1. "All Jews are womanly, but no women are Jews."[1] The Femininity Game of Deception: *Femme fatale Orientale*, and *belle Juive*[2]

This chapter surveys how the focus on gender and sexuality changed the field of Jewish cultural studies in the late 1990s. It asks to what extent these epistemological intentions, which were enriched by postcolonial and diaspora-studies, offered an opportunity that "grants theorizations about Jewishness a place in ongoing discussions about race, ethnicity, nationness, diaspora, memory, religion, gender, and sexuality." (Bunzl 2000: 323) The chapter starts by examining the surprising impact of "androcentrism" (Boyarin/Itzkovitz/Pellegrini 2003: 3) in these earlier approaches. It further points out the emphasis on the male Jew, Jewish masculinity, and homosexuality, especially the overdetermined significance that the trope of the effeminized male Jew is given in antisemitic discourse as well as in early Jewish cultural studies. Following Ann Pellegrini, the texts analyzes the absence of the Jewish woman from initial scholarly discussions and places an analytical focus on the intersections of race and gender in the construction of the Jewish female body. By taking up the role of "orientalization" in European constructions of the "Orient Within" (Rohde 2005) the second part concentrates on the figure of the "Beautiful Jewess" as a cultural "figure of the third" (Eßlinger et al. 2010). As Ann Pellegrini states, "In the collapse of Jewish masculinity into an abject femininity, the Jewish female seems to disappear." (1997a: 109; see also Pellegrini 1997b: 18) She clearly directs this statement and problem also to her male colleagues,

1 Pellegrini (1997a: 118); see also Pellegrini (1997b: 28), *Performance Anxieties,* p. 28. The book *Performance Anxieties* by Pellegrini (1997b) includes portions of the article "Whiteface Performances" (Pellegrini 1997a) but in a revised and expanded form.

2 Translated by Allison Brown.

who largely focus on the Jewish male when speaking of the cultural production of Jewishness. In its concluding sections the chapter returns to the great significance of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis for the early gender/sexuality discussions in Jewish cultural studies.

Jewish Cultural Studies, Feminism, and Queer Theory

In Miriam Peskowitz and Laura Levitt's 1997 anthology with the provocative title *Judaism Since Gender*, feminist authors had already suggested a shift in emphasis in Jewish studies from "women" to "gender." The authors of the articles in the book, including Susan Shapiro and Susannah Heschel, argued the case using a more or less constructionist approach in considering Jewish religious history with respect to gender. This meant following Joan Scott and using gender as a "useful category of historical analysis" (1986: 1067) and "the primary way of signifying relationships of power," (ibid) and thus understanding it as a basic category of knowledge.

In a way, the issue of Jewish masculinity occasionally arose out of historical antisemitism around the end of the nineteenth century, when "non-Jewish commentators began to express serious concern about gender expressions among Jewish men and women, and [when] the trope of the effeminate Jewish man became the target of persuasive and vicious anti-Semitic critique." (Baader/Gillerman/Lerner 2012: 2) The surprising impact of "androcentrism" (Boyarin/Itzkovitz/Pellegrini 2003: 3) in the connection drawn in the 1990s between Jewish studies and gender and queer studies and the emphasis on antisemitic constructions of "deviant" and "female" Jewish masculinity, homosexuality, and homophobia in the initial discussions were partially caused by the historical discourse itself. These scholars were interested "in exploring the complex of social arrangements and processes through which modern Jewish and homosexual identities emerge as traces of each other" (ibid). Jewish studies and queer studies were first brought together in the 1997 anthology *Jews and Other Differences*. Following Jay Geller (1991, 1993) and Sander Gilman (1991, 1993a), here the editors Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin postulated an entangled history of modern constructions of gender/sexuality and antisemitism. In addition to taking up the approaches to the history of sexualities of Michel Foucault (1978), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985), and Marjorie Garber (1992), they also particularly address the pioneering studies of George Mosse (1985) on nationalism, gender, sexuality, and antisemitism.

In *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, Daniel Boyarin (1997) claimed that the antisemitic stereotype of the "feminized Jewish male" is also a product of the hegemonic concept of Western European heterosexuality. This book in particular "helped open up such new interpretative possibilities with [Boyarin's] provocative and controversial claim that Jewish mode of culture has fostered a distinct Jewish gender order and a unique mode of masculinity that resonated from ancient times into the twentieth century." (Baader/Gillerman/Lerner 2012: 3) He puts Jewish constructions of the "female masculinity" in a postcolonial perspective, beginning with the Roman Empire and the Jewish diaspora. Moreover, he links the rhetorical and theoretical constructions of the "homosexual" to the discursive development of modern sexuality. Boyarin's point of reference is the modern construction of heterosexuality, which he asserts is homophobic at its roots and which, since its emergence in the nineteenth century, no longer allows any latitude or ambivalence whatsoever: "'Heterosexuality,' as its tenets have been ventriloquized by David Halperin, involves the strange idea that a 'normal' man will never feel desire for another man." (Boyarin 1997: 212; see also Halperin 1986: 44) Historian Wolfgang Schmale, who, like Boyarin, refers to Foucault's concept of a regime (*dispositif*) of sexuality in his book *Geschichte der Männlichkeit in Europa (1450–2000)* (History of Masculinity in Europe, 1450–2000), shifts "the norming of the man as heterosexual," (2003: 207) which he says necessarily implies homophobia, all the way back to the eighteenth century.

If the Jewish man was then characterized as "female" because he was circumcised, as occurred in the antisemitic discourse of the late nineteenth century (cf. Geller 1992; Gilman 1993a), then he was also placed in close proximity to a pathologicalized homosexuality, even though he was simultaneously said to be fixated on the family (Mosse 1985). "Still, Jews were not thought to endanger society by their supposed homosexuality but rather by their evil heterosexual drives. […] But while family life was intact among the Jews themselves, it was, so racists asserted, directed against the family life of others." (Mosse 1985: 142) As Susannah Heschel has emphasized, it was precisely the fluctuation in antisemitic discourse that made the Jewish man appear "both as a man in the most extreme sense, a sex-obsessed predator […], as well as an abnormal man, one who is effeminate and even menstruates." (1998a: 86) Without referring to early discussions in Wilhelmine sexology, namely to Magnus Hirschfeld and Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Sander Gilman speaks of a "third sex" (1995: 156-157) with respect to the Jewish man. All of these authors, even when they theoret-

