

Jean-Joseph Goux (*Oedipus. Philosopher*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993) has argued that circumcision should be understood within a larger context of rites of initiatory investiture by which male children are uprooted from the world of their mothers and regendered through the fathers and inscribed into their genealogy for the purpose of making marriage and procreation possible. For Goux, the world-historical meaning of the Oedipus story is that Oedipus is the first figure in the western tradition who openly refuses to undergo any ritual ordeal, who imagines that the force of his autonomous cunning and reasoning can, as it were, get him past the Sphinx and into the seat of supreme symbolic power and authority: 'The myth of Oedipus the king is a myth of avoidance of initiation. To put it in more Freudian terms . . . it presents the complex critical tableau of the fantasmatic orientation that is founded on the avoidance of symbolic castration. The avoidance of castration is the Oedipal neurosis' (p. 38). Goux argues, in effect, that the Oedipal neurosis is coterminous with a blindness about the workings of symbolic power. The Oedipal fantasy is, in other words, the modern one codified in the philosophical tradition from Plato to Descartes to Hegel (and only to some extent to Nietzsche), that one can attain the symbolic status of adulthood by dint of spirit and mind alone, that the transmission and transfer of knowledge and status leaves the body untouched and unmarked, that ordeals of initiatory investiture are examples of merely primitive and savage modes of thought. Although Goux claims that Freud did not appreciate the reasons why he structured the edifice of psychoanalysis around the Oedipal neurosis, he suggests that the Freudian innovation is the paradigmatic modern 'ordeal' through which the subject is initiated into his or her own unconscious, understood in its turn as the site where the fantasmatic residues of traditional patterns of transmission continue to produce effects. Psychoanalysis becomes the symbolic procedure whereby modern subjects are 'initiated' into the consequences of failed/refused initiation: 'The place of psychoanalysis is assigned by its function within a democratic socio-symbolic regime: it takes over the shadows, the unconscious symbolic counterpart that the democratic subject's will to autonomy cannot fail to create: the subject's Oedipean conflict. . . . The Oedipean structure of *pathos* and knowledge is thus the distinctive feature of the post-traditional world in which the dramaturgy of transmission has entirely disappeared as an established social practice and in which the passage through castration (separation, severing) remains free, individual, self-generated, and in a sense deferred, permanent, indefinite. The historical world would thus be not so much a world in which the process of initiation has disappeared as a world in which no one is ever done with it – a world of the son, who structurally, fundamentally, cannot stabilise himself in the knowing posture of the father: a world of prolonged liminality. In short, a world of (permanent, provisional, repeated) auto-institution, thus of history' (pp. 205–6). My claim apropos of Schreber would be that this world of prolonged liminality corresponds, in essence, to Schreber's notion of conditions contrary to the Order of the World and that his transformation into a Jewish transvestite is, paradoxically, his way of assuming the place of the father in such a world.

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Goyim Naches, or, Modernity and the Manliness of the *Mentsh*

Daniel Boyarin

Long live war. Long live love. Let sorrow be banished from the earth.

Giuseppe Verdi, *The Sicilian Vespers*

I begin with a story, indeed one of the initiatory stories of modernity. In the *Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud reports the following event from his early childhood:

At that point I was brought up against the event in my youth whose power was still being shown in all these emotions and dreams. I may have been ten or twelve years old, when my father began to take me with him on his walks and reveal to me in his talk his views upon things in the world we live in. Thus it was, on one such occasion, that he told me a story to show how much better things were now than they had been in his days. 'When I was a young man', he said, 'I went for a walk one Saturday in the streets of your birthplace; I was well dressed, and had a new fur cap on my head. A Christian came up to me and shouted: "Jew! get off the pavement!"' 'And what did you do?' I asked. 'I went into the roadway and picked up my cap,' was his quiet reply. This struck me as unheroic conduct on the part of the big, strong man who was holding the little boy by the hand. I contrasted this situation with another which fitted my feelings better: the scene in which Hannibal's father, Hamilcar Barca, made his boy swear before the household altar to take vengeance on the Romans. Ever since that time Hannibal had had a place in my phantasies.¹

With all that has been written about this text, connecting it with Freud's individual psychology, I think it has not been sufficiently emphasized how emblematic it is of a historical moment, the parallel shift of Jews from 'traditional' to 'modern' and 'eastern' to 'western', and the ways that both are intimately imbricated in questions of male gender. Freud's anecdote is, accordingly, not merely autobiographical but historiographical.

The historical shifts are, with Freud's characteristic rhetorical brilliance,

indicated with deft and subtle strokes in the text. First of all, there is the signal that a historical shift is at stake in the father's declaration that he is about to tell a story that will indicate how much 'better things are now'. Second, there is the indication of the shift in space. The incident took place in 'the streets of Freud's birthplace', that is, in the eastern place from which the Freuds had come to Vienna. Third, there is the indication that Freud's father had been, at that time, a very traditional Jew. He was wearing the *shtrimmel*, the Sabbath fur hat of the east European Hasid, an emblem in Freud's world of the unreconstructed, primitive *Ostjude*.² All of these cultural forces are explicitly concatenated with issues of masculinity within the text. Freud's father, 'a big, strong man', behaves in a way that Freud experiences as shameful, and Freud seems to know, although he does not explicitly say, that this 'passivity' had to do with his father's Jewishness. The specificities of the incident reported by Freud are highly significant as well. The hat was certainly for him a symbol of the phallus. In at least two places in the *Interpretation of Dreams*, that is, the very same work in which this story is reported, Freud writes as much explicitly.³ Thus, whether or not it is 'true' that the hat symbolizes male genitalia, for Freud it was certainly the case. He would have interpreted this incident, then, as sexually as well as politically emasculating – castrating – for his father, the paradigmatic traditional Jewish male.⁴

In fact, as Martin Bergmann has noted, the 'feminine' response of Freud's father in this incident was not 'unheroic', but antiheroic, and indeed, traditionally Jewish: 'A Jew was expected to be able to control his anger, not to be provoked; his feelings of inner dignity were sustained by a belief in his own spiritual superiority which a ruffian and a "Goy" can in no way touch.'⁵ For premodern Jewry there were both alternative civilities and alternative paradigms of 'manliness', which could be summed up in the relatively modern term, 'mentsh'.⁶ I emphasize once more what I have tried to make clear throughout my work. I find no feminist paradise in premodern Jewish culture, quite the opposite, but nevertheless, paradoxically (some would say perversely) argue that it may yet provide resources for feminism in the present and future.⁷

Marc Kaminsky has isolated two aspects in the construction of the *mentsh*. These two aspects, which to a certain extent pull in different directions, are both nevertheless significant and need equal attention:

Mentsh, as cultural ideal, proposes an ideal of person that is purportedly genderless, a norm to which both genders have to adhere. . . . There are two points to be made. Within a certain ongoingness of tradition, exalted gender-free ideals are a starting point upon which conventional notions of the differences between genders are set to work in a scale of values that subordinates women. But the second point is more important for your

project. The concept of *mentsh* in modern Yiddish culture exalts an ethics of the household, of the extended family, of the sphere of the domestic, and, from the purview of the masculinist ideals of the alien cultures in which [Ashkenazi] Jews lived, refigured the feminization of Jewish men in ways that secular Jewish men had to be conscious of.⁸

While Kaminsky, as a feminist male, properly emphasizes the subordination of women, he is also correct to maintain that we need to spotlight at the same time the consequence of the second, the ways in which *Yiddishkayt* exalts for men an 'ethics of the household and a sphere of the domestic' as a secular continuation of the rabbinic opposition to European Romantic 'masculinism'. The paradoxical role of Yiddish can be read as exemplary of this dual movement, for on the one hand Yiddish was explicitly marked as the language of female spaces, the kitchen and the marketplace,⁹ but on the other hand, it was the vernacular of the quintessentially male space of the Study-House. The texts were in 'masculine' Hebrew, but the language of study was in the 'feminine' Yiddish, thus marking the intimate connection between the *Yeshiva-Bokhur* male ideal (the later *mentsh*) and the domestic and female.¹⁰

The westernization process for Jews, which is clearly then not to be simply identified with modernization *tout court*, was one in which *mentsh* as Jewish male ideal became largely abandoned for a dawning ideal of the 'New Jewish Man', 'the muscle Jew', a figure almost identical to his 'Aryan' confrères and especially to the 'muscle Christian', who also gets born at about this time.¹¹ Reversing the cultural process by which the late antique Jewish male and the Christian religious male got their self-definition in opposition to prevailing imperial modes of masculinity, in the Victorian era both of these groups sought to conflate their masculinity with that of 'real men'. I shall be concentrating here, of course, on the Jewish side of this history, on the process that I refer to as 'the invention of the Jewish man'.

