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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this essay is to problematize the inscription of psychoanalytic discourse, with Freud, in the field of the post-colonial world by supporting the category of identification and the related criticism of the identity category. It also emphasizes the dialectical reversibility of the opposition between the registers of civilization and barbarism.

Keywords: identity, identification, coloniality.

RESUMO: Moisés, o egípcio: problematizações sobre a identidade, a identificação e a decolonialidade. A intenção deste ensaio é a de problematizar a inscrição do discurso psicanalítico, com Freud, no campo do mundo do pós-colonialismo, pela sustentação da categoria de identificação e a crítica correlata da categoria de identidade, assim como pela ênfase na reversibilidade dialética da oposição entre os registros da civilização e da barbárie.

Palavras-chave: identidade; identificação; colonialidade.

DOI - <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1809-4414-2023-018>

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1. Identity and Identification.

The primary intention of this essay is to *problematize*^{1,2} the category of *identity* from the perspective of psychoanalysis, as Freud has questioned this category since 1923 with the publication of the essay “The Ego and the Id”³. decisively endorsing the category of *identification*.

However, the conceptual field at hand, established by the systematic opposition between the registers of identity and identification, was introduced into Freudian discourse in 1914 in the essay “On Narcissism: An Introduction”⁴. In this text, Freud problematized the *concept* of the *ego* in psychoanalysis for the first time, despite the *term* “*ego*” being present in his theoretical discourse since “The Project for a Scientific Psychology”⁵ in 1895, continuing the *classical psychological* discourse centered on the registers of the ego and consciousness, decisively established by Descartes’ *cogito* in “Meditations”⁶. Consequently, the *cogito* was formulated as the axiom “I think, therefore I am.”

For Freud, the ego’s register would not be original in the constitution of the subject but would originate and derive from the primal *register* of *autoerotism*, mediated by a “new psychic action” through which autoerotism would be transformed into (primary) *narcissism*⁷. The *primary narcissism* would thus constitute the ego itself, in a crucial operation where the register of the *Other* would be constitutive of the ego. Therefore, the psychic register of the *unconscious* would not identify with the registers of the ego and primary narcissism; instead, it would strictly be of a “transindividual” nature, as asserted by Lacan in the essay “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis”⁸, in the famous Rome discourse. In conclusion, the unconscious’s register would refer to the register of autoerotism, making the unconscious specifically *sexual*.

In this perspective, while the registers of the ego and narcissism are characterized by *totality* and *unity*, the psychic registers of the unconscious and autoerotism, in contrast, are characterized by marks of *partiality* and *fragmentation*, respectively. Consequently, if the registers of the ego and narcissism, marked by the signs of totality and unity, point towards the conception of identity, the registers of the unconscious and autoerotism, marked by partiality and fragmentation, would reveal the field of identification. Finally, it is in this context that Freud stated in “The Ego and the Id” (1923) that the unconscious’s register would be characterized as a “graveyard of lost objects,”⁹ i.e., a set of identifications characterized by partiality and fragmentation. The opposition between the concepts of identity and identification was fundamental in the constitution of psychoanalysis since the formation of the second topic in Freudian discourse, as mentioned above. It is through this lens that psychoanalytic discourse could problematize the *spread* of *identity politics* in contemporary times, examining its implications and historicity from a genealogical perspective^{10,11}.

2. Identity Politics and Contemporary Times

In 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall resulted in the unification of Germany, marking the end of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. This marked the triumph of the West and the beginning of the *globalization* process. The subsequent fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 was a major sign of the defeat of *real socialism*, with the political-military dismantling of the Warsaw Pact. However, paradoxically, NATO was maintained, a clear sign of the military triumph of the West against the old socialist order.