ically draw totally different conclusions from this, nevertheless underline the effeminization of Jewish men derived from circumcision as a central aspect of the discourse. Thus, Gilman summarizes his comprehensive medical history studies on the syndrome of circumcision in the cultural discourse of the nineteenth century as follows: "The circumcised Jew became the representative of the anxiety-provoking masculine. […] The very body of the (male) Jew became the image of the anxiety generated by the potential sense of the loss of control." (1993a: 9) This loss of control was also understood in sexual terms and in older colonial discourses and it had already been projected upon colonized groups such as the autochthonous populations of India, Africa, or the Americas. (cf. Lewis 1996; Mc Clintock 1995; Schülting 1997) The masculinist imaginary was a target of Daniel Boyarin's 2003 essay, "Homophobia and the Postcoloniality of the 'Jewish Science.'" He compares constructions of "blackness" and Jewishness and brings together two postcolonial subjects, Freud and Fanon. Jan Nederveen Pieterse had already indicated that the processes of "othering" did not advance in only one direction, but were instead, in the sense of an entangled history, an interplay of overseas and inner-European colonial discourses:

> While "others" mirror Europe's negative self or split-off shadows, European hierarchies re-emerge with the internal "others" reconstructed in the image of the overseas shadow. […] Indeed, virtually all the images and stereotypes projected outside Europe in the age of empire had been used first within Europe. (1992: 212, 215)

Particularly in view of the long history of Christian anti-Judaism, whose legacy was taken up by antisemitism, the historical chronology of internal and external boundaries must also be read in a reversal of the chronological course of events, as Tudor Parfitt has stated: "From the very beginning of European expansion Judaism was employed in the decipherment of religions, and Jewish ancestry was used as likely explanations for the people Europeans encountered." (Parfitt 2005: 53) Susanne Zantop (1997), Susannah Heschel (1999), Jonathan Hess (2012), and Achim Rohde (2005)–to name only a few scholars–reconstruct the discourse and the "colonial fantasies" around the "Jewish Question" in Germany within a postcolonial theoretical frame. Aamir R. Mufti (2007) opens up a European and global perspective. By 1900, at a time of highly sexualized antisemitism, the cultural practice of circumcision brought the Jewish population (once again) within proximity of the "primitive" peoples overseas. This was due especially to the new, comparative studies

in the fields of ethnography and the sexual sciences, such as those of Wilhelm Wundt and Paolo Mantegazza, who were referred to also by Sigmund Freud. Circumcision, that "uncanny" sign on the male genitalia (Geller 1993), became the medium of othering; "it suggested something perverse" (Geller 2007). In his later studies on circumcision Geller viewed it as an apparatus (Foucault: *le dispositif*) that determined discourses and practices in European identity- and alterity-formation:

> 'Circumcision' became both an apotropaic monument and a floating signifier that functioned as a dispositive, an apparatus that connected biblical citations, stories, images, phantasies, laws, kosher slaughterers […], ethnographic studies, medical diagnoses, and ritual practices […] in order to produce knowledge about and authorize the identity of *Judentum* – and of the uncircumcised. (2007: 26)

Precisely the relative, at least publicly, invisibility of circumcision certainly also generated an antisemitic politics of visibility that focused on the body—especially the nose—of the male Jew:

> By the end of the nineteenth century the body of the Jew came to be the body of the male Jew, and it was the immutability of this sign of masculine difference that was inscribed on the psyche of the Jew. The fantasy of the difference of the male genitalia was displaced upward – onto the visible parts of the body, onto the face and the hands where it marked the skin with its blackness. (Geller 2007: 21)

Along with the aspect of cultural masculinity, the sociability of the (male) Jew also became a problem. As analogous to the female, as Gilman stresses, or coded as "queer," as stated by Boyarin (1997) and Geller (2007), the Jewish man moved culturally into the realm of the homosexual, who was defined as deviant. (Mosse 1985) As an ultimately indefinable gender that oscillated between an abject, male, or oversexed femininity and a homosexualized or "less-than-virile" (ibid: 8) masculinity, Jews challenged the bourgeois gender order as a whole. In contrast to this antisemitic effeminization of the Jewish man, Talmud expert Daniel Boyarin claims and reconstructs a centuries-old "positive sense of self-femminization within [mostly premodern Eastern] rabbinic representations" (1997: 143). Boyarin's idiosyncratic spelling (double m) of "effemminization" is significant. He does not intend to ascribe "some form of actual or essential femininity to certain behaviors or practices [… nor] to reify or celebrate the 'feminine' but to dislodge the term." (ibid: 4)

He concentrates his argumentation on the analysis of the gender/sex system of traditional Ashkenazic culture of premodern Eastern Europe. Thus, he sees two different models of masculinity that have opposed each other in European civilization since the Roman Empire and the Jewish Diaspora: on the one hand, the Roman-coded "heroic" model with its emphasis on "male" values, such as honor, valor, a readiness for war, and physical fitness; and, on the other hand, the traditionally "unheroic" "Ashkenazic model of a gentle, nurturing masculinity, exemplified in the eroticized figuration of the Yeshiva-Bokhur, the pale and meek student of the Talmud." (Bunzl 2000: 328) This Jewish-feminine model of masculinity, in Boyarin's view, was conceivable in the Christian-influenced culture only for the career of a monk, but not that of a sexually active family, as it is in Judaism. However, with the parallel development of the modern, antisemitic stereotype of the "female Jew" and that of the "homosexual" as "deviant" and "degenerate," these discourses ultimately merged at the fin de siècle and produced, according to Boyarin's radical thesis, "a perfect and synergistic match between homophobia and antisemitism." (1997: 209 Based on this cultural analysis, Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin (1997) proposed in the introduction to *Jews and Other Differences* a methodological renewal of Jewish cultural studies by appropriating methods and questions of gender, queer, and postcolonial studies. In this they ascribe key significance to the history of sexuality, in particular the scientific "invention" of homosexuality in the late nineteenth century:

> Basic theoretical questions about the history of sexuality will be central to any endeavor in Jewish cultural history. A question as central to contemporary cultural studies most broadly conceived as whether "homosexuality" has always existed or is a specific historical cultural phenomenon will take its place as a central issue for Jewish cultural studies as well. (1997: x)