Is Love 'Goyim Naches'?

The problem of male gender in the modernizing process of the Jews involves complex reformations of Jewish practices with respect to both sexuality and violence. The oppositions between cultural codes for gendering reproduce the terms of difference already set up for European culture at the outset of the split between Judaism and Christianity. As Charles Mopsik has written,

Modern societies tend more and more to separate the body that reproduces, a link in an immemorial genealogical adventure, from the body that desires,

a lonely object, a consumer of briefly gratifying encounters. Thus, *modern* man has two distinct bodies, using one or the other as he pleases. This caesura is perhaps merely the persistence of a split opened two millennia ago by the ideological victory over one part of the inhabited world of the Christian conception of carnal relation – and of carnal filiation – as separate from spiritual life and devalued in relation to it.¹²

R. Howard Bloch astutely argues that virginity is an Idea, and the loss of virginity then ‘seems closest to what the medievals conceived as the loss of the universality of an Idea through its expression’.¹³ This relationship of the universality of the Idea to the particularity of its expression is, of course, the very relation between Christianity and the Jews with their particularist insistence on physical practices and disdain for mere spiritual faith.¹⁴ No wonder, then, that traditional Jewish culture had little use for the merely spiritual loves between men and women that came to characterize European Romantic culture. ‘Our Rabbis have taught: One who loves his wife as he loves his own body and honors her more than he honors his body and raises his children in the upright fashion and marries them soon after sexual maturity, of him it is said, “And you shall know that your tent is at peace”’ (Babylonian Talmud, Yevamoth 62b). The vaunted cynicism of Jews towards romantic love needs to be revalued in the context of the serious critique of that formation that has been mounted from feminist (and other critical) quarters. Rather than reading it as a misogynist disdain for women, it should be taken as disdain for a cultural ideal that was so uncomfortable with women that they had to be transformed into angels before men could imagine living with them. This transformation, however, was to be crucial in the production of the ‘modern’ Jew.

Instead it is the cultures of bourgeois romantic love that exhibit a virulent misogyny. Among the most cogent of the recent writers on this subject are Bloch and Bram Dijkstra. Bloch has particularly investigated the historical genesis of this ideology in certain Christian ideals of sexual purity, ‘The principled deferral of satisfaction synonymous with courtliness represents a striving for spiritual purity that is deeply beholden to a Christian notion of love, the poetic expression of a desire deferred in this world because it is deflected toward the next.’¹⁵ At the same time, Bloch shows how precisely this poetic expression is deeply structurally wedded to misogyny: ‘The discourses of courtliness and misogyny conspire with each other.’¹⁶ And, of course, it is but a short step from there to violence. As Bram Dijkstra has made only too clear, much of the sexual imaging in this period involved fantasies of women ripe and available for rape at any time, and this was typically expressed in representations of primitives of one sort or another, cavemen, barbarians whose cultures allegedly permitted such ‘free’ sexual behaviour.¹⁷ Particularly telling is Dijkstra’s summation of this ideology:

‘Many middle-class men dreamed of those simple times when the sight of a male was enough to make a woman cringe, and when, if you wanted a woman, you simply reached out and took her [my emphasis].’¹⁸ Thomas Luxon has reminded me of several examples from English literature within which images of warfare, and indeed rape, are central to valorized descriptions of male ‘love’, such as Sidney’s *Astrophel and Stella* and John Donne’s ‘Batter My Heart’.¹⁹ Violence, says Luxon, is read – by men, and indeed some women – as foreplay in this cultural formation.²⁰ This is the other side of courtly and romantic love, its unsublimated form.

In opposition to such ideological formations on the side of premodern Jewish culture stood the concept of *goyim naches*. This might be translated as ‘games *goyim* play’, a somewhat racist term of opprobrium for European culture and its violent ‘masculine’ values such as warmaking, duelling and courtly love affairs that end in *Liebestod*. Unlike the authors of two recent books on Freud, John Murray Cuddihy and Estelle Roith,²¹ for whom the use of this term by *Ostjuden* only manifests these Jews’ primitive inability to appreciate properly the wonders of that culture of romantic maleness, glorious violence, chaste love affairs and beautiful deaths, I read this term as a manifestation of a critique – to be sure, somewhat obnoxious, but not entirely unjust – of Romantic culture by European Jews. Conversely, it was with the weakening of the concept of *goyim naches* that the production of the ‘modern Jew’ became possible.

It is not love that is *goyim naches*, but courtly and romantic love. In the process of modernization, westernization, and *embourgeoisement*, the ‘inability’ of Jews to appreciate romance was considered a mark of the great deficiency of their culture. In the light of contemporary demystifications of the ideology of ‘romantic love’ and feminist demonstrations of its extreme misogyny disguised as regard for women, we need no longer continue such misrecognition. A much truer generalization would be that traditional Jewish culture did not make the dualistic split between the body and the spirit that enabled such culturally peculiar practices as the adoration of unconsummated loves between men and women. Love is understood to be profoundly connected with and enhanced by the physical intimacy of the (always married, of course) lovers, including the intimacies of both living together and intercourse.²²

Mentshismo

These conflicts between traditional Jewish inscriptions of gender and their European context can be read in many texts of early modern Jewish literature. In medieval and early modern texts of the haggada, the home liturgy for Passover eve, the ‘wicked son’ had been illustrated always as

some form of martial figure, including that of the knight. In glossing a passage that speaks of a 'skilful knight [*Reiter*]', for example, the eleventh-century French talmudic commentator Rashi feels that he has to inform the reader that this man was a Jew, in spite of the fact that this is entirely obvious from the context, precisely because it was so counter-intuitive to Jews that there would be a Jewish knight.²³ As late as a haggada published in Vienna in 1823, the 'righteous son' is depicted as a Middle Eastern scholar wearing a robe and carrying a scroll, while the 'wicked son' is a Roman soldier with a long sword attached to his belt. The iconographic tradition thus represents the continuity of the stereotyping of the bad Jew as one who imitates the martial ideals of the prototypical *goy*, the Roman, while the good Jew is a scholar, in dress more like an abbot than any other European male type.

This, of course, stands in direct and explicit contrast to the models of 'manliness' that the circumambient culture had developed by the nineteenth century. As George Mosse has remarked, 'Manliness drew upon the aristocratic ideal of knighthood as a pattern of virtue in a changing world and a model for some of its behavior.'²⁴ For traditional Jews, the knight and all that he represented, both on the field of battle and in the bedroom of courtly and romantic love, were the essence of *goyim naches*. In a less caustic vein, this contrast could be brought out by citing the following contrast between Freud's masculine ideal and that of a near-contemporary *Ostjude*. The great Lithuanian rabbi and psychologist Israel Salanter had written that the ideal man is sensitive, and that the cure for a lack of sensitivity is 'to revive emotion and to arouse [in oneself] constant concern and care'.²⁵ Freud, for his part, was to describe 'the essence of great men' as 'above all the autonomy and independence of the great man, his divine unconcern which may grow into ruthlessness'.²⁶

Pious Eros: Hasidism and the Modern Jewish Man

Analysing one particularly fascinating Jewish text of the nineteenth century brings many of these conflicts between traditional Jewish culture of gender and its European context to light. Moreover and surprisingly, this analysis reveals the ways in which Hasidism is a movement of at least partial accommodation of Jewish to Romantic culture.²⁷

At the beginning of the volume of legends and sayings of the Besht, Rabbi Israel of the Good Name, who founded Hasidism, the modern Jewish pietistic movement, there is a remarkable legendary account of the origins of this figure, covering his birth, childhood and marriage, up until the point when he 'revealed' himself to the world. A recent scholar has argued quite persuasively that this text actually represents a move in a

nineteenth-century controversy among different Hasidim to establish different models of leadership and authority within the movement.²⁸ Paradoxically, this very 'defect' of the text as a historical source about the founding of Hasidism magnifies its significance for my purposes, for the text seeks to 'reduce' the subversiveness of the image of the Besht and to make him over in the image of the classical Talmud scholar.²⁹ In other words, there is tension within the text itself between two 'redactional' levels that can be read as socio-cultural conflict within the communities that produced the composite text, one in which traditional Jewish masculinity was being reformed by Hasidism and one in which it was being reinstated.

