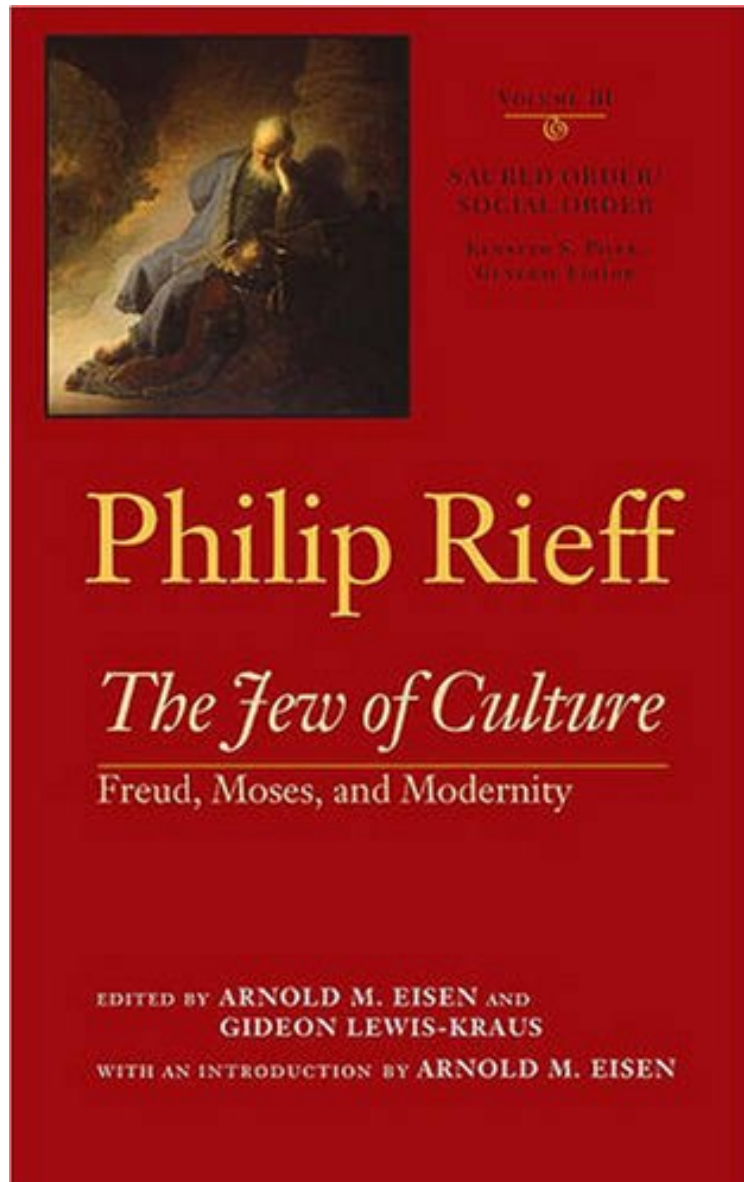


Sacred Order/Social Order: The Jew of Culture: Freud, Moses, and Modernity (v. 3)

Philip Rieff

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#456383 in Books Philip Rieff 2008-05-02Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.56 x .91 x 5.841, 1.02 #File Name: 0813927064224 pagesSacred Order Social Order The Jew of Culture Freud Moses and Modernity v 3 | File size: 79.Mb

Philip Rieff : Sacred Order/Social Order: The Jew of Culture: Freud, Moses, and Modernity (v. 3) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sacred Order/Social Order: The Jew of Culture: Freud, Moses, and Modernity (v. 3):

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Rieff's last book is his best introduction