As Geller (2007), Boyarin (1997), Gilman (1993), and Pellegrini (1997a) have demonstrated in their works in very different ways, in the history of antisemitism, racial difference has always been entangled with sexual difference. "For Jewish male bodies, marked for an anti-Semitic imaginary by overlapping layers of blackness, effeminacy, and queerness, the sexualization of 'race' and the racialization of 'sex' are constitutive features." (Pellegrini 1997a: 108; see also Pellegrini 1997b: 17) As Matti Bunzl has emphasized, these early studies "have a significant blind spot, which suggests the need for further work at the intersection of Jewish and queer studies. […] While the interpretive move uncovers the queer valence of modern Jewish identities

[…] Boyarin never addresses possible Jewish inflections in the constitution of homosexuality." (2000: 337) In the 2003 anthology *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, Daniel Boyarin, Pellegrini, and Daniel Itzkovitz react to Bunzl's intervention and exemplify the queer studies and postcolonial approach to Jewish studies through historical case studies that follow the queer-Jew connections in literary examples, in the history of homosexuality, and in new readings of Freud's theory of sexuality. The both antisemitic and homophobic ascriptions, however, were also internalized by Jewish authors and sometimes, as often demonstrated (cf. Arens 1995) by Otto Weininger, for example, even intensified. (cf. Boyarin 1997; Gilman 1993a) In his 1903 study *Sex and Character*, which rapidly became a popular science best-seller, the homophobic, antisemitic, and misogynous trends in Vienna's fin de siècle were linked in a symptomatic as well as diagnostic way. For Weininger, a Jew who converted to Protestantism, it was certainly threatening that "Man has everything within him. […] He can reach the greatest heights or degenerate most profoundly, he can become an animal, a plant, he can even become a woman, and that is why there are female, effeminate men." (2005 [1903]: 162) He saw the same possibility of adaptation with regard to being Jewish. Judaism, for him, was neither a "race" nor a "people," but a psychological opportunity for every individual: "*Judaism must be regarded as a cast of mind, a psychic constitution which is a* ***possibility*** *for* ***all*** *human beings, and which has only found its most magnificent* ***realization*** *in historical Judaism* [here and in the following, emphasis in original]." (ibid: 274) Just as the virile man stands opposite the effeminate one, the modern Aryan man opposes the Jew, according to Weininger, as a psychological possibility of his self. The *tertium comparationis* of the Jew and the homosexual, however, is their "femininity." In the introduction to chapter 13, "Judaism," Weininger ties the Jews even more to "femininity":

> If one thinks about the woman and the Jew, one will always be surprised to realize the extent to which Judaism in particular seems to be steeped in femininity, the nature of which I have so far only tried to explore in contrast to masculinity *as a whole without regard to any differences* within it. (ibid: 276)

At the end of his book, Weininger views the woman and the Jew, both of which he says have "no personality" or "intelligible self" (ibid: 278) as coming together in secular, liberal modernity: "The *spirit of modernity* is *Jewish*. […] Our age is not only the most Jewish, but also the most effeminate of all ages." (ibid: 299) It is not so much Weininger's mental disposition—he committed suicide shortly

after his book was published—that makes his work so fascinating, but the fact that *Sex and Character* became so popular and consolidated the "spirit" of his times. This overdetermined mixture of homophobia, antisemitism, and misogyny was a distilled concentration of "the ordinary thought of his time and place." (Boyarin 1997: 237)

Between the Poles of Oriental Femininity and Jewishness: the *Beautiful Jewess*

In view of the crucial role played by the effeminization of the Jewish man in antisemitic discourse, according to Ann Pellegrini, the difference of the Jewish woman also consists of external ascriptions in which gender, sexualization, religion, and race played a role. Yet, as Barbara Hahn has argued on the basis of Bernard Picart's *Céremonies et costumes religieuses* (1727–1743), Jewish women were seldom as clearly marked as Jewish men were. (Hahn 2005: 33) Along with the emancipation of the Jews—during the early nineteenth century at the latest—however, the Jewish woman, as the "Beautiful Jewess", became a literary, artistic, and theatrical figure in Europe: "This figure, which was born in the [19th] century, forcefully expanded into the European imaginaries [Castordiadis]," (Fournier 2011 : 7) wrote Éric Fournier, also explaining the seismographic role of this cultural invention:

> More than other representations of the Jewish world, this ambivalent figure of the Other did in fact appear with an intensified plasticity, which was capable of expressing, in a frenetic manner, the entire range of judgments and opinions about Judaism, from philo-Semitism to anti-Semitism. (ibid: 9)

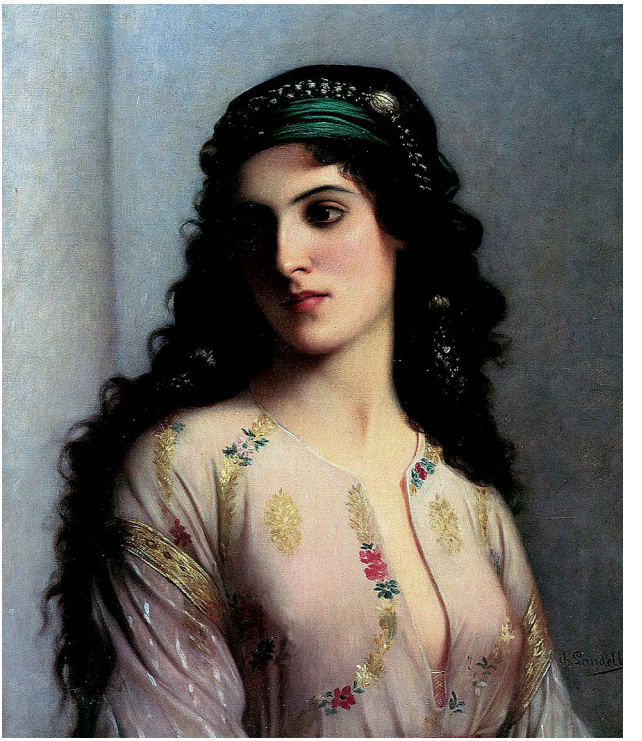
As Florian Krobb (1993) has shown, in the first and thus far only German-language book on the "Beautiful Jewess", the Jewish woman in (German-language) literature before the fin de siècle embodied not so much a negative difference but functioned instead as an ambivalent mediating figure. (See also Frübis 1997; Ludewig 2008) In the stereotypical, repeated master narrative of the "Beautiful Jewess", as the daughter of an often antisemitically exaggerated father (a mother is rarely present), she stood between the Jewish and Christian worlds. As an object of Christian male desire, as a lover, or even as a later wife of a Christian man, the completely assimilated Jewish woman ultimately also

