. And Freud who knew *Faust* by heart *and who specifically identified with the Devil* (see Freud Quotes at [www.passionformurder.com](http://www.passionformurder.com) ) could not have failed to realize that his analogy with Jacob was also his analogy with the Devil. The Devil is a master of disguises but he cannot disguise the fact of his limp, as we see in Johann Goethe’s Cathedral scene in *Faust*:

Mephisto: I often travel incognito, that is true,  
But I wear my decorations at a proper do.  
I haven’t got the Order of the Garter—though  
My cloven hoof commands respect up here, you know.  
You see this snail here slowly crawling by?  
It’s only got those feelers in its face,  
But can sense something, perhaps it knows my limp—

I can't disguise myself here even if I try.  
Come on, let's have a good look around the place;  
You can be the punter, and I'll play the pimp.

A comment by Montgomery also makes a related point, mentioned above, that Freud also identified himself with an animal. "The devil is able to appear in human form except for one cloven hoof instead of a foot. This misshapen foot, in the form of a goat's hoof, points to the animal origins of the devil." (Montgomery 35).

So it *is* symbolic, you cry. Yes, I would respond, it is very symbolic, but it was physical, too. There is no spiritualizing away the injury to Jacob's hip socket, and the limp that characterized his walk in later years. These were not just symbols of his encounter and humbling before God, they were physical remnants of the struggle, too. We have trouble believing in events that we have no experience base from which to understand. We have experienced the mental and spiritual anguish and struggle of the night, but not the physical, and so we doubt the physical. This event is both physical *and* symbolic!

TO BE CONTINUED. . . .Below, see Appendix, a very interesting commentary on Jacob's struggle with the Angelic Adversary, Esau, the ritual murder, of his elder brother, etc.

## APPENDIX

Excerpt from James G. Williams, *The Bible, Violence & the Sacred: Liberation from the Myth of Sanctioned Violence*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991, pp. 46-54.

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### 3. *Jacob's Encounters with God and Esau (Genesis 32-33)*

a. *The Encounter at the Jabbok*. The mimetic crisis was abated only by **Jacob's** flight or expulsion, and as he returns to Canaan from Aram, Jacob knows that he must still deal with its consequences. Esau has reason to hate him and seek revenge, even though twenty years have passed. From **Jacob's** standpoint the messengers he sends to Esau only confirm his worst fears, for Esau approaches to meet him with four hundred men. "Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed" (32:7), dividing his people, flocks, herds, and camels into two companies in the hope that if Esau attacked the one the other would escape. Jacob prays to his God for deliverance from his brother, reminding God of the promise made at Bethel (32:9-12).

Now Jacob conceives a strategy of "softening up" Esau by sending ahead animals at intervals as a present to his brother (32:13-21). As is well known to Hebrew Bible specialists, the word *face* (Hebrew *panim*) in some form occurs six times in this passage. Some of them, as isolated occurrences, would simply belong to colloquial expressions and so would carry no special meaning. However, taken together, they form a kind of litany that prepares the way for **Jacob's** struggle with the Adversary at the spot that he would name Face of God. The first occurrence is, in truth, rather isolated, so it is arguable whether it belongs to this configuration: "Pass on before me [*lefanay*, 'to my face'; the *p* sound becomes like our *f* after a vowel], and put a space between drove and drove" (32:16). But there is no doubt about the pattern in verses 20-21:

And you shall say, "Moreover your servant Jacob is behind us." For he thought, "I may appease him [*akapprah fanayw*, 'cover or atone his face'] with the present that goes ahead of me [*lefanay*, 'to my face'], and afterwards I shall see his face (*fanayw*); perhaps he will accept me [*yissa fanay*, 'lift my face']." So the present passed on ahead of him [*al-panayw*, "on or to his face"]; and he himself spent that night in the camp.