This *dual event*, with its multiple *consequences* and *connected* developments in international geopolitics, led to the theoretical void of Marxist discourse, which had held a hegemonic and strategic position in the fields of the left and socialism. This impacted the theoretical nerve of *Marxist discourse* in the political realm, namely the concept of *class struggle*. If, until then, the concept of class struggle was foundational in the theoretical field of historical materialism and relegated various socio-identitarian registers to a secondary position, as stated by Marx and Engels¹² in 1848, from the late 19th century onwards, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent emptiness of Marxist discourse, identitarian struggles took the primary and strategic position in contemporary political and social confrontations. Thus, if historically the concept of class struggle subsumed all identitarian marks in its theoretical field, from the 1990s onwards, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Soviet Union, and the connected void of Marxist discourse, identitarian struggles

¹ Foucault, M. *Dits et écrits*. Volume IV. Paris, Gallimard, 1994.

² Deleuze, G., Guattari, F. *Mille Plateaux*, Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2. Paris, Minuit, 1980.

³ Freud, S. (1923). “Le moi et le ça”. In: Freud, S. *Essais de psychanalyse*. Paris, Payot, 1981.

⁴ Freud, S. (1914) “Pour introduire le narcissisme”. In: Freud, S. *La vie sexuelle*. Paris, PUF, 1973.

⁵ Freud, S. «Esquisses d’une psychologie scientifique» (1895). In: Freud, S. *La naissance de la psychanalyse*. Paris, PUF, 1973.

⁶ Descartes, R. “Méditation. Objections et réponses” (1641). In: *Oeuvres et lettres de Descartes*. Paris, Gallimard (Pléiade), 1949.

⁷ Freud, S. “Pour introduire le narcissisme”(1914). In: Freud, S. *La vie sexuelle*. Paris, PUF, 1973.

⁸ Lacan, J. “Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage en psychanalyse” (1953). In Lacan, J. *Écrits*. Paris, Seuil, 1966.

⁹ Freud, S. “Le moi et le ça” (1923). In: Freud, S. *Essais de psychanalyse*. Paris, Payot, 1981.

¹⁰ Foucault, M. “Nietzsche, la généalogie, l’histoire”. Foucault, M. *Dits et écrits*. Volume IV. Op. cit.

¹¹ Nietzsche, F. *Seconde considérations intempestive*. Paris, Flammarion, 1874.

¹² Marx, K., Engels, F., *Manifesto comunista* (1848). Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 2021.B

were inscribed in the forefront of political strategies in the West¹³. Indeed, *gender*, *race*, and *ethnicity* became the guiding principles in political confrontations within the social space of the contemporary West¹⁴, outlining the new strategic and hegemonic position represented by various identitarian discourses.

In the work titled "On Populist Reason,"¹⁵ published in 2008, Laclau unexpectedly proposes the *positive restoration* of *populist discourse* in contemporary times, due to the centrality attributed to the category of the people in political philosophy discourse. According to Laclau, there is a need for a *left-wing populism* to counter the spread of *right-wing populism*¹⁶, aiming to support the fundamental thesis of a project for *radical democracy* based on the imperative of *contingent universality*, produced by the conjunction and overcoming of different identitarian agendas¹⁷. However, the said contingent universality refers to the psychoanalytic concept of identification, putting the different forms of identity (race, gender, ethnicity) in abeyance in contemporary discourses. Following the theoretical discourses of Freud and Lacan, Laclau thus resumed the theoretical path of identification, opposing the identity register, to decisively consider the proposals of radical democracy and *contingent universality*¹⁸.

Emphasizing historically the strategic importance of identities in contemporary *emancipatory* agendas, Butler argued that while initially identitarian issues were important for enabling the political enunciation of *black movements*, *the homosexual movement*, *the lesbian movement*, and *the transgender movement*, identitarian primacy subsequently became a crucial obstacle to these emancipatory discourses. According to Butler, identitarian agendas became later *obstacles to emancipatory* processes concerning gender, race, and ethnicity¹⁹.

Moreover, it is essential to highlight the construction of the problematics of the *common* in contemporary times, assuming a critique of the concept of identity and the correlated promotion of the concept of identification. This can be observed in various *sociological* readings by Dardot and Laval²⁰, as well as in *political philosophy* with Negri and Hardt²¹, and in epistemology with Isabelle Stengers²². With the overcoming of the identitarian impasse and the promotion of multiple identifications, the construction of the common would then be effectively possible. Similarly, the enunciation of the concept of *becoming black and becoming African*, stated by Mbembe²³, presupposes the promotion of the concept of identification and the critique of the concept of identity as a concrete condition for the systematic deconstruction of brutality²⁴.