I am not suggesting by this that lives as they were lived necessarily actually followed these models, but the models themselves are a significant cultural fact. Moreover, since the Besht was for much of eastern European Jewry in the nineteenth century a hegemonic figure, to the extent that this text was accepted as canonical (and it was), it would have been effective in reproducing certain gendered roles, whether or not those roles had been actually practised before. Exploring this text carefully will give us, then, some insight into the persistence of the traditional talmudic model in the construction of Jewish gender practices as late as the nineteenth century, or rather, since it is not a line of historical consistency or development that I am tracing, insight into the effectiveness, the materiality, of the talmudic model in informing the gender practices of early modern traditional Jews in the European context, in which quite different gender roles were enforced.

The text begins with a fantastic narrative of the birth of the hero, elements of which will be entirely familiar to many readers. The father of the Besht was captured by pirates who took him away to another country where there were no Jews and sold him. Rabbi Eliezer, the father, served his master so well that the latter appointed him overseer of his house, allowing him to keep the Sabbath. Afterwards, Eliezer was given as a gift to the viceroy of the kingdom. The only task that the slave had was to wash the master's feet when he came home. Otherwise, he spent all of his time studying the Torah and praying in his special chamber. At a later date, the viceroy was unable to help the king in a matter of military strategy until his Jewish slave (who he did not know was Jewish) dreamed the appropriate advice. The king forced the viceroy to reveal whence his information had come, and upon hearing the truth elevated the slave to battle commander. 'He won every battle that the king sent him to fight.'³⁰ The king gave him the viceroy's daughter as a wife, but he did not touch her, finally revealing to her that he was a Jew, in spite of the fact that in that country all Jews were immediately put to death. She gave him gold and silver and helped him escape, but on the way home all was stolen from him. He arrived home

and found his wife still alive, and 'The Besht was born to them, when both of them were close to a hundred.'³¹

Aside from the obvious elements of biblical intertextuality – Eliezer is a combination of Joseph, Moses and Abraham – this story has other meanings for a politics of Jewish maleness. It is a sort of allegorical wish-fulfilment fantasy of threatened Jews. Like the biblical Joseph, Eliezer is able to arrive at political power through dreams afforded to him by God. He also manages to keep his Jewishness in a world that is the limit case of hostile gentile society: there are no other Jews, and Jewishness is punishable by death. Moreover, as in the case of Joseph, this retention of Jewishness is signified in part by his avoidance of sexual intercourse with a non-Jew. He thus achieves wealth, power and sexual access to a princess, all of the signifiers of gentile masculine success; but he refuses all of them. He returns to his humble Jewish existence as poor, weak and married to a poor old Jewish woman. This is how he achieves his true vocation as father of a great mystic. This true Jewish existence had been maintained throughout in the domestic, private, 'female' space of his own room, where he engaged in the non-manly, quintessentially Jewish pursuit of the study of the Torah. In modern terms, it exemplifies the ethics of the *mentsh*, the 'ethics of the household'. At the same time, the story signals that his passion for this inner, 'passive' space is not owing to his inability to perform in the world of manliness, but to his commitment to the alternative values of Jewish male gendering. There is, accordingly, nothing radical or even critical in this sequence *vis-à-vis* the traditions of Jewish masculinity.

This begins to change in the continuation. The gendered overtones of this narrative become palpable in the next sequence, where we find explicit textual marking of its intertextuality, of the cultural heterogeneity that has produced the text:

The boy grew up and was weaned. The time came for his father to die, and he took his son in his arms and he said, 'I see that you will light my candle, and I will not enjoy the pleasure of raising you. My beloved son, remember this all your days: God is with you. Do not fear anything.' (In the name of *Admor*, I heard that it is natural for a son and a father to be closely bound, for as our sages, God bless their memory, have said: 'The talk of the child in the market place is either that of his father or of his mother' [Sukka 56b]. How much closer then are ties between parents and children who are born to them in their old age. For example, Jacob loved Joseph because he was born to him in his old age, and the ties between them were very great, as it is said in the holy Zohar. And it was true here. Although the Besht was a small child, because of the intensity and sincerity of the tie, the words were fixed in his heart.)³²

This is actually quite an extraordinary passage, the meaning of which is not at all obvious on first glance. The editor/compiler of the legends about the founder of Hasidism has received a tradition within which the father spoke to the child upon the former's impending death, holding him in his arms and describing raising the child as pleasure, and provides a gloss explaining this tradition. The gloss marks the site, I would surmise, of a cultural gap between the textual source and the editor of the text, that is presumably between an eighteenth-century Polish source and a nineteenth-century Lithuanian editor, although I do not know whether the chronological or the geographical parameter is the important one.

The gloss, apparently, functions as a justification for what the redactor expected would seem as strangely intimate behaviour of a father towards his son. This interpretation is further borne out by the citation from the Talmud. The talmudic text, after all, does not indicate that sons are particularly close to their fathers; rather, it indicates equal intimacy between children and either of their parents. Its function here, then, must be to support the point that sons are intimate with their fathers as well as with their mothers, and especially when the son is born to the father in his old age. I derive from this, then, two sorts of information. At least in the cultural world of this editor, that of early nineteenth-century Lithuanian Hasidism, fathers were not necessarily physically and emotionally close to their children. But also such intimacy was being promoted by the rabbinical leaders, at any rate by the highly significant Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Ladi, the founder of Habad Hasidism (*Admor* in the text), supporting this norm, moreover, by citing the Talmud.

The sense of conflict around the role of the Jewish male continues in the next section of the text as well:

After the death of his father the child grew up. Because the people of the town revered the memory of his father, they favored the child and sent him to study with a melamed. And he succeeded in his studies. But it was his way to study for a few days and then to run away from school. They would search for him and find him sitting alone in the forest. They would attribute this to his being an orphan. There was no one to look after him and he was a footloose child. Though they brought him again and again to the melamed, he would run away to the forest to be in solitude. In the course of time they gave up in despair and no longer returned him to the melamed. He did not grow up in the accustomed way.³³

The curious contradiction between 'and he succeeded in his studies' and the immediately following running away to the forest marks, once more, the site of a tension within this text between two norms. It would seem that the tradition that the redactor has received is invested in a Besht who was not a student of the Talmud in the classical sense, but a nature mystic, one

who ran away from school and spent time alone in the forest like a Ukrainian pietist.³⁴

We should note the thematization of the opposition between the indoor space of traditional Jewish piety versus the (gentile) outdoors of this radically idiosyncratic figure.³⁵ The 'original' text thus seems to represent a significant breach of the inner cultural boundaries that mark off Jew from gentile. A new form of pietistic, nature-oriented, anti-scholarly, outdoors Jewish leadership is being produced. A delicate semiotic code opposing indoors to outdoors is mobilized throughout this text. Indoors is the place of the Jewish male, while outdoors is the world of the gentiles, with its threats and practices. Our redactor, however, apparently a devotee of the Besht, but at the same time a member of the unique Lithuanian, scholarly branch of Hasidism (whom other Hasidim considered not true Hasidim precisely because of their devotion to study), cannot imagine a Jewish religious leader who would not be a scholar, so the child Besht becomes a successful student who, nevertheless, runs away from school – undoubtedly, as the continuation certifies, for reasons of modesty.

