

ENG 4936

Section 2A34

Kafka, Kierkegaard, and the King James Bible

Fall 2015

TUR 2322

[Periods T2-3, R3](#)

[Warnung! Warning!](#)

[Course  
Description](#)

[Course  
Requirements](#)

[Class  
Schedule](#)

Due the Day  
Before Each  
Class:

[A. Two  
Discussion  
Questions](#)

and either

[B. Three BIG  
WORDS](#)



or

[Professor Richard Burt](#)

C. Three  
shots with  
three film  
analysis  
terms

or both,  
depending on  
the  
assignment.

FIRST  
PAPER, DUE  
Saturday,  
September  
20 by 11:59  
p.m. 750  
words.

UF Class  
Period Times

[ricahrd.a.burt@gmail.com](mailto:ricahrd.a.burt@gmail.com)

## It's time for you to take a You-Turn

Please email me only to send me class assignments. Otherwise, please talk to me in person after (not before) class or during office hours.

Office: 4314 Turlington Hall

Office Phone 352 392-6650

Office Hours: after class, and by appointment

"I could think of another Abraham for myself." . . . This sentence comes to us from a brief parable, two pages by Kafka . . . "I do not see the leap" he would have to had to make in order to show himself ready to obey God on Mount Moriah—the word leap here confirming what is otherwise well known, namely, that Kafka had read Kierkegaard.

--Jacques Derrida, "Abraham, the Other," in *Judeities*, 1-2

Kafka did not always evade the temptations of a modish mysticism. . . . His ways with his own writing certainly does not exclude this possibility. Kafka had a rare capacity for creating parables of himself. Yet his parables are never exhausted by what is explainable; on the contrary, he took all conceivable precautions against the interpretation of his writings. One has to find one's way in them circumspectly, cautiously, and warily. One must keep in mind Kafka's way of reading, as exemplified in his interpretation of the abovementioned parable ["Beim Bau der Chinesischen Mauer"; "Building the Great Wall of China"]. The text of the parable will be another case in point. Given its background, the directive in which Kafka ordered the destruction of his literary remains is just as unfathomable, to be weighed just as carefully as the answers to the doorkeeper in "Vor dem Gesetz" ["Before the Law"]. Perhaps Kafka, whose every day on earth brought him up against insoluble modes of behavior and imprecise communications, in death wished to his contemporaries a taste of their own medicine.

--Walter Benjamin, "Franz Kafka: On the Tenth Anniversary of His Death," in *Selected Writings Vol 2 1931-1934*, Harvard UP, 794-818; to 804.

June 24. *Midnight*.

Not even what I am writing here is my innermost meaning. I cannot entrust myself to paper in that way even though I see it in what is written. Think of what could happen! The paper could disappear; there could be a fire were I live and I could live in uncertainty; I could die and thus leave it behind me; I could lose my mind and my innermost being would come into alien hands; I could go blind and not be able to find it myself; I do not know whether I stood with it in my hands without asking someone else, not know whether he lied to me or whether he was reading, what was written there or something else in order to sound me out.

Soren Kierkegaard, *Stages on Life's Way*. Ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton UP, 1988), 386.

"Nur ein Völlig Fremder kann Ihre Frage stellen. Ob es Kontrollbehörden gibt? Es gibt nur Kontrollbehörden. Freilich, sie sind nicht dazu bestimmt, Fehler im großen Wortsinn herauszufinden denn Fehler kommen nicht vor, und selbst, wenn einmal ein Fehler vorkommt, wie in Ihrem Fall, wer darf den endgültig sagen, es ein Fehler ist."

"Das wäre etwas Völlig Neues!" rief K.

"Mir ist es etwas sehr Altes," sagte der Vorsteher.

--Franz Kafka, *Das Schloss*, (Fischer Verlag, 1979), 65

The current version of this website is the binding one, if you are taking this course.

[A little about me](#)

STEAM, not [STEM](#) (The "A" stands for "Arts," as in Liberal Arts.)