Therefore, all these theoretical and political problematizations present in contemporary times align with Laclau's theses, promoting radical democracy and contingent universality, guided by the promotion of the concept of identification over identitarian essentialism²⁵, as discussed above. To problematize the issue of identity, both in Freud's time and in contemporary times in connection with post-colonial problematization, let us turn to a systematic reading of Freud's essay titled "Moses and Monotheism," as the issue of political theology is inscribed in the fabric of Freud's book²⁶.

3. Unfinished Form, Fictional Construction, and Final Style

This work by Freud, written between 1934 and 1938 and published in 1939, consists of three essays written at different times. It is also set in a historical, social, and political context marked by the intense spread of anti-Semitism in Europe and worldwide, in connection with the rise and assumption of far-right discourses such as fascism and Nazism in Italy and Germany, respectively. The construction of the book, in its crucial articulations with the problematics of anti-Semitism, fascism, and Nazism, is thoroughly archived in *Freud's correspondence with Arnold Zweig*, which took place between 1926 and 1939, with Zweig in Palestine²⁷.

According to all comments on this work by Freud, the book is characterized by various unfinished aspects and formal dissonances, permeated by unnecessary repetitions and the unilateral presence of various prefaces. This set of formal

¹³ Butler, J., Laclau, E., Žižek, S. *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*. Londres, Séves, 2000.

¹⁴ Laclau, E. *La raison populiste*. Paris, Seuil, 2008.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ ibidem

¹⁹ Butler, J. "Des universalité concurrentes". In: Butler J., Laclau E. Žižek S.. *Après emancipation. Trois voix pour penser la gauche*. Paris, Seuil, 2017.

²⁰ Dardot, P., Laval, Ch. *Commun. Essais sur la révélation au XXI^e siècle*. Paris, La Découverte, 2014.

²¹ Hardt, M., Negri, A. *Bem estar comum*. Rio de Janeiro, Record, 2016.

²² Stengers, I. *Réactiver le sens commun*. Lecture de Whitehead en temps de débâcle. Paris, Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2020.

²³ Mbembe, A. *Crítica da razão negra*. São Paulo, n 1 edições, 2018.

²⁴ Mbembe, A. *Brutalismo*. São Paulo, n 1 Edições, 2021.

²⁵ Laclau, E. *La raison populiste*. Op. cit.

²⁶ Freud, S. *L'homme Moïse et la religion monotheïste*. (1938). Paris, Gallimard, 1986.

²⁷ Freud, S., Zweig, A. *Correspondances, 1927-1939*. Paris, Gallimard, 1973.

flaws sharply contrasts with the formal concern evident in Freud's other works. The lack of formal polish and elegance in this work has been interpreted in different ways by various commentators.

For Strachey, the translator of Freud's works into English in the Standard Edition²⁸, as well as for Ernest Jones in his famous biography of Freud²⁹, the unfinished nature of the work was due to *external reasons*, such as the turbulent times in the pre-war European context and Freud's migration to England.

On the other hand, for Marie Moscovici, who presented the latest French translation of the book, the work was guided by the category of psychoanalytic construction, led by fictionality. Thus, Freud's Moses would be a *psychoanalytic novel*³⁰. In the correspondence between Freud and Zweig, the novelistic allusion is present, suggesting that the book would be a *secret novel*³¹, permeated by fiction and psychoanalytic construction. Ultimately, the alleged unfinished nature would be intrinsic to the text, shaped by fictionality.

For Edward Said, in "Freud and the Non-Europeans," the work would demonstrate a literary and aesthetic interpretation. According to him, it would be characterized by what he called the *final style*, as observed in different creators like Beethoven, where the imperative of sustaining a new idea and conception takes precedence over formal concerns. Therefore, the formal unfinished nature of Freud's work would indicate the imperative to support something at all costs, characterizing the book as composed in the final style³².