It is the conservative, talmudically oriented revisionist wing of Hasidism that I am interested in here precisely because it is closer to what might be called, for want of a better term, the normative traditional Judaism of nineteenth-century eastern Europe. In the continuation of the narrative, which describes the further adventures of the Besht's youth, we see the same conflicts between the gender roles taken for granted by these conservatives and the roles – remarkably different and romantic – inscribed in this account of Hasidism's founding being played out:

He hired himself out as the melamed's assistant, to take the children to school and to the synagogue, to teach them to say in a pleasant voice, 'Amen, let His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity, kedushah, and amen.' This was his work – holy work with school children whose conversations are without sin. While he walked with the children he would sing with them enthusiastically in a pleasant voice that could be heard far away. His prayers were elevated higher and higher, and there was great satisfaction above, as there was with the songs that the Levites had sung in the Temple. And it was time of rejoicing in heaven. And Satan came also among them. Since Satan understood what must come to pass, he was afraid that the time was approaching when he would disappear from the earth. He transformed himself into a sorcerer. Once while the Besht was walking with the children, singing enthusiastically with pleasure, the sorcerer transformed himself into a beast, a werewolf. He attacked and frightened them, and they ran away. Some of them became sick, heaven help us, and could not continue their studies. Afterwards, the Besht recalled the words of his father, God bless his memory, not to fear anything since God is with him. He took strength in the Lord, his God, and went to the householders of the community, the fathers

of the children, and urged them to return the children to his care. He would fight with the beast and kill it in the name of God. 'Should school children go idle when idleness is a great sin?' They were convinced by his words. He took a good sturdy club with him. While he walked with the children, singing pleasantly, chanting with joy, this beast attacked them. He ran toward it, hit it on its forehead, and killed it. The corpse of the gentile sorcerer was found lying on the ground. After that the Besht became the watchman of the Beth-hamidrash. This was his way: while all people of the house of study were awake, he slept and while they slept, he was awake, doing his pure works of study and prayer until the time came when people would awaken. Then he would go back to sleep. They thought that he slept from the beginning until the end of the night.³⁶

The text here manifests a powerful cognizance of the tension between its valorization of 'diasporic' models of Jewish masculinity and the inability of such men to 'protect' Jewish children from antisemitic violence. The Jewish boy who did not grow up like other Jewish boys is able to protect the children from the gentile sorcerer who wishes to eat them up.

The 'original' level of the text thus promotes a revisionist model of masculinity, one closer in certain of its parameters – protecting dependants – to the chivalric ideal of manliness than to the scholarly ideal of the *Yeshiva Bokhur*.³⁷ However, within the scholarly community that is promulgating this particular version of his life, it is not this ability that brings him praise, but, once more like his father, his secret studies of the Torah. In other words, while the original Hasidic text emphasizes the overturning of traditional Jewish norms of masculinity in the Hasidic movement in favour of those current in their European context, the revised version of the text wishes to preserve those very norms through the same text and the same exemplary figure. The unusual, subversive (but also protective) aspects of the Besht are all placed in the outdoors, but his true nature as a Jew is revealed in the secret activities that he carries on in the Beth-hamidrash. The message is clearly that on the surface he is somehow more like 'them', but truly he is a real Jew.

It is not his prowess in battle against antisemitic demons that will win him a wife, as would be predicted by versions of chivalric culture, but again his devotion to the indoor pursuit of Torah study: 'When the people of the community saw that our teacher Israel was studying with Rabbi Adam's son, they said that it was probably on account of Israel's father that Rabbi Adam's son came here to care for Israel. It seemed to them that Israel was behaving in the right way. And so they gave him a wife.'³⁸ Precisely the qualifications that would render a young man fit to be a monk within European Christian culture, scholarliness, quietism, modesty and a spiritual aptitude, are those that qualify him to be a husband in this Jewish culture. This is almost explicitly contrasted with the

qualities that certified his father as appropriate spouse for the daughter of the gentile viceroy in the sequence discussed above. There, of course, it was winning battles that made him a desirable husband. The point is not, then, that Christian cultures lacked similar valorized models of 'feminized' masculinity, but that they assigned this male type an entirely different place within the erotic economy of the society. This parallels my reading of late antiquity as well, within which the Christian ascetic demasculinized male is also desexualized, rewarded with saintliness, while the 'feminized' Rabbi is rewarded with a wife.³⁹ In Christian culture, speaking very broadly, the feminized male was de-eroticized, while in Jewish culture, he was projected as the husband *par excellence*, and even, as we shall see in the next section, as favoured object of female desire. Indeed, a major part of the 'biography' of the holy rabbi is devoted to making an appropriate match for him.

This point will be borne out further in analysing the detailed account of the Besht's marriage that follows:

Our master, Rabbi Gershon of Kutu, was head of the rabbinical court in the holy community of Brody. His father, our master Abraham, had a law-suit to settle with one of the people in the community where the Besht was staying, so he went there. He asked his opponent to travel with him to the holy community of Brody to settle the issue between them according to the law of the Torah. But the man said to him: 'There is with us here a teacher, eminent in the knowledge of Torah, who is a righteous judge. Whenever a case is brought before him both sides agree completely with his decision because he clearly explains the verdict. Let us go to him and present our arguments, and, sir, if you are not satisfied with his decision, then I will go with you to the holy community of Brody.' He accepted his advice and they went to him. When our master and rabbi, Rabbi Abraham, came before the Besht, he immediately was inspired with the holy spirit *and perceived that his daughter was to be the future wife of the Besht* [my emphasis]. At that time it was the custom of great scholars that when a worthy guest came he would give an explanation of a difficult passage. And the Besht clarified a complex point in the *Rambam* with great subtlety. He continued to do so until Abraham's soul became attracted to the Besht's soul and their souls were in accord.⁴⁰

The narrative goes on to relate how the Besht returned such a just decision in the case that had been brought before him that once more, as in the past, both sides went away satisfied. His future father-in-law had so fallen in love with him, moreover, that he offered him the hand of his daughter, which the Besht accepted on condition that he should not be revealed in Brody as the great scholar that he was.

For all its apparent subversiveness, therefore, this narrative is characterized by the remarkable continuity between its norms of masculinity and ones that go back as far in Jewish culture as the Babylonian Talmud itself. Just as in talmudic narratives that I have discussed elsewhere,⁴¹ it is the acceptance of the life of the Torah student, the Besht's secret life as Torah scholar, opposed to his public life as 'watchman' and 'footloose' wanderer in the forest, that renders him an appropriate erotic object for Rabbi Abraham to be connected with via the marriage to him of his daughter.

The sequence that follows is almost a direct reversal of romance in that the daughter keeps insisting that she will follow her father's wishes in the marriage plot, however surprising they may seem. The question is never whether she will be willing to marry the intended but whether her brother will fall in love with him as her father had. The father, having died in the meantime, has left behind a document indicating that his daughter is to marry someone named Israel, without background or family lineage. His son, the brother of the prospective bride, is shocked but she says, 'If our father thought the match was proper, we shouldn't doubt his decision.' The Besht, of course, as is his way, exacerbates the situation by showing up to claim his bride in 'clothes like those worn by loafers. He put on a short coat and a broad belt, *he changed his demeanour* and manner of speech.'⁴²

The short coat signifies two things, both encompassed in the term '*batlanim*', translated 'loafers'; it indicates modernity and the aping of gentile fashions. The appropriate clothing would be a long robe more similar to the robe of a Christian monk than to the short coat of a doctor, soldier or businessman.⁴³ Once more, we have the theme of the Besht as openly disdainful of traditional Jewish social norms, but secretly in full harmony with them. The daughter, notwithstanding the fact that according to Jewish law she has every right to refuse a match, nevertheless chooses once more to follow her father's desire. He reveals himself in secret to the bride and swears her to secrecy as well. They are married, and her brother, who is also a great rabbinic scholar, endeavours to teach his brother-in-law the Torah, but the latter pretends both ignorance and inability to learn, whereupon the brother drives both sister and her husband away. After several years of living as a semi-hermit in the mountains, digging clay that his wife sells in the town, the Besht and his wife return to the town of the brother, where the brother takes pity on his sister.