The Hebrew expression "atone his face" is particularly interesting. The ordinary way of saying "appease" someone would be to "find favor in his eyes," or some expression of that order. The wording here is much more serious and fraught with tangles of meaning. The noun related to *kipper*, *kofer*, has the common signification of "ransom" or "price of exchange" (so Exod 21:30). Hartmut Gese discusses various occurrences of this root, *kpr*, and concludes that *kofer* and its Greek translation *lutron* bear the basic meaning of "means of exchange for release" (*Losegeld*), that is, "what comes in as the price of a life, what can stand in for my life." The verb then denotes to find a *kofer*, and in relation to God this means to "release from death-guilt, and from the human side only total surrender can be adequate to that."<sup>(1)</sup>

The sequence of occurrences of the word for face makes it appear that ritual process is being described in 32:20-21: (a) finding release from death-guilt for his face (b) by means of the gift that goes to my face, (c) and afterward (i.e., so that) I will see his face; (d) then perhaps he will lift my face. By the logic of this process, if he lifts my face (accepts me, is reconciled with me), then I will have atoned for or propitiated his face. Then -- and it remains to be seen precisely what this could mean -- we both will have our proper face.

In this situation of acute anxiety for Jacob in which he agonizes over "facing" his brother, he does a very strange thing: he sends the remainder of his party -- his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children -- across the fording place of the Jabbok River and spends the night alone on the farther side. Is it his fear that prevents him at this moment from taking another step toward meeting his brother? Or is it a literary device, not smoothly employed, to have Jacob alone for the ensuing struggle? Because I think the author is both cunning and profound, I find it hard to accept the notion of an awkward literary device, but this question need not detain us.

**Jacob's** struggle with the strange assailant is narrated in 32:24-30. (Verse 30 is not part of the contest episode as such, but as the text stands it relates the object of the narrative,

so I will include it in my comments here.) The literary richness of the passage has often been noted by the commentators.<sup>(2)</sup> Only two of the literary elements interest us here: the repetition of the word *name* (*shem*) and the movement toward the naming of the spot Face of God. I will come to these shortly.

The adversary who attacks Jacob is called initially a "man," in Hebrew, *ish*. Whether this is to be taken as an actual male human being, or God, or an angel in the form of a man is not clear. The God of Israel and of the ancestors could appear in human form, as could his messengers (see Gen 18:1-15; 19:1-23; Judg 13), and in the early Israelite tradition the prophet Hosea called **Jacob's** adversary "the angel" (Hos 12:4). Of course, in popular mythology there was a fine line between God and angels, and the appearance of both as the subject of the same passage probably indicates not a contradiction, but an expression of the same reality viewed from a slightly different angle.<sup>(3)</sup>

As it turns out, this "man" cannot defeat Jacob, whose strength is evidently superhuman (so his feat of rolling the stone away from the mouth of the well, Gen 29:10). He has strength and staying power. As he had held on to Esau's heel at birth, so now he holds on to his opponent and will not let him go.<sup>(4)</sup> The opponent even puts **Jacob's** thigh out of joint, but still he holds on, until the adversary says, "Let me go, for the day is breaking" (32:26). But Jacob refuses to release him unless the opponent blesses him. This demand of a blessing shows that Jacob views his opponent as divine.

And he [the opponent] said to him, "What *is your name?*" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your *name* shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Tell me, I pray, your *name*." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my *name?*" And he blessed him. So Jacob called the *name* of the place Face of God (*Peniel*), saying, "For I have seen God *face to face* (*panim el-panim*), and yet my life is preserved." (32:27-30, RSV modified; my italics)

I italicize *name* and *face* in order to highlight the significance of **Jacob's** new name and the naming of the site. We find in this fascinating episode simultaneously a recognition of rivalry and a disclosure of its emptiness. The disclosure of emptiness is a subversion of the ritual process of substitutions for the original victim. Jacob had been anxious about encountering Esau and had sent expensive gifts ahead to pave the way, hoping that he could "atone his face." But with his mind on that he is encountered by an adversary who is, in effect, **Jacob's** true opponent, his Other, who wrestles with him but renames him and blesses him. The name and blessing are gained for no other reason than his strength and persistence: he holds on until dawn. There is no question of an exchange of anything. The adversary will not disclose his name, which means that Jacob cannot have power over him (see Exod 3:13-14 and Judg 13:18). What Jacob can give or ascribe to him *makes no difference to him*. **Jacob's** differences do not matter to the Other, but the new name and the blessing make all the difference to Jacob.