Moreover, what Freud unequivocally imposed on himself through the composition of this book was the support of certain highly *controversial* theses, in the historical-social context of the rise of Nazism and the increase in anti-Semitism.

4. Controversial Theses

So, what were the controversial theses formulated by Freud?

First and foremost, it is necessary to highlight that Freud's composition of the figure of Moses is completely *desacralized*, with no evidence of *religiosity* in the historical character. Hence, in the last French translation and edition of Freud's work, the chosen title was "Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion," thus emphasizing Moses' human dimension without any sanctity³³.

In the initial two essays, Freud posited the thesis that Moses was not originally Jewish but Egyptian, despite being the creator of the Jewish tradition. In the first essay, this thesis is stated directly and affirmatively, while in the second essay, it is presented as a question, in an interrogative form. However, this notion of Moses having Egyptian, not Jewish, origins was already proposed in German historiography by Sellin. Finally, Freud put forth another controversial thesis: that Moses was murdered by the Jews in a rebellion against the strict precepts of Jewish ethics³⁴. What were the repercussions of these contentious theses on Moses within the Jewish community and in the psychoanalytic field?

5. Unfoldings and Consequences

As a result of Freud's controversies surrounding the historical figure of Moses, the international Jewish community of that time, and still to some extent today, reacted *negatively* to Freud's critical formulations. These controversial theses were viewed as detrimental to the Jewish cause, as they clashed directly with Zionist ideas. Consequently, suspicion regarding Freud's readings crystallized not only in the historical context in which they were published but also persists to this day.

This negative reception of Freud's work within the Jewish community had *significant effects* on the international psychoanalytic field. Freud's Moses book did not circulate as widely as his other works, resulting in a relative silence or, primarily, an symptomatic ignorance of this specific Freudian work within the psychoanalytic community. While Freud's other works on culture and society circulated extensively in psychoanalytic institutions and the psychoanalytic movement—such as "Totem and Taboo,"³⁵ "The Future of an Illusion,"³⁶ "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," and "Civilization and Its Discontents"^{37, 38}—the same did not occur with Freud's book on Moses. It took on the negative role of an outsider in the community and psychoanalytic institutions.

²⁸ Strachey, J. "Editor's Notes pour Moses and Monotheism". In: Freud, S. "Moses and Monotheism". *The Standard Edition of the Complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*. Volume XXII. London, Hogarth Press, 1978.

²⁹ Jones, E. *La vie et l'oeuvre de Sigmund Freud*. Volume III. Paris, PUF, 1972.

³⁰ Moscovici, M. *Le roman secret*. In: *L'homme Moïse et la religion monothéiste*. Op. cit.

³¹ Freud, S., Zweig, A. *Correspondances, 1927-1939*. Op. cit.

³² Said, E. *Freud e os não europeus*. São Paulo, Bomtempo, 2004.

³³ Freud, S. *L'homme Moïse et la religion monothéiste*. (1938). Op. cit.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Freud, S. *Totem et Tabou* (1913). Paris, Payot, 1975.

³⁶ Freud, S. *L'avenir d'une illusion* (1927). Paris, PUF, 1973.

³⁷ Freud, S. *Malaise dans civilisation* (1930). Paris, PUF, 1971.

³⁸ Freud, S. «Psychologie des foules et analyse du moi» (1921). In: Freud, S. *Essais de psychanalyse*. Paris, Payot, 1981.

As a consequence, Israeli historian Yerushalmi, in “Freud’s Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable”³⁹ strongly criticized Freud’s reading of Moses’s murder by the Jews, arguing that there was no historical documentation of such an event⁴⁰. However, Derrida contested Yerushalmi’s critique in “Archive Fever” (1995), criticizing Yerushalmi’s positivist view of history that relies solely on documentary evidence without considering other modes of archiving events⁴¹. Derrida argued that, in “Moses and Monotheism,” Freud introduced the concept of historical repetition from the unconscious. This highlighted the historical repetition focused on the unconscious, connecting the death of the father of the primordial order, the death of Moses by the Jews, and the subsequent death of Christ, revealing a process of historical repetition rooted in the unconscious⁴². Therefore, the concept of historical repetition, within the realm of the unconscious, referred to the concept of historical truth⁴³, as Freud had formulated earlier in the essay “Construction in Analysis,”⁴⁴ opposing the material concept of truth.