[If Students Are Smart, They'll Major in What They Love](#)

[Missing UF Faculty](#) (mostly from English)



**[The CIA's Kafkaesque Guide to Subverting Any Organization with "Purposeful Stupidity" \(1944\)](#)**

**[The CIA's Timeless Tips for "Simple Sabotage"](#)**

I interrupt my paraphrase here only to point out that I was speaking about issues, concerns, matters of art that entered into our field of vision and only now, by means of my imperiled speech, did they emerge as shadows at its edge. I observe that we had no way of verifying what he meant by means of his own annotated presentations at the time we heard with the dimly excited fantasy of children listening to music they do not understand, even while their tender minds were enriched and stimulated in some strangely dreamlike way. "Fugue," "counterpoint," "*Eroica*," "confusion respectively colored modulations," "strict style"—all these were like fairy-tale whispers for us, but we heard them as glass harmonica sounds as children listen to something incomprehensible, but appropriate for them—and with much more delight than we do with what lies close at hand, from what is fitting and proper. We considered the most intensive and proud, perhaps even the most official kind of learning—anticipatory learning, learning that stretches across stretches of ignorance? As a pedagogue I should promote it on its behalf, but I know for a fact that young people's preference for it, and I suspect that with time the glass harmonica will be skipped fills up all on its own.

from Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, trans. John Wood, p. 63

Pausing to leave a text in order to find out more about what is being discussed and described; going to a source like wikipedia to find out a little bit about or going to youtube to listen to a piece of music; returning to the text where you left. The text returns to you; you may reread it; you may finally read it after all; you may learn even more. Theodor Adorno; Adorno and Mann correspondence; Mann, *Genesis of Doktor Faustus: The Novel of a Novel*; Schoenberg; you read books and articles; you listen to more performances of Beethoven, more recordings; you learn about pianists who perform the piece--Maurizio

Pollini); you learn about the piano sonata; about the sonata and classical music; classical versus romantic music; late Beethoven--quartets; deafness, and so on.)

**You Already Know** How to Read Film (Genre--you know what to expect) Example: [Hostel \(2005\)](#)

Reading is a vice which can replace all other vices or temporarily take their place in more intensely helping people live, it is an aberration a consuming passion. No, I don't take any drugs, I take books, of course I have certain preferences, many books don't suit me at all, some I take only in the morning, others at night, there are books I don't ever let go, I drag them around with me in the apartment, carrying them from the living room into the kitchen, I read them in the hall standing up, I don't use a bookmark, I don't move my lips while reading, early on I learned to read very well, I don't remember the method, but you ought to look into it. They must have used an excellent method in our provincial elementary schools, at least back when I learned to read.

--Ingeborg Bachmann, *Malina: A Novel*, trans. Philip Boehm (Teaneck, NJ: Holmes & Meier, 1990), 57-58.

[Gladstone said, "To me, the biggest amazement when I looked at everything was that for someone as iconoclastic as that, who didn't care for the system, he saved every scrap. He cared about posterity, or else throw it away! Every little napkin—" She gestured toward some twenty boxes that had been assembled for the perusal of Marvin J. Taylor, the director of the Fales Library, at N.Y.U., and the founder of the library's Downtown Collection, which would be receiving Smith's ephemera. \(Gladstone will hold on to the sellable work.\)](#)

Performing Race:

[Black Like You: Blackface, Whiteface, Insult & Imitation in American Popular Culture](#)

Jacques Derrida, ["Plato's Pharmacy"](#)

[Writers Reading Writers](#)

["Neoliberal Arts" Harper's Magazine 2015](#)

[Dickens, Charles. 1852. "A Ragged School," Harper's Magazine](#)

"Historical, in fact philological, considerations have slowly but surely taken the place of profound explorations of eternal problems. The question becomes: What did this or that philosopher think or not think? And is this or that text rightly ascribed to him or not? And even: Is this variant of a classical text preferable to that other? Students in university seminars today are encouraged to occupy themselves with such emasculated inquiries. As a result, of course, philosophy itself is banished from the university altogether."

[Nietzsche, Fredrich. 1872 anti-education Harper's Magazine](#)

[Friedrich Nietzsche, 1872. ANTI-EDUCATION](#) introduction and annotation by [Paul Reitter](#) and [Chad Wellmon](#), translated from the German by [Damion Searls](#)

Heidegger, Martin, 1933. ["The Self-Assertion of the German University and The Rectorate 1933/34: Facts and Thoughts," Review of Metaphysics](#) 38 (March 1985): 467-502.