Jacob has won; he has prevailed -- over Esau, Isaac, and Laban, and now over his Other, over God. Or at least this is what he concludes: "I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." Something like a substitution *has* taken place, of course -- the name Israel for the old name of Jacob. But it is not actually a sacrificial substitution,

for there is no concealment or denial of the old name, which he continues to use and which is employed more frequently than "Israel" in the remainder of Genesis.

But the Jacob story does not break *completely* with the cultic context. Ancient Israelite readers undoubtedly understood the naming of the site as an etiology, or tale explaining how a cultic sanctuary got its name, and at the surface level of the text such is the case. Furthermore, the injury of **Jacob's** thigh (32:31-32) -- or perhaps penis or groin<sup>(5)</sup> -- is related to a cultic taboo. The injury is related to the universal motif of the hero's injury.<sup>(6)</sup> And the hero's injury or disability is conventionally a sign of his outsider status and an indication of his fate as a victim. But the figure of Jacob is now basically different from the expelled hero or sacred king. Unlike the blindness of Oedipus, **Jacob's limp** is a sign of his success, a sign *that he has been victorious without scapegoating or being scapegoated*. The great disorder he has endured has resulted in *sight*, not blindness: "I have seen God face to face." He no longer must live away from his land but is now prepared to return. *Rival* comes from a Latin root meaning "other side, river bank." Now Jacob knows who his real rival is, the Other who lets him win. Now he can cross the river.

Some years ago the structuralist-poststructuralist critic Roland Barthes presented a very interesting reading of **Jacob's** struggle at the Jabbok. His overall approach, which he calls textual analysis, "seeks to say neither *from where* the text comes (historical criticism) nor *how* it is made (structural analysis), but how it undoes itself, explodes, disseminates -- by which coded routes it *departs*." Most of the essay is devoted to "sequential analysis," which is an inventory and classification of actions. The most striking result of his sequential analysis is the observation that the personage delivering the supposedly "conclusive blow" (*coup décisif*) is not the winner: the adversary, angel, deity, or whatever it is, delivers the blow that injures **Jacob's** thigh, but he is blocked or stymied and so enters (must enter?) into negotiation with his human opponent. But even though the weaker combatant stymies the divine adversary and wins new name and blessing, he is "marked," that is, injured: "the weaker defeats the stronger, *in exchange for which* he is marked (on the thigh)." Barthes goes on to observe that just as Jacob had earlier "marked himself," as it were, in grasping his older brother's heel at birth, so he accomplishes an analogous feat here. "One may say in a sense that [God] is the substitute for the older brother, who once more submits to defeat by the younger brother: the conflict with Esau is *displaced* (every symbol is a *displacement*; if the 'struggle with the angel' is symbolic, then it has displaced something)."<sup>(7)</sup> [underline added]

As for **Jacob's** new name, it is part of the pattern of "mutations" that are discernible in the narrative. That is, "the entire episode . . . functions as *the creation a multiple trace*: in **Jacob's** body, in the status of the brothers, in **Jacob's** name, in the name of the place, in dietary practice." The sequences analyzed are instances of *passage*: "of place, of parental line, of name, of dietary ritual, all of which remains very close to an activity of language, to a transgression of rules of meaning."<sup>(8)</sup>

After a few further comments on a structural, rather than textual or sequential, analysis of the passage, Barthes concludes that what really interests him "are the frictions, the ruptures, the discontinuities of readability, the juxtaposition of narrative entities that to a degree escape an explicit logical articulation: one has to do here . . . with a sort of *metonymic montage*." The logic of this metonymic montage is that of the unconscious, and it is this that should be the focus of the reading of the text, of its "dissemination," rather than the question of its "truth." "The problem, at least the one I pose to myself, is really to succeed in not reducing the text to a signified, whatever it may be (historical, economic, folklorist, or kerygmatic), but in maintaining its open meaning."<sup>(9)</sup>

The lucidity of Barthes's reading, in conjunction with the appeal of structuralist and poststructuralist approaches since the early 1970s, has resulted in the high status accorded this essay in the recent history of biblical studies. The paradox of **Jacob's** "victory," the function of symbolizing as substitution, and the description of metonymy are interpretive insights that are deservedly esteemed. I have, however, two primary objections to his reading. One is an issue at the level of assumptions and philosophical perspective. The appeal to the unconscious and to the work of Freud on rivalry and displacement is an appeal to a myth that sucks up the meaning of the text into a dark abyss where all signifieds, all objects of signifiers, disappear. One then does not have to deal with real things, with real events, with "truth" -- because the "truth" is foreclosed by the "truth" of the unconscious, which is the origin and end of all attempts at signification. The ethical issue, as I see it, is that one does not have to assume responsibility for the text in the context of its tradition or relations with other persons. Or to put it another way: one assumes responsibility only to show continually how the signifier -- the text, the sequences and functions of the text, the words, the sounds of the words, and so on -- refers always to another signifier in a metonymic chain.

