



Mark Edmundson, *The Death of Sigmund Freud: The Legacy of His Last Days*
The Death of Sigmund Freud: The Legacy of His Last Days by Mark Edmundson,
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The Journal of Religion

book is a welcome addition to lines of inquiry that have been well established. But it is not the first, nor will it be the last, contribution to the discussion.
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EDMUNDSON, MARK. *The Death of Sigmund Freud: The Legacy of His Last Days*. New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2007. xii+276 pp. \$25.95 (cloth).

In his most recent volume devoted to Sigmund Freud's work and influence, the eminent English professor, pedagogue, and public intellectual Mark Edmundson interweaves an account of Freud's final years with Adolf Hitler's Austrian adventures to stage a dramatic, albeit virtual, confrontation between the self-critical voice of reason and the poster-boy personification of evil. To a world feeling imperiled by fundamentalisms, especially religious fundamentalisms, but that still imagines the threat as arising from some Hitler redux, Edmundson deploys the story of the original in order, through the mediation of Freud's insights into humanity's universal "hunger for authority" (passim), to reorient its response to those apparent dangers. Rather than looking to fantasies of the omnipotent father as both the source of and savior from evil, Edmundson counsels that today's world needs to look at both those fantasies and what needs they supposedly satisfy.

Death aims at a sophisticated lay audience, hence some simplification of Freud's arguments is to be expected. Yet, the author makes a number of misrepresentations of Freud's work and life. In *Totem and Taboo* (Leipzig/Vienna: Hugo Heller, 1912–13), for example, the primal horde's parricidal cannibals never "believe [their father] to be magic and want to internalize his supernatural powers" (63), despite Edmundson's assertion to the contrary. Further, at no point does Freud "maintain" that the Egyptian Moses was "somehow taken up and adopted by impoverished Jews" (200). Most questionable, though, are the means by which Edmundson would supplement Freud's non-discussion of fundamentalism. First, in his characterization of Freud's goals in psychoanalysis generally and in the work of his last years specifically, Edmundson accords far too much significance to what Freud decried as his "worst book" (Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* [New York: Norton, 1988], 525), *The Future of an Illusion* (Leipzig/Vienna: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer, 1927) and to its discussion of the "longing for a father" (151). He then, without textual warrant, repeatedly characterizes capital T "Truth" (e.g., 152, 240–42) as humanity's ultimate illusory object of desire.

There are also numerous problematic biographical statements in this book. *Pace* Edmundson, Freud's daughter Anna (Freud) had just turned age eighteen at most and was not yet in analysis with her father before she attracted the attentions of "the devoted womanizer Ernest Jones" (61). By juxtaposing Freud's choice of Anna "as the guardian of the legacy" with the "break with [Carl] Jung" and then noting that the break was "beginning *around* 1912" (65; my emphasis), rather than that it was finalized by 1913, Edmundson suggests that her selection occurred immediately rather than twenty years after the break; he thereby reinforces his assertion there that it marked a "great shift." Again, given the genre, one should expect remarkable feats of biographical divination. Still, to conclude that, after receiving Abraham Yahuda as his first visitor in England, "Freud's misspell[ing] the scholar's name as Jahuda [was] a sign perhaps of Freud's overall feelings about the visit" (149) is dubious,

given that Freud was most likely employing the standard German transliteration of the Jerusalem-born scholar's Hebrew name.

Nor is historical exactitude always evident in this work. Edmundson reproduces the myth that Austria was the first victim of the Third Reich. He compounds this fantasy by giving the impression that Kurt von Schuschnigg's government was a democratic republic rather than the inheritor of the Austrofascist corporate state (*Ständestaat*) that overthrew the First Austrian Republic in 1933. And I'm not sure where his notion that the Viennese before the *Anschluss* (Austria's union with the Third Reich) "were purportedly the most tolerant people in all of Europe" (51) came from. Besides, Hitler was never elected chancellor (9, 269); he was appointed.

Details aside, Edmundson's having Freud and Hitler possibly cross paths in 1909 is a questionable opening conceit. Michael André Bernstein has rightfully criticized how, in a kind of "retroactive foreshadowing" (*Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History*, *Contraversions: Critical Studies in Jewish Literature, Culture, and Society* 4 [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994], 16), scholars juxtapose the lives of victims and murderers as well as invoke killing sites of the Shoah at a moment well before either person or place assumed these terminal labels. More than indulging in Hitler kitsch that generates a frisson to get the reader's attention, such a rhetorical move also problematically suggests some always already shared and inevitable fate. When such a pairing becomes a structuring principle, as it does in the remainder of *Death*, the fates are more than shared; they risk being presented as symbiotic, as when Edmundson employs Hitler's "telling lines" (153) to confirm Freud's insights. Considering the vast scholarly attention now directed at Freud's last works, the reader can and should expect better.

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TWEED, THOMAS A. *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006. ix+278 pp. \$27.95 (cloth).

Trying to make sense of the Cuban Catholic ritual he observed during fieldwork on a warm September night in Miami, Florida, in 1993, Thomas Tweed ventured a journey of theory exploration and construction, of which the result is *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*, a new, relational and dynamic, or, shall we say, kinetic theory of religion. Originating from fieldwork observations and dissatisfaction with available theories, Tweed's seminal work well fulfills his quest: "[making] sense of the religious life of transnational immigrants and addressing three themes—movement, relation, and position" (5). *Crossing and Dwelling* is provocative of both philosophical thought and scholarly debate.

Before presenting his theory of religion, Tweed explains how his understanding of theory departs from five types of theories (deductive-nomological, law oriented, idealizing, constructivist, and critical) that he identifies in the humanities and social sciences. He rejects a presupposition they all share, "that the theorist and the theorized are *static*" (8; my emphasis). Tweed follows James Clifford's suggestion and turns to the metaphor of travel, reimagining theories as itineraries. Tweed's perspective might be understood as "pragmatic or nonrepresentational realism or to use the philosopher Hilary Putnam's phrase, 'realism with a small r' as opposed to 'metaphysical Realism', which champions 'a view from nowhere' and aspires to link concepts with mind-