As a result of this, Derrida stated that Freudian discourse does not fall within the realm of Jewish religion⁴⁵ because, like other religions, it falls within the domain of illusion, as Freud articulated in the essay titled “The Future of an Illusion,”⁴⁶ as a defense against fundamental helplessness⁴⁷. On the contrary, Derrida asserted in “Archive Fever” that Freud would be inscribed in the discourse of Jewishness, which is based on the concept of absence⁴⁸. The critique of positivism in Yerushalmi’s conception of history brings Derrida’s interpretation closer to Foucault’s interpretation of history. In “The Archaeology of Knowledge,” Foucault emphatically stated that the document is not a monument⁴⁹.

6. Moses’s Anger

Before delving into the first controversial thesis by Freud regarding the historical figure of Moses, claiming that Moses was not Jewish but Egyptian, it’s essential to note that “Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion” is not Freud’s sole work on the historical figure of Moses. In 1915, in the essay “Michelangelo’s Moses,” Freud interpreted the sculpture depicting the moment when Moses reacts with anger to the Israelites’ rebellion against the sacred texts, emphasizing the opposition between the Jews of that time and the living representation of Jewish ethics, characterized by austerity⁵⁰.

But it is also known that in this essay, Freud identified with Moses in the context of the controversy with Jung within psychoanalytic discourse at the time. During a course held in the United States and published under the title “Transformations and Symbols of the Libido,”⁵¹ Jung criticized the concept of infantile sexuality, central to Freud’s psychoanalytic theory. He argued that the psyche is regulated by a *neutral energy*.

This theoretical break was bitter for Freud—not only because Jung was to succeed him as the leader of the international psychoanalytic movement but also because it brought Freud back to the early days of psychoanalysis. Initially, psychoanalysis was confined to a Jewish group in Vienna. In this historical context, Freud feared that psychoanalysis would be associated with *Jewish science* and, consequently, the analytic field would become a *Jewish ghetto*. Therefore, the entry of Swiss psychiatrists into the psychoanalytic movement, such as Jung and Bleuler, brought relief to Freud regarding anti-Semitic fears.

In 1914, Freud published the essay “The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement”⁵² as a response to indicate the broad international diffusion of the analytic movement, far from the restricted Viennese and Jewish circle of its beginnings.

After the anger of Moses (Freud) faced with the (Jewish) Jungian rebellion—due to Jung’s refusal to acknowledge the theoretical relevance of infantile sexuality and his assertion of the existence of a neutral energy—Freud revisited the historical figure of Moses. He posited two controversial theses: that Moses was not Jewish but Egyptian on one hand, and that the Jews had murdered Moses in rebellion against the ethically rigorous precepts of Jewish ethics on the other. Freud stated the first controversial thesis unequivocally affirmatively in the first essay⁵³ and in an interrogative form in the

³⁹ Yerushalmi, H. *Freud’s Moses, Judaisme Terminable and Interminable*. Yale, Yale University Press, 1991.

⁴⁰ Yerushalmi, H. *Freud’s Moses, Judaisme Terminable and Interminable*. Yale, Yale University Press, 1991.

⁴¹ Derrida, I. *Mal d’archive*. Une impression freudienne. Paris, Galilée, 1995.

⁴² Ibidem.

⁴³ Ibidem.

⁴⁴ Freud, S. (1937). “Constructions dans l’analyse”. In: Freud, S. *Résultats, Idées, Problèmes*. Volume II, 1921-1938. Paris, PUF, 1972.

⁴⁵ Derrida, I. *Mal d’archive*. Une impression freudienne. Paris, Galilée, 1995.

⁴⁶ Freud, S. *L’avenir d’une illusion* (1927). Paris, PUF, 1973.

⁴⁷ Ibidem.

⁴⁸ Derrida, I. *Mal d’archive*. Op. cit.

⁴⁹ Foucault, M, *Archeologie du savoir*. Paris, Gallimard, 1969.