Auerbach, Eric. 1943. Epilogue to [Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature](#)

Curtius, E. R. 1947. Die auslandische wissenschaftliche Literatur der Kriegs- und Nachkriegsjahre ist mir bis auf verschwindende Ausnahmen nicht zuganglich gewesen. Auch die Bonner Universitatabibliothek ist seit 1944 in folge eines Bombenangriffs teils unbenutzbar, teils verbrannt. Ich habe daher manches Zitat nicht meher vergleichen, manche Quelle nicht mehr einsehen konnen. Aber wenn die literature 'das fragment der Fragmente' ist (Goethe), muss ein Versuch wie der vorleigende erst recht den Charackter des Fragmentarishcen tragen.

During the war and postwar years, I lost sight of foreign literary criticism after it vanished and was thus inaccessible to me. Also, as a consequence of an air raid in 1944, parts of the Bonn University Library were unusable or burnt. I could no longer check various citations or consult many sources. But if literature is "the fragment of fragments" (Goethe), an attempt like this one in particular must exhibit a fragmentary character.] — "Vorwort," in *Europaisches Literatur und Lateinische Mittelater*, (my translation; not translated in the English

edition of 195

Curtius, E. R. 1953. I have tried to show that humanistic tradition is from time to time attacked by philosophy. It may suffer a serious setback from these aggressions. Many signs seem to point to the fact that we are faced once more with an incursion of philosophers, existentialists... "Appendix: The Medieval Bases of Western Thought," *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*, 592

De Man, Paul. 1983. As a control discipline . . . philology represents a store of established knowledge; to seek to supersede it . . . is without merit. "[Heidegger's Exegeses of Hölderlin](#)," *Blindness and Insight*, 263-4.

Readings, Bill. 1997. [The University in Ruins](#). Harvard University Press.

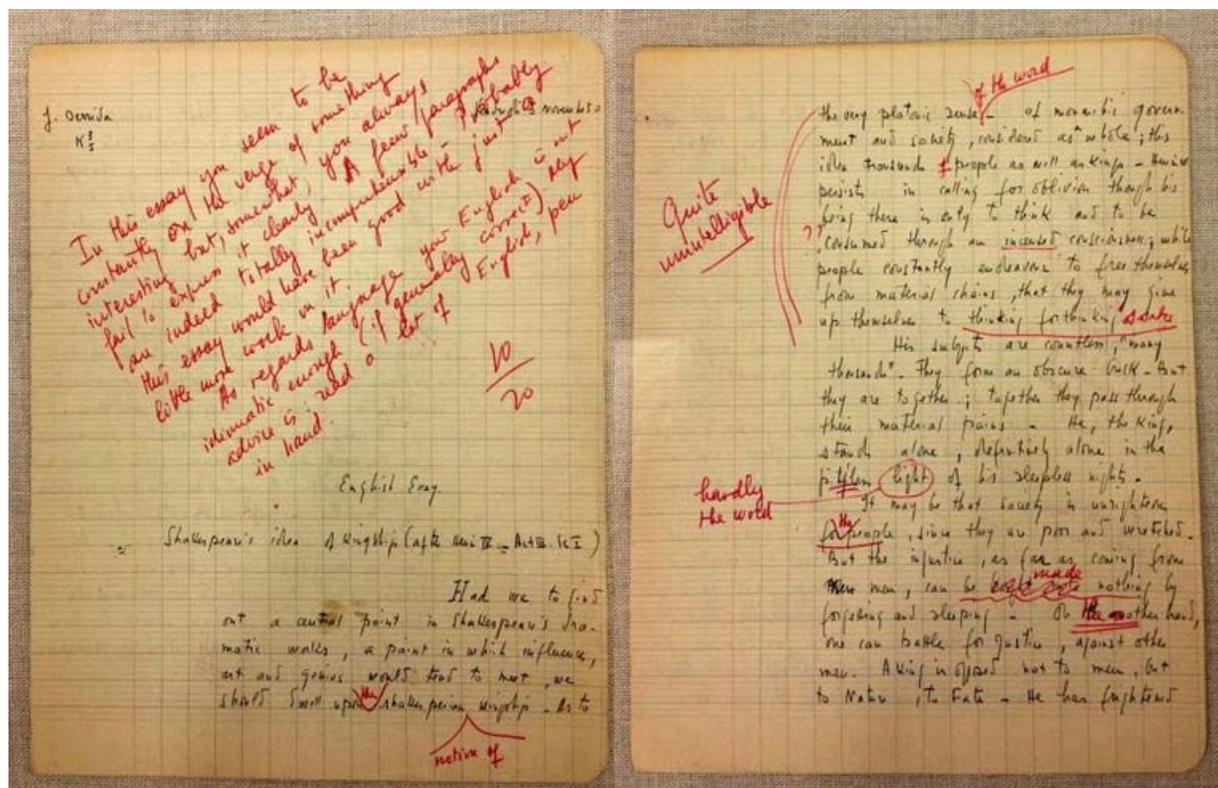
Derrida, Jacques. 2001. "The University Without Condition," originally delivered as a Presidential Lecture at Stanford University in 1998. Its title was "[The Future of the Profession or the University Without Condition \(Thanks to the 'Humanities,' What Could Take Place Tomorrow\)](#)." This version can be found in *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*, ed. Tom Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 24-57. A slightly altered version, recast as an essay, appeared as "[The University Without Condition](#)" in Jacques Derrida, *Without Alibi*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2002), 202-37. The French original is *L'université sans condition* (Paris: Galilée, 2001).