converts to Christianity.[3] This acid test between the cultures and religions, however, often ended for the "Beautiful Jewess" with her sacrificing her own identity, self-denial, or even with her death. This has been presented in different ways, but always associated with serious consequences, by, for instance, Sir Walter Scott in *Ivanhoe* in 1820, Eugène Scribe in his libretto to Fromental Halévy's opera *La Juive* (The Jewess) in 1835, and Franz Grillparzer in his play *Die Jüdin von Toledo* (*The Jewess of Toledo*) of 1872. Florian Krobb considers the literary motif of the "Beautiful Jewess" to be a "pan-European phenomenon," in which the characterization does not always have clear-cut distinctions between "the Jewish and the feminine." (1993: 192) Some French painters like Eugène Delacroix and Charles Landelle created iconic portraits of "belles juives," in which the motifs of the Jewess as oriental and the oriental Jewesses that they actually saw during their Middle Eastern travels merged. One of the most iconic of these "Beautiful Jewesses" is Landelle's idealized yet alien *Jewess from Tangier* from 1908. Her noble, spiritualized beauty and heightened femininity is paired with long, sensual black hair and a very thin and diaphanous Orientalized dress. In her idealized white-skinned femininity, she shows no obvious negative markers of Jewishness.

At the same time the fascinating ambivalence of the figure raises the question as to precisely how her Jewishness and her femininity work together in each case. Even for Otto Weininger, the Jewish woman personified the essence of "femininity" or the "eternally female." In *Sex and Character* he wrote that "No woman in the world represents the *idea* of Woman as perfectly as the Jewess […]. But the Jewess can seem to represent more fully both poles of femininity, as a housemother with many children and as a lustful odalisque, as Cypris and as Cybele." (2005: 289) To describe the double difference of the imaginary Jewess, a *tertium comparationis* of her femininity and her Jewishness has to be found. Her orientalization served this purpose. (Fournier 2011: 27-29) The physical beauty and sensuality of the Jewish woman, her dark hair, her "Eyebrows á L'orientale" (Ockman 1991: title) and sometimes even her clothing, were almost always described using orientalizing tropes and characteristics.

3 This master narrative of the "Beautiful Jewess", which is reproduced today with regard to Muslim women, depicts some similarities to the oft-cited sentence by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak concerning the imperial narrative of salvation (in Spivak with reference to the Hindu practice of suttee): "White men are saving brown women from brown men." (Spivak 1988: 297)

Fig. 1: Charles Landelle: Jewess from Tanger (1908), Museum of Fine Arts, Reims.



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Fournier reconstructed this process as it pertains to France:

> The "Beautiful Jewess" inscribes herself forcefully into the invention of the Orient by the fascinated scholars, both as a discursive matrix and through a feeling of foreignness. […] In the middle of this long list of exotic beauties—the Turkish, Egyptian, Greek, Moorish, Armenian, Abyssinian, Coptic—the Jewess appears as the most troubling of them all. (ibid: 27)

As Andrea Polaschegg demonstrated in her comprehensive, pioneering work on German Orientalism, which offers a critique of Edward Said and at the same time exceeds Said's scope, also in German Oriental studies and aesthet-

ics of the Orient this cultural field had already been tapped starting in the late eighteenth century as a referential reservoir for representations of Biblical and contemporary Judaism. The appropriation of orientalizing traits followed traditional images and narratives, but the process developed a complex dynamic of its own, "as these […] acts of reference always produce a surplus of meaning." (2005: 284) In view of the fact that, in the eighteenth century, the Hebrew Bible was already recognized as a literary text and had thus undergone a "poetic, historical, and oriental […] transformation," it is not surprising that it was biblical figures of women and girls that inspired the imaginations of modern authors. Although Krobb does not go into the intertextual and historical phenomenon of the orientalized "Beautiful Jewess", he often cites precisely from relevant passages in novels in which the Jewish woman is introduced via orientalized biblical figures: for example, from a short passage from Countess Ida von Hahn-Hahn's story *Maria Regina* of 1850, which lacks any explicit mention of the name Judith: "She had that special something, as if she could cut off the head of a Holofernes if need be." (cit. in Krobb 1993: 188) In another example, the novel *Esthers Ehe* (Esther's Marriage, 1886) by Hermann Heiberg, a number of orientalizations are combined with antisemitic tropes of the "salon Jewess." When Baroness Christine's son presents the young Jewish woman Esther as her future daughter-in-law, the Christian mother of noble pride contradicts him with the words: "A Jewess? Her? Oh! […] The black Oriental whose great grandfather […] lent gold for a usurer's interest. […] And the future association with […] smart and hot-blooded women with low décolletés and with all the darkly colored young male disciples of gold […]!" (cit. in Krobb 1993: 189; ellipses in original) This even carried over to the likable figure of Lenore in Eugenie Marlitt's novel *Das Heideprinzesschen* (*The Little Moorland Princess*). The story, "with its Jewish title character, with which the best-selling author attempted in *Die Gartenlaube* (The Garden Arbor) magazine in the jubilee volume of 1871 to offer a liberal appeal for tolerance against the emerging chauvinism" (Krobb 1993: 192-193), also makes reference to the figure of Salome of all things when describing the young Jewish woman: "Now I know where my little favourite got her Oriental face. Yes, yes, it must have been just such a black-haired girl, with feet of quicksilver, who beguiled Herod to give her the head of John the Baptist!" (Marlitt cit. in Krobb 1993: 186) In contrast to Judith, whose murder of the tyrant Holofernes was long passed down—after it appeared in the Septuagint and the Protestant Apocrypha—as a heroic, patriotic act of assertiveness and as "a paragon of self-sacrificial martyrdom for a noble cause" (Dijkstra 1986: 377), Salome was regarded very early on as a

canonical figure of anti-Judaism. It is known that she was not only a beautiful Jewish princess who was connected to the beheading of John the Baptist, but already as a biblical figure she performed a seductive dance that Oscar Wilde was later to call the "Dance of the Seven Veils." All in all, modern "Beautiful Jewesses" appeared often enough in European literature as singers, actresses, dancers, or even as prostitutes and courtesans, as in Balzac's novels, or were associated with masquerade balls, parties, or dance events. (Fournier 2011: 33-35) The imaginary proximity to seduction, sexuality, theater, and dance, as well as to masquerade and costumes, certainly had just as much to do with their femininity—situated outside of bourgeois gender roles—as with their Jewishness. At the same time, Polaschegg infers from the increased presence of these characters on the stages of European theaters and opera houses that "the prominence of said Oriental figure device on the opera stages does in fact suggest a specific affinity of this west-eastern subject for dramatic or even music-theatrical art forms and aesthetics." (2005: 173)