This description of their lives follows:

After that our master and rabbi, Rabbi Gershon, rented a place for the Besht in a certain village where he would be able to earn a living. And there he achieved perfection. He built a house of seclusion in the forest. He prayed and studied there all day and all night every day of the week, and he returned home only on the Sabbath. He also kept there white garments for the

Sabbath. He also had a bathhouse and a mikveh. His wife was occupied with earning a living, and God blessed the deeds of her hand and she was successful. They were hospitable to guests: they gave them food and drink with great respect. When a guest came she sent for the Besht and he returned and served him. The guest never knew about the Besht.⁴⁴

The points do not need labouring. First of all, as was frequently the case in eastern European elite (and ideal) Jewish culture at this time, a wife is working successfully at some trade or business in order to support a husband's religious and scholarly activities.⁴⁵ This issues in a reversal of the topoi of public and private that encode male and female within European culture.⁴⁶ Although, to be sure, those topoi are themselves seriously open to question, they are nevertheless active as commonplaces and as norms, and much of upper-class Jewish culture reverses them exactly, offering the private spaces of study and prayer as most appropriate to the male, and the public spaces of getting and spending to the female.⁴⁷ In some traditional communities, men even did housework while their wives supported them by working outside the home or in business.⁴⁸ Once more, we observe within this short paragraph the contradictions that mark this text as a site of conflict over these ideals. In the first sentence we are informed that the Besht is installed in a village where he would be able to earn a living, but then it turns out that what he was really doing was praying and studying, while only pretending to be a householder. It was his wife who was entirely supporting him economically. Thus where early Hasidism seems to have been anxious to recreate an economically productive male ideal, as well as resisting the disdain for such men within elite Ashkenazi culture,⁴⁹ the redactor's level of the text reinstates this ideal as such. This is indicative of a virtual reversal in the traditional Ashkenazi ideal of gendered positions *vis-à-vis* the general culture, except, of course, for monks.⁵⁰ The most remarkable aspect of this narrative, however, is simply then that it is a story of a married monk, a story, I repeat, within which a man fit to be a religious celibate according to European Christian mores, is married.

It seems, then, that while we can learn very little of the history of the founding of Hasidism in the eighteenth century from such a clearly legendary text, we can derive some knowledge of social norms and ideals that informed its authorship in the nineteenth.⁵¹ This text bears out Percy Cohen's observation that 'the values and status inhering in the physically passive, scholar idea safeguarded the pre-emancipation Jew's sense of masculinity.' The Besht finally 'reveals' himself as an appropriate marriage object for his brother-in-law, that is, as scholar and mystic, as he had done earlier for his father-in-law, and all is peaceful once he takes on his shawl as leader of the Hasidim, the sect of the pious.

'Give Me a Bridegroom Slender and Pale': The 'Effeminate' Talmudist as Erotic Object for Women

In order to construct my proposition, however, that the passive, pale, gentle, and physically weak *Yeshiva Bokhur* was an object of erotic desire, I will have to show him as desirable to female subjects as well, not only to fathers and brothers. Otherwise it is too easy to 'demystify' the eroticism of the homosocial attachment as being a mere effect of the seeking of cultural capital on the part of the male 'lovers' of the scholar and not a truly affective, erotic attachment, in spite of the phraseology of 'souls loving souls' that the texts embrace. Here I tender a semi-documentary text, taken from the autobiography of a Polish Jew, Yehiel Yeshayahu Trunk (1887–1961) and relating the story of the marriage of his great-great-grandmother at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁵² This story is all the more revealing in that it portrays the desire of a socially and economically independent woman:

His mother, Devora, was a poor and simple orphan, who came from Plotsk. She had a stall in the market, and from this labor supported herself. When she had gathered an amount of money from her standing in the market for long days in sweltering heat and freezing cold – and she had for some time been sexually mature – she came to the local Rabbi, Rabbi Leibush the Sharp, showed him the fund of gold coins that she had gathered through her toil, and requested that he, Rabbi Leibush the Sharp, would provide for her a husband who was a Talmudic scholar. Rabbi Leibush answered her that he knew in Plotsk a Jew, somewhat advanced in age, who was a great Talmudic scholar, and who was supporting himself through teaching children. The man was poor and destitute, but an outstanding sage. . . .

The damsel Devora asked Rabbi Leibush the Sharp: 'Is this poor schoolmaster truly a great Talmudic scholar?'

'Yes, my daughter,' answered her Rabbi Leibush, 'he is an outstanding Talmudic sage.'

'If so,' said the orphan Devora, 'I agree.'

From this union was born only one son, he was Rabbi Yehoshuale Kutner.⁵³

This is truly a remarkable story in many ways and paradigmatic, I suggest, of rabbinic culture. We have here several reversals of the gendered expectations of bourgeois European culture. First of all, the dominant, desiring subject is clearly the female one. It is she who seeks to find a husband. It is important to emphasize, moreover, that she is totally independent of father and brother and any other male who could directly control her desire. To be sure, her desire is constructed by her cultural formation, but then so is all desire, and that, of course, is precisely my

point. Second, in order to find the sort of husband that she desires, she must be economically well established. She accomplishes this task, presumably starting from nothing, through great effort. The prospective bridegroom, on the other hand, is working as the Jewish equivalent of a governess. I do not mean, of course, to imply that he is doing women's work from the point of view of Jewish culture; he is not. However, in terms of a western European marriage plot, it would be a young woman who would be supporting herself through the honourable but somewhat humble work of taking care of others' children until an economically established man would come along to rescue her into a marriage. Here, once more, the plot is reversed. Although the text does not make this explicit, we should understand that from now on the husband will devote himself entirely to study, no longer forced to waste his time on the teaching of children and no longer oppressed by grinding poverty. He now has a proper wife to support him. At least for the narrative's purposes, it is simply assumed that he would agree. Finally, the story has a happy end, because although only one child was born of the union, he was a very famous talmudic sage and rabbi in his own right, the eminent Rabbi Yehoshuale Kutner. In a sense, that is the whole point of the story, to narrate the birth of the hero. Importantly, this same Rabbi Yehoshuale's wife came from a similar family structure. As Trunk describes his other great-great-grandmother, 'Ratza was the central figure in the management of the business and the household. Her name appears in the place of honor in the family history. Her husband, grandpa Haim, remained obscure.'⁵⁴ To be sure, however, this is also a story that has been filtered through a male textuality; yet it is not, I suggest, entirely imaginary that within this cultural formation, such a man, a slightly ageing, economically ineffective but brilliant talmudic scholar, would be desired as an object for marriage on the part of a young, nubile and independent girl.⁵⁵ Nothing could be more directly in opposition to the ideals of masculinity of romantic, 'civilized' society. What we observe here is not, however, a 'primitive' unawareness of the evolved norms of western European culture, but a principled and deliberate reversal and rejection of those norms.