Derrida, Jacques. 2002. [Who's Afraid of Philosophy: Right to Philosophy 1](#) trans. Jan Plug. Stanford Univ. Press,

Derrida, Jacques. 2004. [Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2](#) trans. Jan Plug. Stanford Univ. Press,

When do you have to go outside the text in order to understand it? Philology (history through etymology)

Philology as entry into history and culture: Life / Sex Life / End of Life = life, sex, and death=civilization





Set design for the trailer / short film *The Nursing Home* (Tagline: "Before you die . . . you've already gone to Hell!"), to be filmed with scale models and voice-overs.

Remember. Elders Care!

JAMIE HOLMES, "[The Case for Teaching Ignorance](#)" *NY Times* AUG. 24, 2015

Reading as skipping and stumbling

[Geoff Dyer, "Reader's Block"](#)

Jacques Derrida, "[Eating Well](#)"

Jacques Derrida [Interview on writing as food or drugs](#)

STEAM (not [STEM](#)) "A" stands for "Arts," as in Liberal Arts

[Freud's Disruptive Student](#)

[Autocorrect](#)

[Farhenheit 451](#) paratext

Juan Luis Borges, "[Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote](#)"

Carlo Ginzburg, [Clues](#)

[Writing as a Drug](#)

[Samsung Instinct film trailer](#)

[Martin Scorsese on pan and scan versus letterboxing](#)

Warner Brothers [high def website](#); Toshiba's "dead" website [The Look and Sound of Perfect HD-DVD website](#) (YouTube trailer)

[Mirrors trailer](#)

[Freudian Slips in German](#)

Walter Benjamin, ["The Work of Art in the Age of its Reproducibility"](#)

[Jacques Derrida in \*Ghost Dance\*](#)

[Avital Ronell on the examined life](#)

[Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny"](#)

Sigmund Freud, ["Dreams and Telepathy"](#)

Sigmund Freud, ["Psycho-analysis and Telepathy"](#)

Sigmund Freud, ["Mourning and Melancholia"](#)

Sigmund Freud, ["Beyond the Pleasure Principle" standard edition](#)

[Derrida on invention and illegality](#)

[Jacques Derrida in \*Ghost Dance\*](#)

[Avital Ronell on the examined life](#)

[Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny"](#)

[Friedrich Schlegel, "On Incomprehensibility"](#)

[Kafka](#)

[Interpretation as Circle](#)