⁵⁰ Freud, S. “Le Moïse de Michel-Angel” (1914). In: Freud, S. *Essais de psychanalyse Appliquée*. Paris, Gallimard, 1933.

⁵¹ Jung, C.G. *Symbols of transformations* (1911-1912). In: *The collected works of C.G. Jung*. Volume 5. Londres, Routedledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.

⁵² Freud, S. *Histoire du mouvement psychanalytique* (1914). Paris, Gallimard, 1980.

⁵³ Freud, S. *L’homme Moïse et la religion monotheïste*. (1938). Ensaïos 1 e 2. Op. cit.

second essay, but the statement remains unchanged in both formulations. In the essay “On Narcissism: An Introduction,” published in 1914, Freud mocked Jung for discarding the theory of infantile sexuality, as Jung believed there was no eroticism in religious figures—a naive assumption⁵⁴.

7. Egyptian Moses and Identification

Therefore, in “Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion,” Freud reintroduced the Jewish issue into his theoretical discourse, emphatically asserting not only Moses’s murder by the Israelites but also decisively and paradoxically formulating that Moses was Egyptian, not Jewish⁵⁵. The question that arises now, without further ado, is: what is the *epistemological* and *strategic* importance of Freud’s first thesis? Nothing less than questioning the category of *identity* (the Jewish tradition’s leader Moses was Egyptian, not Jewish) and highlighting the significance of identification. This identification is marked by a *lack of reference to nationality and a partiality*, as Freud emphasized in 1921 in “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego”⁵⁶ and in “The Ego and the Id”⁵⁷ in 1923. Characterizing the historical figure of Moses as of Egyptian origin and not Jewish, despite Moses being unequivocally the creator of the Jewish tradition, places this identification in the realm of the unconscious and breaks with the logic of identity and self-repetition. This is because the identifying mark is constituted exogenously (Egyptian) and not endogenously (Jewish). Moreover, the imperative of otherness is constitutive of the concept of identification, highlighting the *Other’s* register rather than the *Same’s*.

From this perspective, the unconscious would be *transindividual*, not shaping itself within the ego’s identity as marked by identity, as Lacan stated in “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis,”⁵⁸ in his famous Rome Discourse in 1953. Indeed, if identity outlines the ego’s register and the imperative of totality as such, the unconscious, on the other hand, is expressed through the gaps in the field of identity, representing a *discontinuous* conception of consciousness. It is worth noting that psychoanalysis is not psychology, nor is it an analysis of the ego. In Freud’s “The Ego and the Id,”⁵⁹ the unconscious is marked by identifications. Furthermore, Freud’s essay on Moses is political in nature. Monotheism as a religion opposed to polytheism is situated within the realm of political theology. Religion is inscribed in a political context, and monotheism would exist in a proper political context broadly. Moses would have been defeated in Egypt by the return to polytheism under the reign of Pharaoh Akhenaten. Faced with this defeat, Moses sought among the Israelites the possibility of reestablishing and implementing the defeated monotheistic religion in Egypt⁶⁰. Thus, the religious cause is political, and vice versa, constituting the narrow field of political theology in the ancient world, both involved in the formation of nation-states in the early modern era.

It is essential to highlight how the category of identity was inscribed in the field of *nationalism* in 19th-century Europe. Movements and ideologies guided by *particularism*, in opposition to universalism, proliferated in Europe in the 1930s, represented not only by Nazism and fascism but also by their ideological derivations such as Francoism in Spain and Salazarism in Portugal. In all these identitarian political platforms, universalism was the preferred target and goal to be opposed by extreme right-wing political and ideological forces.

Contrarily, through the lens of the identification category, Freud delineated a decidedly universalist perspective and systematically criticized all forms of particularism in Europe. Thus, from the early 20th century, the psychoanalytic movement guided by Freud sought to distance psychoanalysis from any hint of being a Jewish science and the psychoanalytic community from becoming a Jewish ghetto, adopting an eminently universalist stance.