By David M. Pence "The great teacher is he who because he carries within himself what is already known can transfer it to his student; that inwardness is his absolute and irreducible authority." This last book in the series Sacred Order /Social Order by Philip Rieff (1922-2006) is the one volume of the trilogy I would recommend to a new reader of Professor Rieff. The editors of the previous two volumes as well as the editors of Charisma (The gift of grace and how it has been taken from us) correctly allowed many of Rieff's obscurities to remain in those difficult rich texts. Those editors heeded the warning that if you pull up the weeds too soon, the grain might be taken with. The editor of this text had a different assignment and he served his teacher well. Arnold Eisen (Chancellor of the Theological Seminary of America) has an inescapable advantage over those of us who simply read Professor Rieff because he studied with him in person. That affords a crucial perspective when learning from a teacher who defines a bearer of culture as one who has internalized the culture's commands in his character. ("Until recently it seemed true that without imitations of compelling characters, character itself could not develop. Morality abhors impersonality") I have no doubt that Rieff understood his presence was as much his lesson as his propositions and in this he taught Sociology as Michael Polyani taught the proper epistemology of Science (see Personal Knowledge). This text gains clarity from an excellent introduction, the use of several previously published essays that could stand alone (on Benjamin Disraeli and Oscar Wilde) and a crisply edited new work "Is not the truth the truth?" That last section is a riveting crystallization of his accusations in My Life among the Deathworks. The accusations are stinging and even his student blanches at their full meaning. And yet, Chancellor Eisen blesses us by insuring that the last words we hear from Professor Rieff are a defense of the personal nature of G-d. For there is an inexorable logic in the work of Philip Rieff. First he teaches us of the necessity for authority to safeguard love and shape character. But then he cannot escape the abiding authority who specifically elected the Jews to tell the truth about creation. The canon cannot be emptied of its contents. If the Jew of culture is the officer class or the teacher, he is the officer of an army with a General and a teacher of a subject with a Living Author. For Rieff, any Jew who claims he can be a Jew but deny G-d has joined the Deathworks and betrayed the Jewish character which bears a command which is not self constructed. Rieff does not tread lightly on that Christian Love for whom "Jew hatred remains its most transgressive motif" At the same time he challenges the atheistic logic of the cultural secular Jew and condemns Freud as a murderer of the Jews for murdering Moses the Father. The self congratulations of Jewish Studies academics that Freud and Marx show what great intellectuals the Jews are will find no good natured backslap from Professor Rieff. The arrangement of this collection jolts one in seeing the transformation of Rieff and his relationship to Freud over the course of his life. Professor Rieff followed the implications of his own initial insights and was delivered from the top of the academic molehill to the foot of Sinai. I always thought he was amazingly prescient in 1968 to describe the psychological man but what he is describing now is (using a much abused word) prophetic. The Triumph of the Therapeutic foretold the mass appearance of psychological man because Rieff could see him coming. Rieff's final works are not prophecy as in prediction but prophecy as in witnessing to G-d's truth and seeing reality in the light of His abiding presence and commandments. He shows again how much clearer the vision from the foot of a holy mountain is than from the top of a desacralized hilltop. Rieff's understanding of Israel is also drawn much clearer here than in any previous work. In the midst of the Deathworks of what he calls the third world anti culture the vigor of his defense of Israel is much more than simply raising the volume of his voice. He describes Israel as the Machstaat necessary for the Kulturestaat (if the Machstaat is reduced then "the sacred self loses its surround. It is without that completion of self in the social self that needs its political expression in order to achieve the primordially ... of sacrality. Eternal truth does not derive from historical. On the contrary historical truth derives from the eternal. Sacred order is far more stable than social order.") This is the same insight of GK Chesterton who described the social contract as men first finding a sacred spot and then becoming a political/civic community while defending the sacred center. It is true too in America that the nation forms the walls of our city to safeguard the sacredness of our temples. There is a nagging question I always bring to reading Philip Rieff. It seems better answered in this book than any others. I wondered if he prayed the Shema which he clearly saw as the touchstone postural truth in his later years. It struck me again when I read his accusation of the modern intellectual. "I too aspire to see clearly, like a rifleman, with one eye shut; I too aspire to think without assent." Professor Rieff seemed to me like many a man of this era of stiff necked intellectuals who knows he should believe but feels if ever he seriously began praying then he would have to obey all 613 laws or be a hypocrite. Rieff and many Jewish men like him need an authoritative rabbi (or a new teaching order) who would spare him such strange modernistic inversion rituals as the bat mitzvah while once again assembling a minyan of fathers to pray, "Hear o Israel.." If reading Phillip Rieff makes you more likely to ponder sophisticated thoughts about Judaism than to pray prescribed prayers to G-d, then you are missing this great teacher's hard won lesson. There must be a Hebrew saying that reminds us: "First pray and then learn." For it is only in prayer and worship that man acknowledges what Rieff called that "without which authority cannot exist" --a presiding presence.

Philip Rieff earned recognition as one of the most profound social theorists of culture and authority of the twentieth century. Through such works as Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer and The Triumph of the Therapeutic, he proved

himself an incisive interpreter of Freud and his legacy. His work now culminates with the long-awaited trilogy Sacred Order/Social Order, a three-volume work on social theory and contemporary culture. Arnold Eisen chose the selections for the final volume of the trilogy in consultation with Philip Rieff. All of the selections bear on the nature of the "Jew of culture." Rieff explicitly and consistently identified with this ideal-type, named for the first time in *Fellow Teachers*, and crucial in one form or another to everything he wrote. For the rest of Rieff's long career, "Jew of culture" would serve as foil, countertype, corrective, and adversary to the "therapeutics" who represented both Rieff's analysands and his antagonists. The purpose of this collection of Rieff's writings, undertaken at his suggestion, is to trace the evolution of the "Jew of culture" over the course of his work. In doing so we gain particular insight into his distinctive theory of society and the self; we also come to better understand the theorist.

Philip Rieff (1922-2006) was one of the finest minds of his generation...the strength of these volumes lies in the detail and remarkable range of the material he marshalls and in his extraordinary hermeneutic daring. (Charles Turner, University of Warwick *British Journal of Sociology*)
About the Author Philip Rieff (1922-2006), Benjamin Franklin Professor of Sociology and University Professor Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania, was the author of the classic works *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist*, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, and *Fellow Teachers* and the editor of *The Collected Papers of Sigmund Freud*. Kenneth S. Piver is a psychiatrist in private practice in San Diego, California. Arnold M. Eisen is Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and is a leading scholar of contemporary Judaism. Gideon Lewis-Kraus is a critic and journalist who has written for *Slate*, *Bookforum*, and the *New York Times Book* .