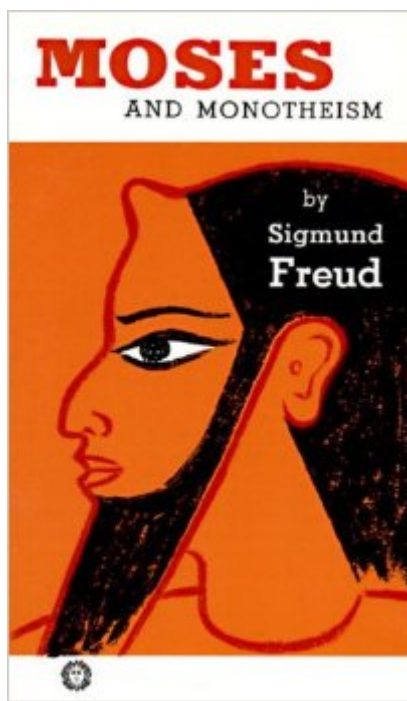


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Moses And Monotheism



Synopsis

Freud's speculations on various aspects of religion where he explains various characteristics of the Jews in their relations with the Christians.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Reading through the many wonderful reviews here, one gets the picture of what it is with this book: love it or hate it, believer or skeptic, even telling people the gist of the thesis and the story (the book is magnificently both), this work never fails to evoke a strong reaction. Look at the reviews. What is evident is that the book is truly provocative - rare for any book - no less a slight, speculative work of less than 200 pages, written somewhere in the middle of the twentieth century. Who would really care? But as you can see from this representative sample, people do. Despite the ongoing controversy regarding, increasing skepticism towards, and perhaps dismissal of his major ideas, Freud still engages us as one of the most influential thinkers of the past century, and this work, which, surprisingly, may come to be regarded as his masterpiece (it is a masterpiece - do not doubt that), written as he was dying of cancer of the jaw and fleeing from the Nazis (Freud was Jewish - and among all the things that it is, the book is his response to that singular experience), is his signal contribution to religious studies. The story is that: 1) Moses was an Egyptian, likely of royal birth, that he learned monotheism from the renegade Egyptian monarch, Akenaton, who, during his brief and probably aborted reign, unsuccessfully attempted to displace the long-standing polytheism and its attendant institutions with a unitary sole deity - a sun god - not represented in any form or art .2) -

That he may have been the proprietor or governor of a fringe province, the Biblical "land of Goshen" with a population of Hebraic or Semitic descent, to whom he taught the new religion. At some point during the exodus, Moses was murdered by his followers.

This is my favorite nut book of all time, principally because it was written by THE most original thinker of the 20th century. A conspiracy book by a mediocre paranoid is par for the course; but one written by a genius of the first order is bound to be outstanding. To fully understand M&M one has to be somewhat conversant with Totem and Taboo, and Freud reiterates those basic premises here as well. Briefly they are as follows: The origin of society begins with a tribe in which the dominant male gets all the women, including his sisters and Mommy. His sons are understandably upset at being left out of the fun and complain, so Dad kills or castrates them. Or makes the mistake of being lenient and simply drives them off. The sons, unable to find females of their own, band together go back and murder dad. Then, of course, they eat his body. There being too many sons (and feeling repressed guilt at killing their old man) they make taboos against incest thus establishing the rule of law. (Bet you didn't know this was the origin of Magna Carta, et al). This keeps the gene pool safe from inbreeding but leads to all sorts of guilt feelings which get acted out politically-- not the least of which is a worshipping of Mommy, which leads to LHM - a Literal Historical Matriarchy. (And to think feminists dislike Freud) Next, they get fed up with being bossed about by Mom (and who wouldn't?) so they re-establish the patriarchy; only this time they stick to the rule of law, because they can't afford further fratricidal bloodshed and they invent polytheism to boot. But deeply repressed father hatred looms within, which leads to the final step: monotheism, in which God is an avenging Father who must be appeased before he starts castrating again. . .

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