As it is known, the 1930s witnessed the spread of extreme right-wing ideologies such as Nazism and fascism, which, in their nationalist and xenophobic particularities, accused Jews and the Jewish tradition of being inherently universalist. Due to the Jewish diaspora, Jews did not conform to the territorial boundaries of nation-states but existed on the borders and edges of different existing *nation-states*. Through continuous migration and their perpetual refugee status, occupying a minority position in the interstices of different nation-states, the Jewish tradition was, in fact, both ethically and politically universalist. It is essential to mention that even an author like Blanchot, who later became an intellectual icon of the left and a leading thinker in French literary and philosophical traditions, held anti-Semitic and fascist positions until the late 1930s. It was only then that he began to break with these positions of his youth, identifying with the fascist discourse in Europe and France⁶¹.

Thus, there is no doubt that the issue of identity in 19th-century Europe was decisively inscribed in the political, social, and ideological field of the extreme right, with discourses on nationalism, fascism, and Nazism, as well as their ideological derivations like Francoism (Spain) and Salazarism (Portugal). In contrast, Freud’s discourse took a universalist

⁵⁴ Freud, S. “Pour introduire le narcissisme”(1914). In: Freud, S. *La vie sexuelle*. Paris, PUF, 1973.

⁵⁵ Freud, S. *L’homme Moïse et la religion monotheïste*. (1938). Op. cit.

⁵⁶ Freud, S. «Psychologie des foules et analyse du moi» (1921). In: Freud, S. *Essais de psychanalyse*. Paris, Payot, 1981.

⁵⁷ Freud, S. (1923). *Le moi et le ça*. In: Freud, S. *Essais de Psychanalyse*. Paris, Payot, 1981.

⁵⁸ Lacan, J. “Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage en psychanalyse”. In: Lacan, J. *Écrits*. Paris, Seuil, 1966.

⁵⁹ Freud, S. “Le moi et le ça” (1923). In: Freud, S. *Essais de psychanalyse*. Paris, Payot, 1981.

⁶⁰ Freud, S. *L’homme Moïse et la religion monotheïste*. (1938). Op. cit.

⁶¹ Berkman, G. *La question juive de Maurice Blanchot*. Paris, Le Bord de l’eau, 2023.

position, systematically criticizing identity politics and nationalism, guided by the theoretical perspective of identification. Moreover, in the essay “The Question of Weltanschauung” (1933), Freud criticized the totalizing and unified perspective of the worldview present in religious and philosophical discourses, stating that psychoanalysis aligns more with the discourse of science due to its fragmentary and partial characteristics⁶². In other words, while the worldview is guided by the category of identity, the discourses of science and psychoanalysis are oriented by the category of identification.

8. Another Turn of the Screw

In the essay titled “Freud and the Non-Europeans,” Said attempted to think and inscribe psychoanalysis in the world of non-Europeans through the reading of “Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion.” For this crucial debate, historical, methodological, and epistemological aspects would be considered:

1. The reference to non-Europeans in Freud in the historical context of the establishment of psychoanalysis⁶³.
2. Subsequently, references to non-Europeans in later historical periods where the critique of colonial tradition became prominent, making it important to analyze how the theoretical structure of psychoanalysis could effectively confront this crucial contemporary condition⁶⁴.

In this regard, Said’s reading on these two points is quite clear. In fact, if Freud did not broadly refer to non-Europeans in his time - with the exception of references to the Egyptian tradition in North Africa and early societies - on the other hand, by emphasizing the theoretical and structural construction of Freudian discourse, in the opposition he posed between so-called civilized peoples and those considered barbaric at the time, within the context of this opposition in which such positions would be reversible through *repression* and the *return of repression*, Freud’s work could decisively incorporate consideration for non-Europeans into its theoretical and structural foundations^{65, 66, 67}.