However, in the nineteenth century Jewish women played a pan-European role not only as fictive actresses, dancers, and singers, but also as real ones. With reference to highly visible Jewish actresses such as Rachel and Sarah Bernhardt, Ann Pellegrini reiterates her question about the cultural space occupied by Jewish women in the nineteenth century: "The French stage was dominated and dazzled by Rachel in the first half of the nineteenth century and then, in the latter half [...] by Sarah Bernhardt.[...] Jewishness—as performatively constituted and publicly performed—clearly needs to be thought through the female Jewish body, no less than through the male." (1997a: 110; 1997b: 19) Like no other actress of her time, Sarah Bernhardt, who had in fact been baptized and was raised in a convent, was made into the epitome of the "Beautiful Jewess", and the embodiment of a modern Salome. The fantasized links between Sarah Bernhardt and Salome were so great that "Oscar Wilde wrote his Salome for her." (Fournier 2011: 249)

In his 1993 essay, "Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt, and the 'Modern Jewess,'" which Ann Pellegrini also refers to, Sander Gilman examines the discursive production of the Jewish woman around 1900, asking "under what circumstances does her 'Jewishness' and under what circumstances does her 'femininity' become her defining moment?" (1993b: 197) However, because in the antisemitic discourse of the time the Jewish man is coded as "female," Gilman begins his study with a vexatious paradox:

> When Jewish women are represented in the culture of the turn of the century, the qualities ascribed to the Jew and to the woman seem to exist simultaneously and yet seem mutually exclusive.[…] When we focus on the one, the other seems to vanish. (ibid: 195)

In order to grasp this simultaneous appearing and vanishing of gender and race regarding the Jewish woman, Gilman broadens the thesis of the deceptive correlation between antisemitic and sexualizing tropes to include the construction of the Jewish woman. According to Gilman it is also true for the Jewish woman that, to a certain extent, she becomes a vessel for transgressive images of ("female") sexuality/identity or those repressed by and which threaten the normative ideal: "Central to the arbitrary but powerful differentiation between the stereotype of the Jewish man and that of the Jewish woman is the different meaning of male and female sexuality at the fin de siècle." (ibid) Just as the Jewish man is seen as effeminized and thus the negative Other of the strictly heterosexual-male Gentile, Gilman says, the Jewish woman, too, is constructed as the "exclusionary feminine" (ibid: 197) or the countertype to the normative ideal of the passive and passionless housewife, as was still defended by the Moral Purity Movement around 1900.[4] On the other hand, ascriptions of femininity, especially if they are accompanied by transgressions or confounding of the gender order like in the figure of the deadly *femme fatale*, acquire a negative, sometimes even a stigmatizing, pejorative character. The "Beautiful Jewess" Ann Pellegrini notes was sometimes a "deceptively feminine figure, 'deceptive' because her beauty concealed her powers of destruction" (Pellegrini 1997: 129). Challenging the order of binary thinking, putting into question the categories of "female" and "male", liminal figures of a "third sex" or "third term" (Garber 1992: 11), have furthermore often been connected to a monstrous, multiform "abject femininity".

The "femininity puzzle" of the Jewess contains all figures of female otherness, from the sexually active "phallic" woman and the courtesan to the "intellectual woman" to the bluestocking. (Gilman 1993b: 355) Sometimes the "Beautiful Jewess" disappears entirely behind and in the stereotype of the *femme fatale*, and sometimes her Jewishness is emphasized as a source of seductive and destructive energy. It is no coincidence that Gilman chooses the figure

4 John Fout (1992) has shown how around 1900 the Christian Values or Moral Purity Movement fought to defend this bourgeois gender order.

of Salome, "one of the master narratives of this stereotype at the fin de siècle" (ibid), as the object of his study. Admittedly, he studies Salome as she is presented by non-Jewish, European – especially German – authors as "the essential 'woman'," whose femininity is used to "simultaneously evoke […] the essential 'Jew.'" (ibid) Even today, as Shelley Salamensky states, a "near complete absence of scholarship on Wilde vis-à-vis the Jew" creates difficulties, because "Wilde's conflicted uses of the figure of the Jew are key to understanding central issues not only in *Salomé*." (2012: 215) What Gilman does not examine, however, is the complex task that the wide spectrum of the orientalizations of Salome, as shown in chapters six and seven, assumed in the late nineteenth century in this game of deception between "femininity" and Jewishness. Decisive configurations of the Salome story before and around 1900, which would later influence Oscar Wilde, were linked in France to names such as Gustave Flaubert, Gustave Moreau, and Joris-Karl Huysmans. Starting with Flaubert's story *Herodias* (1877), continued in Moreau's paintings *Salomé* (1871) and *L'Apparition* (1876), and culminating in Huysmans's 1884 novel *À Rebours* (*Against Nature*), Salome is entirely separated from her (historical) Jewishness. As a dancer, who was both erotic and deadly, she is instead transformed into the epitome of the "femme fatale Orientale" (Fournier 2011: 197). What began as Flaubert's attempt to create a Salome, who "is nothing more than a paradox of an eternal femininity" (ibid: 199), culminated in Huysmans's fiction of a "superhuman, strange Salome" (1998: 46, cit. in Fournier 2011: 200) that no longer had any trace of a "Beautiful Jewess", but all the markings of a fascinating, artificially created *female evil*, as was widespread in the imagery at the fin de siècle. (Praz 1970) To be sure, it was Oscar Wilde who first created Salome's gruesomeness in literature; Flaubert had still portrayed her as simply a tool of her mother Herodias.