Second and concomitantly, the reader of the text does not then have to become engaged with the question of real conflict and violence. I think this is the surest proof that a reading like Barthes's is still caught in the myth of Oedipus, accepting the blindness that the community demands but attributing it to the unconscious. The displacement into nonviolent resolution of the conflict of brothers becomes simply a signification of a different sense, a different language. Violence and scapegoating cannot really be a subject of concern because to lift this to the light of day would be to call the reading, along with the power and prestige of the reader, into question in light of an interpretive consensus that signifiers deal with nothing real but other signifiers. What Jacob sees, the God beyond differences, is only a difference thrown up by the unconscious, and this difference or meaning, this "truth," can only lead into other differences that come from the unconscious. It seems very similar to a chain of victims or victim substitutes offered in sacrifice so that the community will not have to confront why it offers sacrifice continually.

*b. The Meeting with Esau.* After the encounter at the Jabbok, Jacob must still face Esau. As he sees Esau approaching with four hundred men, he anxiously arrays his women and children, with his favored ones, Rachel and Joseph, at the rear where they will

presumably be safer. Jacob leads the way, "bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother" (33:4). Jacob is overwhelmed with Esau's enthusiastically affectionate greeting. When Esau asks him about the "camp," or company of animals, Jacob replies that it is all for his older brother, "to find favor in the sight of my Lord" (33:8).

We as readers are not prepared for Esau's generous welcome of the brother who had tricked him out of the blessing. After the notice that he had married Canaanite women to displease his father, we hear no more of him until he comes within **Jacob's** horizon once more. Has he changed? Has the divinely guided process of differentiation been at work in his life also? Or has he simply received the message that the cattle and sheep and other animals were intended as a peace offering to him? In that case, he approaches Jacob with some guile in his own right, although the story intends us to understand that he and his men could have easily destroyed or captured Jacob and his company.

However that may be, the next three verses are crucial for understanding the reunion of the brothers: "And Esau said, 'I have much (*rav*), my brother; keep what is yours.' And Jacob said, 'No, please, if I have found favor in your eyes then take my gift (*minhati*) from my hand, because (*ki al-ken*) I have seen your face, [which is] like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me. Please take my blessing (*birkati*) that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have everything (*kol*).' And so he urged him, and he took it" (33:9-11, my translation).

Esau, pretending perhaps not to desire the gift, says "I have much." The usual translation is "I have enough" (so the RSV and NRSV). The word in question is *rav*, which in context may mean "enough," or simply "much" or "a lot." It is also used for other distinctions. In the oracle to Rebecca before the twins were born, the Lord told her that "the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder (*rav*) shall serve the younger" (25:23). The *rav*, the older brother, now tells the younger, "I have *rav*," but the younger then tells the older, "I have everything (*kol*)"! This phrase, "I have *kol*," is usually taken as having the same sense as "having *rav*," but this rendering is to miss the comparison Jacob is making: Esau has a lot, but he, Jacob, has everything!

That is not all, for the "gift" that Jacob offers turns out to be a "blessing"! The Revised Standard Version and New Revised Standard Version render this also as "gift," but again, translators have had difficulty with this word because they did not comprehend what is at stake in the story. Of course, in the sphere of the sacred, giving a gift and giving a blessing are distinct but closely related ritual acts. In ritual or a highly ritualized situation, the gift is a substitute for sacrifice; the blessing is the ritual word that confers the peace and welfare that form the obverse of the disorder the prohibition seeks to avoid. Nonetheless, in ordinary speech they have the appearance of being quite different from each other, so **Jacob's** use of the word *blessing* comes as a surprise here. It may be a slip of the tongue, as Michael Fishbane maintains (see below), but deciding the question does not really matter. What matters is the outcome of **Jacob's** thought, "I may propitiate or atone his face with a gift." Jacob is returning the blessing that he had stolen, and in so doing he is asking his brother for forgiveness. He is asking, indeed, for

release from death-guilt, and in requesting this release he compares his brother's face to the face of God ("because I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God"). [underline added]

