

Freud and Religion

We live in an era that is often described as “therapeutic.” Our culture is suffused with unconscious fantasies and psychoanalytic ways of thinking about self, other, and society. Aspects of the Freudian cultural universe have also had an impact on how we think about religion. In this volume, William B. Parsons explores the relationship between religion and psychoanalysis through multiple, linked investigations. Why did Freud write about religion and what did he say? What were the multiple critiques leveled at his work? What were the post-Freudian psychoanalytic advances? How can we still apply psychoanalytic ideas going forward? In answering these and related questions, Parsons distinguishes between classic-reductive, adaptive, and transformational psychoanalytic models. He also argues that the psychoanalytic theory of religion needs to integrate reflexive, dialogical, and inclusive elements as part of its toolkit. Offering illustrations and applications of such revisions, Parsons creates new capacities for thinking psychologically and critically about religion.

William B. Parsons is Professor of Religion at Rice University. He has authored nine books, including *The Enigma of the Oceanic Feeling* and *Religion and Psychology: Mapping the Terrain*.

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Advancing the Dialogue

WILLIAM B. PARSONS

Rice University



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