Oscar Wilde and his Salomé as a *Figure of the Third*[5]

It all began in 1891 with the play published in French by Oscar Wilde, in which a new figure of Salome took the stage. The author presented her for the first time as a desiring woman and as the independent choreographer of her legendary "dance." When the rehearsals for the play were already well underway in 1892 with Sarah Bernhardt—Wilde's favorite Salome—it was banned for all British stages by The Lord Chamberlain, the chief censor, with the justification that, in it, biblical characters were acting within a "secular" scene. Four years later the play celebrated its premiere in Paris. Oscar Wilde was unfortunately unable to attend the performance, as he was at the time serving a two-year prison sentence for his homosexuality. In 1901, a year after Wilde's death, the play premiered in Berlin. Nevertheless it was not until Richard Strauss's operatic version of the material and the premier of his *Salome* in Dresden in 1905 that Salome began her triumphal march, continuing to the present day, on opera stages around the world. Even before Salome's dance was presented as a dance on opera stages, the "Dance of the Seven Veils" had developed a life of its own. As demonstrated in chapter eight, since 1907 the Canadian "barefoot" dancer Maud Allan had been performing her own *Salome* choreography with growing success in London music halls, bringing the Salomania of the times to a pinnacle. By combining Oriental fantasies and Greek ritual figures with gymnastic and dance elements from the Life Reform Movement, the dancer opened up for many women "a set of codes for female bodily expression that disrupted the Victorian conventional dichotomies of female virtue and female vice and pushed beyond such dualisms. Allan used the 'Orient' as a register for female sensual expression." (Walkowitz 2003: 6) This controversial dance performance was scandalous not only because a "white" woman was adopting supposedly oriental forms of bodily expression, but in particular because Allan's Salome did not simply dance *around* the head of John the Baptist as her "reward," but *with* the severed head of the saint.

Shortly after Allan had taken on the role of Salome in 1916 in a private staging of Wilde's banned play, Noel Pemberton Billing, an advocate of the

5 The *figure of the Third* refers historically to the concept of the "third sex," as used in German-language sexology and by sexual activists such as Karl Heinrich Ulrichs and Magnus Hirschfeld. However, it also refers to the generally queer and transgressive potential of the figure of the "Jew" in Antisemitic discourse (see Holz 2004) and Salome around 1900. (Garber 1992)

right-wing Movement for Purity in Public Life, accused her in his paper *The Vigilante*, under the headline "The Cult of the Clitoris," of "illicit sex" and "political intrigue" (cit. in Cherniavsky 1991: 16). Allan filed libel charges against Pemberton-Billing. In the end, she nevertheless became both the 'perpetrator' and the 'accused' within the trial, which destroyed her career and her life.

The figure of Salome, however, was also connected with homosexuality, especially as a result of the humiliating trial against Oscar Wilde in 1895. One can only speculate how long this scandal, which long made homosexuality an object of public debate, also shook both the heteronormative façade and the tabooed homophile undercurrent of the colonial empire. (Aldrich 2003: 6) Authors who saw Wilde's Salome as his alter ego and regarded her rejection by the morally pure prophet John the Baptist as Victorian resistance to homosexual desire tended to interpret the material as border-crossing. Thus, Elaine Showalter poses the question, "Is the woman behind Salome's veils the innermost being of the male artist? Is Salome's love for Jokanaan a veiled homosexual desire for the male body?" (1990: 151) Katherine Worth, who has examined the motif of veiling and unveiling in Wilde's works, concludes that "unveiling was an appropriate image for the activity which Wilde regarded as the artist's prime duty: self-expression and self-revelation." (1983: 66-67) Other authors, such as Marjorie Garber, view Salome's gender-border-crossing, queer dance as the actual taboo breach. Not the intensified sensuality, but the "paradox of gender identification, the disruptive element that intervenes, transvestism as a space of possibility structuring and confounding culture. *That* is the taboo against which Occidental eyes are veiled." (Garber 1992: 342) Still, the 1923 American film *Salomé,* which was co-directed by and starred the bisexual Jewish actress Alla Nazimova, was rumored to have featured an all-gay cast.

For Wilde, a former Oxford student of ancient philology, who was greatly influenced by Walter Pater, the influential art critic and a source of inspiration for aestheticism, the play was a tragedy and Salome a heroine to be taken seriously, with whom he sympathized. The claim that he himself once donned the costume of Salome, however, as Garber also supported based on a photograph published in Richard Ellmann's 1987 biography of Wilde, has meanwhile been refuted. As can only be sketched here briefly, the discursive nodal points surrounding Oscar Wilde's Salome and Maud Allan's performance around 1900 include many themes that also belonged to cultural antisemitism, but there were no direct links between them. A lone exception to this was a diatribe at the end of Allan's trial: A particularly phobic line of argumentation by Pemberton-Billing culminated in his blatantly an-

tisemitic description of Maud Allan as a spy aligned with "'German-Jewish' interests [and] who promoted Salome productions and who was protected by the present government." (cit. in Walkowitz 2003: 35; see also Walkowitz 2012: 89)

As Bram Dijkstra emphasized in *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture,* his comprehensive, comparative study of literary and visual interpretations, the Salome figure underwent a transformation around 1900. Her murderous fascination was increasingly tied to her virginity. At the same time, the "virgin dancer," according to Dijkstra, increasingly epitomized the "perversity of women: their eternal circularity and their ability to destroy the male's soul even while they remained nominally chaste in body." (1986: 384) In Stéphane Mallarmé's 1864 poem "Hérodiade," Salome "murmurs contentedly as she gazes fixedly at herself in the mirror: 'The horror of my virginity/Delights me [...].'" (ibid: 385) Dijkstra also mentions examples of French portrayals of Salome as a Jewish woman, although verification of this in the sources is relatively meager. Except for an unknown author named Charles Besnard, who published a poem "The Jewess Salome" in a Parisian magazine in 1897, Dijkstra refers only to an anonymously written 1917 work entitled *Famous Pictures Reproduced from Renowned Paintings by the World's Greatest Artists*. Therein, according to Dijkstra, the author emphasized while commenting on a Salome painting by Jules Lefebvres, "that the master had succeeded in portraying in his painting of the daughter of Herodias, 'an essentially Semitic type of the antique period, with the sensuous and soulless beauty of the tigress rather than the woman.'" (ibid: 387) As evidence of pronounced antisemitic depictions of Salome, he offers only Max Slevogt's 1895 painting "Salome's Dance." (see ibid: 386-388) However, in the painting it is not Salome but only the men gazing at her dancing who are portrayed in a racist manner as Jewish.