A number of years ago Michael Fishbane already discerned some of what I have set forth here concerning **Jacob's** meeting with Esau. Two passages in his essay are worthy of quotation. The first concerns the blessing. "What [Jacob] says, in effect, is 'Take [back] the blessing which I have tricked from you.' Esau does, in fact, accept it from Jacob. By such an external transaction the internal guilt of a misappropriated blessing is 'atoned' for."<sup>(10)</sup> The other has to do with Fishbane's interpretation of the relation of **Jacob's** struggle with the adversary and his meeting with his brother.

The wrestling scene thus appears to be part of **Jacob's** dream-work, whereby he "works through" the anticipated struggle with Esau by fusing it with earlier wrestlings with his brother -- in the womb and at birth. The use of the wrestling image not only underscores the *agon*-struggle which Jacob anticipates with Esau, but effectively discloses the psychic core of the event (also indicated by the tongueslip [saying "blessing" rather than "gift"]). Compounded by guilt, the anticipated fraternal strife is fused with an earlier one, allowing Jacob to resolve the conflict raging within him. In the "night encounter" Jacob wrestles with the "Esau" he carried within him. The "rebirth" Jacob achieves by his psychic victory in the night had still to be confirmed in the light of day .... Having seen Elohim face to face at Penuel, Jacob can prepare to meet Esau face to face as well.<sup>(11)</sup>

I find Fishbane's reading quite perceptive. For my purposes it does not matter whether Jacob is engaged in "dream-work," although in general I would want to avoid the connotation of psychological processes that stem from an "unconscious," a kind of mythical place of the psyche that determines psychic life.<sup>(12)</sup> But I agree with Fishbane on these specific points: (1) Jacob says to Esau, in effect, "Take back this blessing that I tricked from you." He thus atones Esau's face with the gift-blessing in the sense of releasing himself from death-guilt and renewing his relationship with his brother. (2) The contest at the Jabbok recapitulates **Jacob's** previous struggle with Esau (in the womb, for the blessing) and represents what he anxiously anticipates as a conflict-ridden, if not violent, meeting with his brother. (3) Jacob himself, perhaps by analogy to his mother carrying twins, struggles with the "Esau" he bears within him, and in successfully carrying this through he experiences "rebirth." I would want to emphasize, though, that a rebirth for Jacob is in some sense a rebirth for Esau. [underline added]

Fishbane's analysis of the Jacob story need only be supplemented and strengthened, first, by the recognition that sacrifice, blessing, and prohibition are rooted in mimetic desire and rivalry.<sup>(13)</sup> The Jacob story is told within this ancient structure of the human condition but seeks to disclose a liberating alternative, a good mimesis in response to the ancient structure of the sacred.

Jacob and Esau desired the same object, the patriarchal blessing (that is, patriarchal status and power), because their father had it, and each knew the other wanted it. But the sacrificial substitutes (the meals), prohibition (not to kill, not to displace the rival who has the blessing), and myth (the tradition of the chosen one who will prosper) have

not sufficed to differentiate the enemy brothers and settle their differences. At the Jabbok, Jacob "forces" the divine adversary to bless him and "accepts" the blessing that attends a new name. The name Israel signifies that he is no longer "Jacob" in the sense of "Jacob struggling with Esau," but is now "Israel" in the sense of "Jacob the ancestor of God's people of the future." As such, as this "new Jacob" that is "Israel," he is ready to become the ancestor of a great people.

Moreover, in my reading, the Face of God plays a more significant role than in Fishbane's. Fishbane speaks of **Jacob's** face-to-face encounter with God as a preparation for his encounter with Esau. I think it is much more than that. The Face of God is the gracious power that differentiates properly and appropriately. The encounter with the *Panim* has done what birth and sacrifice and patriarchal blessing could not do: separate the rival twins so that they could be brothers and not enemies. When Jacob says, "Because I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God," he clearly means that Esau's face is a *reminder* of the divine countenance, of the Face that settles differences because it is not caught up in human differences. Esau is no longer god to Jacob, but he is a reminder of the God that accepts both brothers as distinct.