Tannhäuser, or, The Apotheosis of Goyim Naches

For the 'emancipated' Jew of Vienna, the Jew living a life 'in between', to adopt Leo Spitzer the younger's evocative terminology, this representation would have been transvalued into something negative and shameful, especially as two discourses were intensifying at the *fin-de-siècle*, the discourses of misogyny and homophobia.⁵⁶ These two discourses, moreover, were profoundly related at this time owing to the associations of male

homosexuality with passivity, that is, with femaleness; and hatred of femaleness was raised to a fever pitch such as it seems not to have known before.⁵⁷ The strange phenomenon known as Jewish Wagnerism and its undeclared and surprising connections with other Jewish cultural developments are a symptom of this disorder among Jews.⁵⁸

Among the avatars of Romantic manhood that Europe produced in the nineteenth century, Richard Wagner was certainly representative, and that paragon of the 'new Jewish man', Theodor Herzl, has invited us to see Wagner and especially *Tannhäuser* as the 'most relevant of intertexts for his thought; 'My only recreation was listening to Wagner's music in the evening, particularly to *Tannhäuser*, an opera which I attended as often as it was produced. Only on the evening when there was no opera did I have any doubts as to the truth of my ideas.'⁵⁹ To corroborate this point and indicate that it was not a passing fancy, I adduce the fact that at the Second Zionist Congress, Herzl ordered the music of *Tannhäuser* to be played.⁶⁰

Steven Beller has recently produced a compelling reading of *Tannhäuser* as Zionist allegory, as Herzl might have experienced it, thus accounting for its effect on him. After carefully allowing for the possibility that it was just the glorious music that inspired Herzl, Beller suggests that for him there was more there, that *Tannhäuser* himself is a symbol of 'the Jew', who has spent 'a long time in the arms of Venus in her grotto. Now he wants to be freed from the grotto (ghetto) and achieves his wish, reentering human society.'⁶¹ Unfortunately, the fact that he has been released from the ghetto has not freed our hero from his moral faults; he remains a Jew, caught within the walls of the new (spiritual) ghetto.⁶² He goes to Rome in an attempt to achieve absolution and thus final assimilation back into German Christian society. Beller stunningly associates this moment with Herzl's former plan to go to the pope and offer to convert all of the Jews in return for his aid against the antisemites. Coming back from Rome, having failed in his attempt to win acceptance from the pope, the Jew seeks to return to his grotto/ghetto of sensuous, material, effeminate indulgence and corruption. However he is saved by that figure of pure womanhood, Elizabeth, who translates him into another world – Zion. Beller concludes: '*Tannhäuser* can thus be seen as a great acting out of the redemption of the Jews from their own degeneracy and from their rejection by Western society. Whether or not one believes that they were degenerate [as Herzl did], the fact remains that it was quite possible for Herzl to be inspired by Wagner's *Tannhäuser* in a way quite in keeping with his newfound Zionist faith.'⁶³ Beller's reading can be corroborated from a source that he apparently did not see, namely Wagner himself, for as Paul Lawrence Rose has pointed out, 'Wagner himself referred to the Flying Dutchman as an "Ahasverus of the Ocean", while the parallelism of *Tannhäuser* and the Wandering Jew would have been impressed on him by his friend and

mentor in German myth, the Dresden librarian J. G. Grasse, who recognized the correspondences between the Tannhäuser and Ahasverus legends.⁶⁴ Ambivalent as the Wandering Jew is *vis-à-vis* 'real' Jews, this association could certainly have impressed itself on a Jew such as Herzl in such wise as to further the Zionist reading of the opera, particularly in so far as Heine and Byron for instance had used the Ahasverus myth as a symbol for Jewish vitality.⁶⁵

Beller, however, both ignores and explicitly discounts the gendered aspects of this appropriation of the Tannhäuser myth as an allegory of Zionism. This text represents a distillation of German Romantic ideals of masculinity, and thus in the eyes of Jews (and others) who would be critical of such ideals, the apotheosis of *goyim naches*. Let me begin with a moment that Beller ostracizes openly, the fact that Tannhäuser's redemption is bought at the expense of his death.⁶⁶ In the very play of Herzl's, however, that Beller invokes as a source for his interpretation of Herzl's feeling for Wagner, *The New Ghetto*, this ideology of redemption through death is clearly promoted. As I have argued elsewhere,⁶⁷ this was of a piece with other aspects of Herzl's thought, both 'pre-Zionist' and Zionist. Second, *Tannhäuser* certainly promulgates the notion of love as more spiritual than sexual, of sweet sorrows and the extended, if not permanent, deferment of gratification. We should remember at this point Bloch's analysis of this discourse as being deeply, structurally misogynist in character.⁶⁸ Third, and perhaps most relevant, the human activity to which Tannhäuser wishes to return, that he desperately wants to escape from the grotto/ghetto for, is making war, in order to be readmitted to the homoerotic world of the martial *Männerbund*.⁶⁹ It was especially through violence – duelling – that Herzl imagined that the 'honour' of the Jews would be restored.⁷⁰ It is really no wonder at all that *Tannhäuser*, as no other text, inspired him to write *The Jewish State*.

Beller argues:

Given that we know Wagner saw the present world of 'life and art' as controlled by 'modern Jews,' whose 'sensual' forms of (linguistic) expression disgusted him, it can well be argued that the world that Wagner, the Ahasverian artist, is trying to escape in *Tannhäuser* is precisely the perverse world of 'Jews in music.' Elizabeth, 'the woman who, as a heavenly star, leads Tannhäuser up from the hedonistic den of the Venusberg,' is in effect redeeming Wagner from an Ahasverian existence in a Jewish world.⁷¹

Perceptively reading the nexus between Herzl's adoration of this text and his Zionism, Beller argues for a threefold Wagnerian analysis of the 'Jewish Question' that was identical to Herzl's: (1) the Jewish problem was caused by the fact that there were Jews, that is, in Beller's language, by 'an insufficiently thorough, perhaps impossible, integration'; (2) mixtures of

German and Jewish culture were 'pernicious'; and (3) the only solutions were either the complete disappearance (*Untergang!*) of the Jews through total assimilation or their exit from Europe to somewhere else. Beller writes:

From our perspective this might appear quite horrendous, but, with a few very minor changes, this was also the diagnosis and prescribed remedy that Herzl proposed in 1895, except that by then he had come to the conclusion that the only true remedy was not complete assimilation but rather Wagner's other option, the exit or emigration of the Jews – in Herzl's version, to the 'Promised Land'.⁷²

It is not clear to me how Herzl having adopted such a view would make it appear any less horrendous, and, moreover, the bit of intended amelioration at the end is hardly valid, since Herzl in 1895 was not dreaming of any Promised Land at all, but only of a very Wagnerian exit of the Jews from Europe – to Africa, in point of fact. Careful study of Herzl's writings will show how thoroughly he, like other half-assimilated Jews of the *fin-de-siècle*, was possessed of the ideology of 'manliness' that, as the crescendo of a millennia-old European gender ideology, had overrun European culture at that time.⁷³

It is well known that Max Nordau, the second-in-command of the Zionist movement in the early decades, longed for the creation of muscle-Jews, the very antithesis of the Jewish ideal that I have just been describing. As late as 1938, in a haggada published in Budapest, such a muscle-Jew is portrayed as the 'wicked son'. It is fascinating to note that there is no attempt to render this figure as non-Jewish or even as non-religious. He clearly has a yarmulke on his head. What marks him as the 'wicked son', then, is only one characteristic, the muscularity of his body. Such bodily development is being deployed in this icon as the virtual equivalent of the martial knightliness of the earlier symbols of a dystopic Jewish masculinity, as an epitome of *goyim naches*.⁷⁴

Significantly, then, we see that this is not a racist representation, however contemptuous of the surrounding 'goyish' culture. Another very rich passage from Trunk's memoirs describes in detail the ways of a Jew who represented the antithesis of the Talmud scholar as male ideal. Trunk's grandmother rented for a time an apartment of a Jewish farmer, a certain Simcha Geige. Here is how the man is described:

As I remember him, Simcha Geige walked around all day, in the manner of peasants, in an undershirt and trousers. He would get up with the goyim and the chickens. An odor of the barn was exuded from him. Simcha Geige was friendly with the peasants and used to curse them in accord with their custom. His language was authentically peasant-like and the company of peasants

was more pleasant to him than the intimacy of the Rabbi of Strikev. Simcha Geige was never separated from the pistol in his pocket and used to have a wild pleasure when he was shooting a few rounds among the trees. The echo of the shots in the wood, the voice of the cuckoo all around, the lowing of the cattle, the calls of the chickens and the geese, the mysterious humming of the ancient and massive oaks in the forests of Laginsky, the song of wind and rain, aroused in the crude and primitive heart of Simcha Geige, a sweeter echo than the delicate and fragile sighs of the study-tables of the righteous to which grandpa Baruch used to drag him on occasion. Similarly to the peasants, Simcha Geige had a certain contempt for the delicate and pale city-Jews. . . . His wife, Sore-Bina, a small and corpulent Jewish woman with an old-fashioned yellow wig, was deathly afraid of him, and thus, in trembling terror, became pregnant by him and bore him his sons, who were like him, crude and healthy of body.⁷⁵