Regarding the French reception of the subject matter in the early twentieth century, Éric Fournier made a significant observation. He wrote that, at the time, the figure of Judith, who beheads Holofernes, and that of Salome, who demands the head of John the Baptist as a reward for her dance, merge into a single monstrous figure: that of an actively murderous seductress. According to Fournier her Jewishness is "so evident that there is no need to mention it explicitly." (2011: 210) Precisely because their Jewishness is integrated into the dangerous, transgressive, virginally "phallic femininity" of Judith and Salome to such a degree that it is (un)recognizable, Fournier asserts, they are "the most horrifying '"Beautiful Jewesses' possible." (ibid) Analyzing

the German commentaries to Strauss's opera *Salome*, Gilman comes to similar conclusions to those of Fournier (1993b: 210). Even in extremely antisemitic interpretations, such as the one by Hans F. K. Günther (1930) in *Rassenkunde des jüdischen Volkes*, in which the Jewish manner of speaking ("mauscheln," that is, Yiddish, or German with Yiddish intonation and vocabulary) is described based on the five Jews who appear in the opera as the "special nature of the Jew's body," Gilman says that "only the males, the five argumentative Jews and King Herod, [are] seen to be the racial representatives of the world of the Jews in Richard Strauss's opera." (ibid: 198) There must be something very special about their sexuality that lets the Jewishness of Salome and Judith disappear behind their "femininity."

The Psychoanalytical Theory of Femininity as "Dark Continent"

According to Karin Hausen's "Family and Role-Division. The Polarization of Sexual Stereotypes in the Nineteenth Century. An Aspect of the Dissociation of Work and Family Life" (1981), an article that has become a classic, the bourgeois gender code divided social relationship between men and women into two mirroring spheres of labor. This bourgeois gender order, in which women function as "gender characters," was presented ideologically as "reciprocal." Within this bipolar matrix, the social division of labor unfolds in the relationship between *society* on the one hand – professional and work world, the public – and *community* on the other – home, family, intimacy. Although modern, differentiated society is defined as "gender-neutral," it is naturalized in the 19th century, at least for the hegemonic bourgeoisie, in which women functioned as housewives, and reshaped by the hypostasized "reciprocity of gender characters" (Hausen 1976). Especially against this background of a normalized gender order the figure of the "Beautiful Jewess" became an embodiment of multiform, sometimes idealized but also demonized femininity.

Against this background, the "femininity puzzle" is linked to the attempts to throw light on, to use Freud's colonial image, the "dark continent" of female sexuality. Freud notoriously referred to female sexuality as an unknown, unexplored country. In "The Question of Lay Analysis" (Freud (1925-26/1948): SE 20: 212), he writes: "We know less about the sexual life of little girls than of boys. But we need not feel ashamed of this distinction; after all, the sexual life of adult women is a 'dark continent' for psychology." Here Freud constructs girls and women in general as the mysterious Other of European man. "Per-

haps fearing her difference, he makes her other, obliterating the specificity and difference of her body by turning it into a fetishized metaphor of the unknown: 'dark continent,' and it is defined as lack.[…] Leaving the metaphor of the 'dark continent' in its original English, Freud grants it a further aura: of colonialism and its projection of a mysterious Africa." (Khanna 2003: 49) The metaphor of the "dark continent" was indeed first used by H. M. Stanley in his explorer narrative of Africa: *Through the Dark Continent* in 1878 (see Khanna 2003: 49-50). In colonial discourse the connection of "unknown counties" and "racialized difference" to femininity refers to a then widespread imaginative intersection of colonial Otherness and mythical feminization.

> In the discourse of race, darker peoples were thought of as "female." […] This means that there was a recurrent cross-referencing of hierarchies encoded in metaphors: first, "others" were seen in the image of "females" […]; then, by way of feedback, females were re-coded in the image of the "others". […] The "femininity" or "passivity" attributed to the "darker races" has often been mentioned. (Nederveen Pieterse 1992: 220-221)

According to Gilman (1993b: 37) the pejorative tone of the description of female sexuality as "dark continent" and impenetrable obscure further "parallels the anti-Semitic rhetoric of the hidden nature of the Jew and the Jew's mentality widely circulated, even in medical literature, at the turn of the century." However, in his scientific writing Freud transferred the discourse of race to that of gender. This chapter pays particular attention to transgressive and liminal forms of femininity such as those attributed to Jewish women. As Pellegrini (1997: 129) argues about the orientalized stereotype of the "Beautiful Jewess": "Her dark hair and black eyes not only recall the 'darkness' of the Jew but also anticipate Freud's description of femininity *tout court* as the 'dark continent'. The hyperbolic femininity of the *belle juive* [sometimes even, U.B.] conceals her perverse masculinity."

In the concluding sections we first return to the great significance of Freud's psychoanalysis for the early gender/sexuality discussion in Jewish studies. Geller, Boyarin, and Gilman examine Sigmund Freud's theory of sexuality, also as an expression of "Freud's Jewish Question" (Geller 2007: 17). This chapter aims to explore the theoretical absence of the "Jewish female" in these approaches by referring to the traces of repression of the Jewish woman in Sigmund Freud's theory of femininity. As Ann Pellegrini states: "In the collapse of Jewish masculinity into an abject femininity, the Jewish female seems to disappear." (1997a: 109; 1997b: 18) Pellegrini directs this question

clearly to her male colleagues, who largely focused on the "Jewish man" when speaking of the cultural production of Jewishness.[6] In very different ways, Daniel Boyarin, Geller, and Gilman analyze Freud's theory of "normal," i.e., "heterosexual," masculinity as the main example of the effect of antisemitic effeminization at the fin de siècle. Whereas Gilman interprets Freud's concept of masculinity as the product of a universalizing shift, and Boyarin sees it as a homophobic reaction, Geller makes out a defensive and exaggerated action in Freud's "ideal of the fighting Jew – of masculine Judaism." (2008: 159) For all three, his psychoanalysis is also the struggle of an assimilated Jew for "heroic" or gentile masculinity. Placing psychoanalysis historically within the context of the antisemitism, homophobia, and misogyny that prevailed at the time does not amount for these authors to a biographical reduction; instead, to use Daniel Boyarin's words, this is a matter of putting "psychoanalysis itself on … a Foucauldian couch of cultural poetics and critique." (1995: 137) Gilman reconstructs how, in Freud's theory of sexuality, the antisemitic stereotype that marks the Jewish man as "castrated" and thus "feminine" is transmuted into the characterization of the woman in general. It is no longer the Jewish man, who in the psychoanalytical gender theory thus runs the risk due to his "flawed" genitals of being considered an "effeminate Jewish male" (1997: 27), as hysterical, or even as "castrated"; instead, now all women are "castrated," tend toward hysteria, and suffer from penis envy. Gilman explains: "In Freud's scientific writing this set of images was transferred exclusively to the image of women." (1993a: 37) In this way, the threatening "racial-physical" difference between the Jewish and the Gentile man is excised and at the same time shifted, according to Gilman. As a gender difference it returned in the body of the woman. Geller is correct in rejecting this reading of Freud's gender theory, as Gilman "has let the indigenous misogynist discourses of Europe off the hook by 'explaining' Freud's often stereotypical and misogynist discourse on women as his defensive displacement of the discourses of racial antisemitism." (2007: 19) Geller and Boyarin also assume Freud's "fight" for "heroic" masculinity; Boyarin says "Freud accepts the characterization of Jews as differently gendered, as indeed female, and tries to overcome this difference." (1997: 239) Thus, Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex can be