Regarding this point, Jacqueline Rose’s response to Said’s lecture at the Freud Museum in 2001 on “Freud and the non-Europeans” highlighted Walter Benjamin’s historical interpretation⁶⁸ to indicate how the theoretical and ethical construction of Freudian discourse could detach from its time and find in the future contemporary era another possible reinterpretation, where psychoanalysis could decisively and inclusively incorporate non-Europeans into its discursive field⁶⁹. In other words, Freudian discourse, in its ethical, political, and theoretical structure, would support the post-colonial challenge precisely because of the emphasis on the category of identification and the associated criticism of the category of identity, through the dialectical opposition established between civilization and barbarism, marked by reversibility and guided by the process of repression. In stating that Moses was Egyptian and not Jewish, despite being the creator of the Jewish tradition, Freud emphasized the relevance of the category of identification and criticized the substantial and essential category of identity.

Furthermore, as we have seen, Freud’s work on Moses effectively falls within the field of political theology. Freud critically revisited the idea that psychoanalysis is not only an *individual psychology* but also a *collective psychology*, as it analyzes psychic traits on the porous edges between the realms of *narcissism* (individual psychology) and *alterity* (collective psychology), as he articulated in “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego”⁷⁰. Therefore, Freudian discourse delineated the non-European world pertinently, with references to Oriental and African cultures^{71, 72, 73}, by problematizing the opposition between civilization and barbarism, guided by the dialectical reversibility of repression.

In conclusion, in Said’s proposed interpretation, another turn of the screw is needed⁷⁴, to paraphrase Henry James’s story. This turn would allow for a different reading of Freud, turning towards a post-colonial future, *another turn towards the future of psychoanalysis*.

⁶² Freud S. *La question de la Weltanschauung*, In: Freud, S. *Mentales ostensives sur la psychanalyse*. Paris, Gallimard, 1898.

⁶³ Said, E. *Freud e os não europeus*. São Paulo, Bomtempo, 2004.

⁶⁴ Ibidem.

⁶⁵ Ibidem.

⁶⁶ Said, E. *Orientalismo*. O Oriente como invenção do Ocidente. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2021.

⁶⁷ Said, E. *Cultura e Imperialismo*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2011.

⁶⁸ Benjamin, W. *Oeuvres Completes sur la philosophie de l’histoire*. In: Benjamin, W. *Oeuvres Completes*, volume III. Paris, Gallimard, 1990.

⁶⁹ Said, E. *Freud e os não europeus*. Op. cit.

⁷⁰ Freud, S. «Psychologie des foules et analyse du moi» (1921). In: Freud, S. *Essais de psychanalyse*. Paris, Payot, 1981.

⁷¹ Ibidem.

⁷² Ibidem.

⁷³ Ibidem.

⁷⁴ James, H. *The Turn of the Screw and Other Short Fiction*. New York, Bantam Books, 1981

9. Identity, Universality, and Diaspora

Additionally, Said asserts in “Freud and the Non-Europeans” that the prominent and strategic role occupied by *archaeology* as a science since the creation of the State of Israel is attributed to the archaeological discourse claiming that the State of Israel already existed in biblical cartography and could thus occupy the entire territory of Palestine as a sovereign state. From this perspective, the politics of the State of Israel sustains itself through an identity-based thesis, inscribing its political sovereignty in the barrenness of stones and the Israeli domination process. Isaac Deutscher wrote a masterful essay titled “The Non-Jewish Jew,”⁷⁵ in which he posited that Jews never inscribed themselves within the restricted territory of the nation-state but, conversely, in their diaspora, positioned themselves in *the interstices, borders, and frontiers of the nation-state*. For this reason, the Jewish tradition can uphold the perspective of universalism with leading thinkers such as Spinoza, Marx, and Freud⁷⁶.

It is through this lens that psychoanalysis, through the unconscious, situates itself within the field of identification, systematically critiquing identitarian particularism, xenophobic nationalism, and the nation-state. This perspective also influenced Deutscher, a communist and socialist leader close to Trotsky’s political outlook - and thus opposed to Stalin - who named the three volumes of his biography on Trotsky as “The Prophet Armed,”⁷⁷ “The Prophet Disarmed,”⁷⁸ and “The Prophet Outcast”⁷⁹ emphasizing Trotsky’s (Jewish) universalism in the conception of the Communist Revolution against Stalin’s nationalism, which, on the contrary, advocated the relevance of nationalism in the Russian Revolution.

Received: September 12, 2023. **Approved:** November 3, 2023.

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