Such is the romantic hero in the eyes of the Jewish culture of eastern Europe of the nineteenth century. Many of the features of this Simcha Geige are in fact endemic to that cultural tradition: wild pleasure in physicality, love of weapons, fierce attachment to nature and to locale, healthy body and hard work. All of these features are encoded within the Jewish text, however, as features that mark him not as an example of a high form of masculine humanity but as a very low, crude, primitive, violent and cruel one – a Jew who, like gentiles, has contempt for the effeminately marked scholars and for his wife, whom he terrorizes as well.⁷⁶

It is in the Romantic ideology of manliness that Wagner promulgates in texts like *Tristan und Isolde* and *Tannhäuser* that we can discover the ultimate development of what Jews had derisively called *goyim naches*. At the *fin-de-siècle*, and especially in the Viennese milieu, many Jews were desperately seeking their own *naches* (peace, as well as satisfaction) in becoming just as male and just as Aryan as Tannhäuser himself and his creator. Herzlian Zionism is only one of the manifestations of this transformation in the gender of the Jew – male and female. Although it is perhaps easy to ‘exonerate’ Jews who, in the early part of this century, considered these re/deformations of Jewish masculinity, the substitution as an ideal of muscle-Jew for *mentsh*, it is much harder to do so in the second half of that same century, and particularly after such writers as Dijkstra and Klaus Theweleit have demonstrated the nearly direct connections between these masculinist ideologies and Nazi genocide.⁷⁷ *Goyim naches* can be interpreted now not as a primitive inability to perceive the virtues of western civilization, but as a prescient sign of awareness of the devastating defects and effects of that cultural formation.

Notes

For Chana and Galit, true friends.

I wish to thank Marc Kaminsky, Thomas J. Luxon, Naomi Seidman and Steven Zipperstein for reading an earlier version of the article and for very helpful critical and encouraging comments. My research assistant, Jonathan Schorsch, was of very great help in the preparation of this text as well. A longer version of this text can now be found in Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, *Contraversions: Studies in Jewish Literature, Culture, and Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 33–80.

- 1 Sigmund Freud, ‘The Interpretation of Dreams (First Part)’, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey and Anna Freud, trans. Alix Strachey and James Strachey, vol. 4 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), p. 197.
- 2 This point had been earlier remarked by Ernst Simon and otherwise ignored (and obscured by Freud himself) in the quite voluminous literature on this moment in Freud’s texts. Ernst Simon, ‘Sigmund Freud the Jew’, *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* (London: Leo Baeck Institute, 1957), p. 271.
- 3 Sigmund Freud, ‘The Interpretation of Dreams (Second Part)’, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey and Anna Freud, trans. Alix Strachey and James Strachey, vol. 5 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), pp. 360–2.
- 4 William J. McGrath, *Freud’s Discovery of Psychoanalysis: The Politics of Hysteria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 64.
- 5 Martin S. Bergmann, ‘Moses and the Evolution of Freud’s Jewish Identity’, *The Israel Annals of Psychiatry and Related Disciplines*, 14 (March 1976), p. 12.
- 6 Marc Kaminsky argues that this term functions as a secularization and universalization of the traditional term Jew in his ‘Discourse and Self-Formation: The Concept of *Mentsh* in Modern Yiddish Culture’, unpublished paper (New York, 1994), pp. 298–9. For a relatively early use of the term in a religious context, one could cite the following in the name of the late nineteenth-century Lithuanian Rabbi Israel Salanter: ‘The Maharal of Prague, of blessed memory, created a golem. It is a great wonder, but it is far more wondrous to transmute the nature of the materiality of Man and to make out of it a *mentsh*’ (Hillel Goldberg, *Israel Salanter: Text, Structure, Idea: The Ethics and Theology of an Early Psychologist of the Unconscious* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1982), p. 210).
- 7 At the same time, I should emphasize (following remarks to me by Marc Kaminsky) that this semiotics, while reversing the definition of noble masculinity current in the European culture, nevertheless maintains the class-coding of the term. In other words what this culture takes to be noble may have shifted but there is still a hierarchy whereby a privileged class gets to embody the cultural ideal. Furthermore, it should be stated very clearly that once more, while the cultural ideal is a reversal and contestation of European notions of the manly, it also explicitly leaves gender hierarchy in place, since precisely the ignorant, virile, strong and economically active male is frequently derided as being like a woman (*Yiddene!*) in this culture. Chava Weissler, ‘For Women and for Men Who Are Like Women’, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 5 (1989), pp. 7–24.

- 8 Marc Kaminsky, letter to the author (New York, 1994).
- 9 Naomi Seidman, *A Marriage Made in Heaven: The Sexual Politics of Hebrew and Yiddish*, Contraversions (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997).
- 10 In emphasizing here *Yiddishkayt*, i.e. Ashkenazi secular culture, it should not be understood that it is intended to exclude modern Sefardic or eastern Jewish culture. These simply must be made the object of study in their own right from this historical and theoretical perspective before any similar conclusions could be drawn.
- 11 Donald E. Hall, 'Muscular Christianity: Reading and Writing the Male Social Body', in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. Donald E. Hall, Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture, 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 3–13.
- 12 Charles Mopsik, 'The Body of Engenderment in the Hebrew Bible, the Rabbinic Tradition and the Kabbalah', in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, 1, ed. Michel Feher et al. (New York: Zone Books, 1989), pp. 48–73.
- 13 R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 114.
- 14 Sheila Briggs, 'Images of Women and Jews in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century German Theology', in *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Reality*, ed. Clarissa W. Atkinson, Constance H. Buchanan and Margaret R. Miles (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), pp. 226–59.
- 15 Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny*, pp. 113–14.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 114.
- 17 Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 109–18.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 111.
- 19 Thomas J. Luxon, letter to the author (1995).
- 20 Robin Morgan, 'The Politics of Sado-Masochist Fantasies', in *Against Sadomasochism: A Radical Feminist Analysis*, ed. Robin Ruth Linden, Darlene R. Pagano, Diana E. H. Russell and Susan Leigh Star (San Francisco: Frog in the Well, 1982), pp. 109–23.
- 21 John Murray Cuddihy, *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Lévi-Strauss and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity*, with a new preface by the author (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987); Estelle Roith, *The Riddle of Freud: Jewish Influences on his Theory of Female Sexuality*, The New Library of Psychoanalysis (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987).
- 22 Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture*, The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics, 25 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 53.
- 23 Rashi ad Yevamot, 121b.
- 24 George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 23.
- 25 Goldberg, *Israel Salanter*, p. 278.
- 26 Sigmund Freud, 'Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey and Anna Freud, trans. Alix Strachey and James Strachey, vol. 23 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), pp. 109–10.
- 27 For an illuminating account of closely related ways that Hasidism involves