In a sense, it does appear that Esau is a kind of "god" to Jacob, for the plot line of the story indicates **Jacob's** fear of Esau. Moreover, Jacob humbles himself as if he were Esau's subject, not only bowing to him but also calling him "Lord" (33:8, 13, 14, 15) and referring to himself as "your servant" (33:5). This is also probably an ironic touch in the narrative in light of the oracle to Rebecca ("the elder shall serve the younger") and Isaac's prophecy of **Jacob's** dominance (27:29, 40). But if at the narrative surface Jacob appears to grovel, at a deeper level the significance of the transformation at the Jabbok has taken away his need to contest anything with his brother. He can "return" the blessing and politely grant Esau the title of Lord on Esau's turf because now his own destiny is clear, his own "lordship" has been affirmed.

The aftermath of the meeting with Esau could be viewed purely and simply as Jacob up to his old tricks. Esau wants Jacob to come with him to Seir, and Jacob promises to join him there after he makes a slower journey so that his children and the flocks will not be overtaxed. But when Esau leaves, Jacob journeys on to Canaan and builds an altar at Shechem, an altar that he calls "God, the God of Israel" (33:20). Again, even though this is deception at the narrative surface, we are prepared by now to accept the differentiation of Jacob and Esau that has taken place. They will henceforth be properly distinguished, Jacob in Canaan and Esau in Seir. Each must go his own way.

To conclude concerning the story of Jacob and Esau, the relation of the brothers is a model of mimetic desire and rivalry precisely because the brothers are twins, a factor that intensifies the rivalry and the need to differentiate the two. This need for differentiation functioned in Israel's traditions as a story of Israel's differentiation from its ancestral stock and relationships. At the same time it discloses that separation and identity can and should take place without violence. As already noted, in the Jacob model of origins, the hero's injury or disability is not primarily a sign of his outsider

status and an indication of his fate as a victim. The figure of Jacob is basically different from the expelled hero or sacred king. Unlike the blindness of Oedipus, **Jacob's limp** is a sign of his success, a *sign that he has been victorious without scapegoating or being scapegoated*. The truth of the revelation to which the text bears witness (which, because of its debt to the myth of the unconscious and of endless signification, an analysis like Barthes's will not touch), is that there is an Other whose providential reality is necessary to liberation from victimization because this Other is beyond differences and accepts human creatures in spite of the differences they make between God and man and between each other.

### Notes

1. Hartmut Gese, "Die Sühne," *Zur Biblischen Theologie* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1977), 90 (my trans.). The passages discussed include Exod 21:30; 32:30-32; 2 Sam 21:1-14; Deut 32:43; Isa 6:7; Deut 21:1-9; 1 Sam 3:14.
2. See James G. Williams, "The Comedy- of Jacob," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Supplement 46 (1978), 241-266, where I treat in some detail wordplays, sound plays (e.g., on the consonants in Jacob's name), and repetitions.
3. For example, "angel of the LORD" in Exod 3:3, 7.
4. See Williams, "Comedy of Jacob."
5. See Stanley Gevirtz, "Of Patriarchs and Puns: Joseph at the Fountain, Jacob at the Ford," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 46 (1975), 51-53.
6. See Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, ed. S. Pirkova-Jacobson, trans. L. Scott (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), function 17.
7. R. Barthes, in Barthes, et al., "La lutte avec l'ange," *Analyse Structurale et Exégèse Biblique: Essais d'interprétation* (Paris: Delachaus et Niestlé, 1971), 28, 33, 34 (my trans.).
8. Barthes, "La lutte avec l'ange," 35, 36.
9. Barthes, "La lutte avec l'ange," 39.
10. Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture* (New York: Schocken, 1979), 52.
11. Fishbane, *Text and Tenure*, 52-53.
12. See in particular Girard's comment on the concept of the unconscious as a kind of *deus ex machina* that intervenes from the past in neurotic episodes. *Critiques dans on souterain*, 33-34.

13. Fishbane certainly comes close to this recognition with his statement that the Jacob cycle "opens as a tale of barrenness and birth, of deception and strife, of rights and priorities, and of blessing and power.

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