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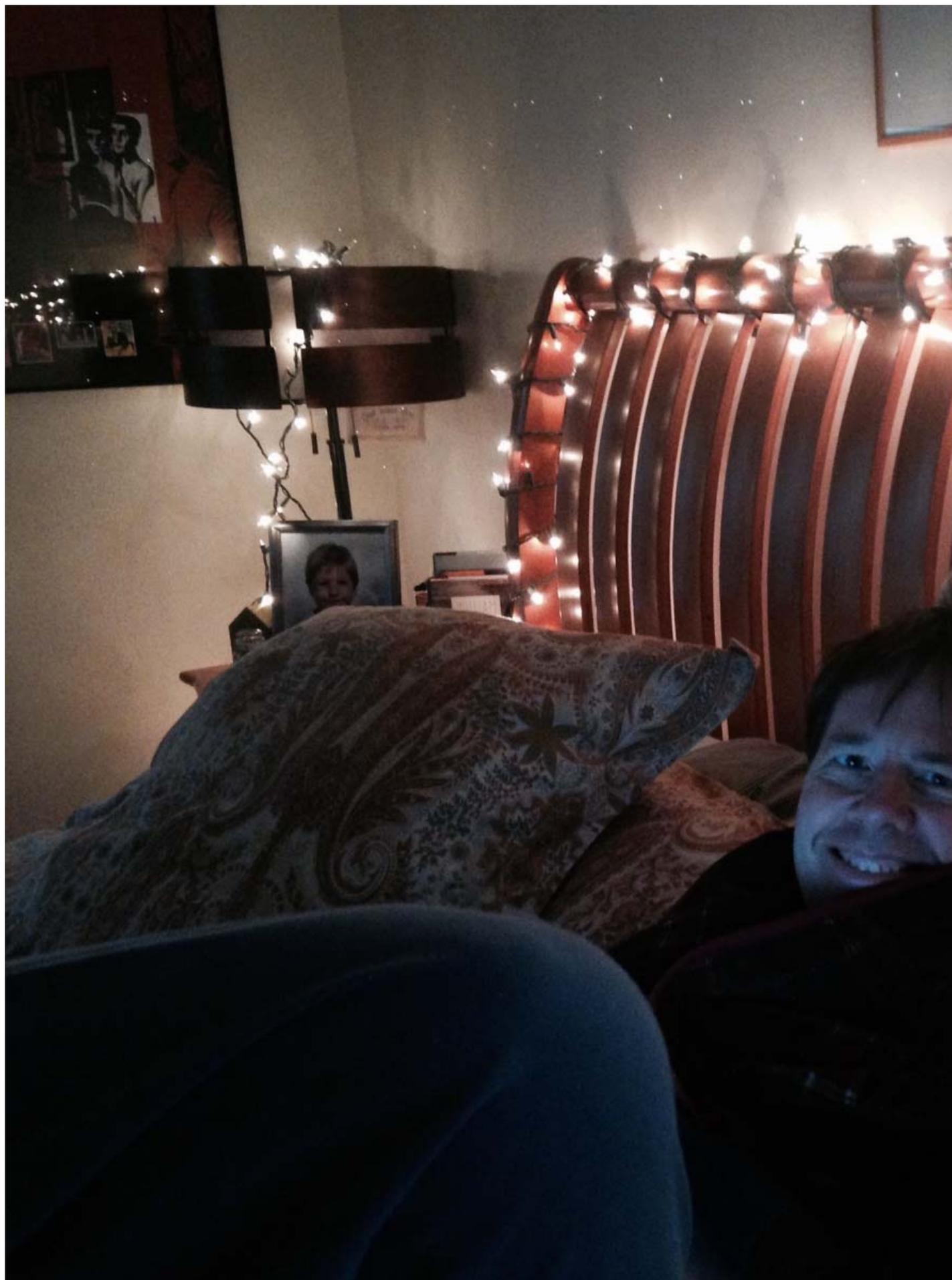


Photo taken by Elizabeth Burt, December 12, 2014. Interior lighting by Elizabeth Burt.



That's me in Berlin circa 1995.



Me circa. 1984



Sigmund Freud, ["Dreams and Telepathy"](#)

Sigmund Freud, ["Psycho-analysis and Telepathy"](#)

Sigmund Freud, ["Mourning and Melancholia"](#)

Sigmund Freud, [Beyond the Pleasure Principle standard edition](#)

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[Friedrich Schlegel, "On Incomprehensibility"](#)

[My LibraryThing](#)

[Kafka](#)

## Interpretation as Circle

### Citations

Blogs / News outlets I happen to like: [Gawker](#) and [RT](#)

[My Blog](#)

**Content on this page requires a newer version of Adobe Flash Player.**





September 19, 1998, possibly the happiest day of my life. Photo taken by Maclay Burt.