- accommodations of the sexual ideology of European Christian culture, see David Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), pp. 121–48.
- 28 Moshe Rosman, *Founder of Hasidism: A Quest for the Historical Ba'al Shem Tov*, Contraversions: Critical Studies in Jewish Literature, Culture, and Society, 5 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), p. 12.
- 29 For this shift towards a more conservative, mainstream rabbinism within Hasidism, see Biale, *Eros and the Jews*, p. 122. Rosman for his part has thoroughly demystified the legendary and popular accounts of Hasidism and shown that within his own context the Besht was hardly subversive. The very contrast between the eighteenth-century 'reality' exposed by Rosman's careful research and the images in the later legendary text only enhances the value of the latter as a historical source for cultural conflict in the later period. Rosman remarks, 'As primarily ideological reifications, most descriptions of the Ba'al Shem Tov [Besht] over the past two hundred years or so tell relatively little about him, but very much about the issues confronting Jewish culture in the Western world beginning at the end of the eighteenth-century. . . . With continual re-invention, the Ba'al Shem Tov can authoritatively epitomize or serve as a counterpoint to one cultural trend or another' (Rosman, *Founder of Hasidism*, p. 210). My analysis would be impossible without Rosman's work.
- 30 Dan Ben-Amos and Jerome R. Mintz (trans. and eds), *In Praise of the Ba'al Shem Tov [Shivhei Ha-Besht]: The Earliest Collection of Legends About the Founder of Hasidism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970) 10.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.
- 34 Some have speculated, indeed, that Hasidism is in significant fashion a product of the 'influence' of Ukrainian Pietism on Judaism at this time. This would explain the identity of the Besht's teacher, Rabbi Adam (Biale, *Eros and the Jews*, p. 124).
- 35 For the outdoors as the realm of the 'other' in quite a different but related context, see *ibid.*, p. 67.
- 36 Ben-Amos and Mintz, *Ba'al Shem Tov*, pp. 11–13.
- 37 Vern L. Bullough, 'On Being a Male in the Middle Ages', in *Medieval Masculinities*, ed. Clare A. Lees, Medieval Cultures, 7 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 34.
- 38 Ben-Amos and Mintz, *Ba'al Shem Tov*, p. 17.
- 39 Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, pp. 99–102.
- 40 Ben-Amos and Mintz, *Ba'al Shem Tov*, p. 19.
- 41 Daniel Boyarin, 'Homotopia: The Feminized Jewish Man and the Lives of Women in Late Antiquity', *Differences*, 7, 2 (Summer 1995).
- 42 Ben-Amos and Mintz, *Ba'al Shem Tov*, p. 21.
- 43 The ironies of this term in this context are fabulous. People who work as doctors or businessmen are called 'loafers', while those who spend their time in study are not. On the other hand, in talmudic times, the term is used precisely for those who devote their entire lives to study and prayer, but it is there a positively coded signifier. We see the multi-layered heterogeneity (class-inflected) of any given term of cultural discourse, and the same is true for gendered terms.
- 44 Ben-Amos and Mintz, *Ba'al Shem Tov*, p. 27.

- 45 Of course, this pattern was (and could be) only a minority pattern and an ideal model, since in most families both members of the couple worked to support the family. Similarly, the commonly held picture of very early marriages among east European Jews of the nineteenth century has been contested on demographic and archival grounds. However, it remains the case that this was the common pattern for the scholarly elite (Shaul Stampfer, 'Gender Differentiation and Education of the Jewish Woman in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe', *Polin: A Journal of Polish Jewish Studies*, 7 (1992), pp. 63–87. It is precisely this elite that represents the discourse of ideal masculinity that I am studying in this book.
- 46 Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, pp. 157–62.
- 47 The class stratification is, of course, highly important, and were I intending social history, it would be crucial. However, it is precisely the play of elite cultural models – understood as social practice in their own right – with which I am concerned here. It must not be forgotten, nevertheless, how problematic the connections between these representations and 'reality' are.
- 48 Stampfer, 'Gender Differentiation', p. 85.
- 49 Marc Kaminsky, 'Discourse and Self-Formation: The Concept of *Mentsh* in Modern Yiddish Culture', *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 54, 4 (1994), p. 302.
- 50 Cf. the distinctly negative reading given this reversal by one 'enlightened' nineteenth-century Jew who describes his sexual problems upon early marriage as having been exacerbated by the fact that he was a 'feminine male', while his bride was a 'masculine female' (Mordecai Aaron Guenzburg, quoted in Biale, *Eros and the Jews*, p. 155). One wonders whether this was his judgement at the time or only after extensive exposure to 'European' culture. One hint that this might be true is Guenzburg's further praise of 'the customs of countries where men work and women stay at home' (*ibid.*, p. 160), which suggests to me, at any rate, that having adopted the gender ideology of the European bourgeois he was bound to see traditional Jewish gender practice as a reversal of the proper and natural order. This is obviously not a definitive argument but seems to me suggestive nevertheless.
- 51 Cf. n. 29 above.
- 52 For more and other forms of documentation, see Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, pp. 68–9.
- 53 Yehiel Yeshayahu Trunk, *Polin: Memories and Portraits*, trans. Ezra Fleischer (Jerusalem: Sifrat Hapoalim, 1962), pp. 6–7.
- 54 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- 55 For a sensitive and nuanced account of the problem of writing Jewish women's history on the basis of the autobiographical accounts of male relatives, see Iris Parush, 'Women Readers as Agents for Social Change among East European Jewish Society in the Nineteenth Century', *Gender and History*, vol. 9, I, April 1997, pp. 60–82, and especially the following: 'Most of the testimonies about female personalities come from male members of the family. Only toward the turn of the century do we begin to find memoirs and autobiographies portraying women born in the second half of the nineteenth century from a feminine point of view. Regrettably few of these contain evidence from a firsthand source. Perusal of such books can indeed yield valuable tidbits of information about the education and reading habits of these women, and perchance even something about their outlook on life. But rarely do they offer a glimpse of their inner world' (pp. 2–3). Precisely the same problem and promise attend my own project (which is dependent, in part, on the same texts as Parush's).
- 56 Laurence Senelick, 'The Homosexual as Villain and Victim in Fin-de-Siècle Drama', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 4, 2 (October 1993), pp. 201–29; Ed Cohen, *Talk on the Wilde Side: Towards a Genealogy of Male Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
- 57 Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*; Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Penguin, 1990).
- 58 For an analysis of the most recent forms of this cultural phenomenon, see Lawrence D. Mass, *Confessions of a Jewish Wagnerite: Being Gay and Jewish in America*, foreword by Gottfried Wagner, Cassell Lesbian and Gay Studies (London and New York: Cassell, 1994).
- 59 Theodor Herzl, *Zionist Writings: Essays and Addresses*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Herzl Press, 1973), p. 17, on the writing of his book *The Jewish State*, cited in Amos Elon, *Herzl* (New York: Schocken, 1986), p. 3. I thank Jonathan Boyarin for reminding me of this key text.
- 60 Steven Beller, 'Herzl, Wagner, and the Ironies of "True Emancipation"' in *Tainted Greatness: Antisemitism and Cultural Heroes*, ed. Nancy A. Harrowitz, Themes in the History of Philosophy (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), p. 128.
- 61 Beller, 'Herzl', p. 150.
- 62 For the term 'The New Ghetto', the title of Herzl's most famous play, see discussion of this text in Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, pp. 285–96.
- 63 Beller, 'Herzl', p. 150.
- 64 Paul Lawrence Rose, *Wagner: Race and Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 37.
- 65 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 66 Beller, 'Herzl', pp. 151–2.
- 67 Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, pp. 295–6.
- 68 In my forthcoming project, tentatively entitled *Christianity as Queer Theory*, I hope (writing in 1997), DV, to give a much more complex and nuanced, indeed partially and ironically redemptive reading to such 'resistances to heterosexuality' than I was moved to do at the time that I wrote this text (in 1995).
- 69 Cf. also Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 137 on the mythic or symbolic aspect of the friendship of Herzl and Nordau.
- 70 Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, p. 291.
- 71 Beller, Herzl, p. 138.
- 72 *Ibid.*, p. 139.
- 73 Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*; Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*.
- 74 A recent haggada put out by very traditionalist groups in Palestine/Israel has the wicked son as a soccer player! Only since the advent of Zionism has the wise son ever been depicted with a weapon.
- 75 Trunk, *Polin*, pp. 20–1.
- 76 For a critical reading of the inner Jewish tradition that proper Jews do not beat their wives, as well as a general critique of the ambiguous (to say the least) implications for Jewish women of Jewish male feminization, see Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, pp. 162–9 and *passim*.
- 77 Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 1: *Women Floods Bodies History*, trans. Stephen Conway, Erica Carter and Chris Turner, foreword by Barbara Ehrenreich, Theory and History of Literature (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

In memory of Gillian Rose (1947–1995)

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‘the Jew’**

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