6 Jay Geller was self-critical in referring to this gender blindness within Jewish cultural studies when he confirmed that virtually all studies "examining the role of gendered representation and self-representation in German-Jewish cultural history … focused almost exclusively on men." (2011: 359-360)

reinterpreted, in particular the assumptions based on it, in such a way that castration anxiety is the lynchpin of universal "masculine" subjectification and that the woman in her constitution is a deficient being. (Schnurbein 2005) However, when Gilman claims that Freud's theory of femininity is just a reflection of his defense against the antisemitic stereotype of an effeminate, "castrated" male Jew, that is, a transformation of the difference of race between the Jewish and the Gentile man into a generalized difference of sex, between all men and all women, then he is at the same time implying, according to Pellegrini, that "masculinity has no gender and femininity, no race, [and] he treats race and gender as discrete, rather than mutually informing, structures." (1997a: 118; see also 1997b: 28) With that, in addition to his denial of the real (also for Freud), effective misogyny around 1900, this reveals another blind spot in Gilman's analysis, so that I would like to cite Pellegrini in asserting that "the Jewish woman cannot appear in Gilman's analysis except in drag: as a Jewish man or as a 'whitened' and presumptively Gentile woman: *All Jews are womanly, but no women are Jews*." (ibid)

The Trace of Repression of the Jewish Woman in Freud's Psychoanalysis

My point of departure in the following is the hypothesis that, in the development of psychoanalysis, the repressed or concealed "Jewish woman" – that is, most of Freud's female patients and the women in his Eastern European family of origin – can be discovered at the margins of the psychoanalytical theory of femininity itself. According to Freud, in order for the girl to materialize into the "normal" specimen of "properly passive femininity" (Pellegrini 1997a: 119; Pellegrini 1997b: 29) with a basically desexualized vaginal female sexuality (Schlesier 1981: 149), she has to go through a number of painful processes. "Freud allows no doubt that the main feature of female Oedipus Complex — in contrast to that of the male — is its desexualization. Clitoral sexuality disappears through repression, and under the condition of the Oedipus Complex the vagina could not yet be discovered." (Schlesier 1981: 149) His theory that the (juvenile) vagina as an erogenous zone remains undiscovered in the so-called phallic stage of infantile sexuality can be considered a cornerstone of the Freudian castration model of "femininity." "Normal" adult femininity, however, Freud emphasizes even more, is based on a radical repression, a repression of clitoral sexuality: The pre-Oedipal sexuality of the girl, he more-

over asserts, "is of a wholly masculine character" (1953 [1905]: 219). A girl, fantasizing and experimenting in a polymorphous perverse manner just as actively as a young boy, must renounce her masculinity, as (according to Freud) associated with the clitoris, in order to achieve "adult femininity": "Women change their leading erotogenic zone […] together with the wave of repression at puberty, which, as it were, puts aside their childish masculinity." (ibid: 221) In a text on hysterical attacks, the psychoanalyst even spoke of "the typical wave of repression, which by doing away with her masculine sexuality, allows the woman to emerge." (1955 [1909]a: 234) Freud's theory of femininity is thus based not only on the theory of the infantile non-discovery of the "vagina as a woman's erogenous zone" (Schlesier 1981: 159); it also assumes that the "coexistence or even coincidence of clitoral and vaginal sexuality" (ibid: 158) is impossible. According to Sander Gilman, Freud's definition of the clitoris as a "truncated" penis, and thus as almost "male," was in keeping with a "popular fin de siècle […] view of the relationship between the body of the male Jew and the body of the woman." (1993a: 39) They resemble each other through the "truncated" penis. In addition, Gilman continues, Freud must have also known that "the clitoris was known in the Viennese slang of the time simply as the 'Jew' (*Jud*)." (ibid) If for a moment we pursue this thesis, which is disputed in current scholarship, the "flawed" body of the (circumcised) Jewish male thus reappears in the body of the woman.

But the Jewish women and patients in Freud's life are more than merely the reflection or mirror, before and in which the drama of masculinities takes places. The generalized "neutral" ideal of the domestic, passive, and ultimately desexualized woman that Freud establishes in his theory is also a product of assimilation. It is "white, Christian, reproductive and hidden from view." (Pellegrini 1997a: 121; Pellegrini 1997b: 31) Normal, i.e., Western bourgeois "femininity," is for Freud the product of a painful performance, an achievement of repression that can also be read geographically and culturally. Precisely the requirement to repress early childhood clitoral "masculinity," which is at the core of the performative theory of femininity, reveals traces "of Jewish female difference," (ibid) according to Pellegrini. Jay Geller, too, says that it was in particular Jewish women who were characterized as phallic or masculine. As evidence Geller cites an antisemitic text, the *Handbuch der Judenfrage* (Handbook of the Jewish Question, 1936) by Theodor Fritsch: "One finds among the Jews a great number of feminine men and masculine women. This goes for both body and soul." (2011: 31) Daniel Boyarin also emphasizes that "there is strong evidence, however, that just as Jewish men were perceived as feminized—and

queer—by European gentile culture, Jewish women were perceived as virilized, indeed as viragos." (1997: 354) Moreover, according to Pellegrini (1997a) and Boyarin (1997), in Eastern European Jewish family structures, which of course also influenced Freud, the mother played a far more dominant role than in bourgeois Viennese society. The American Jewish studies scholar Susannah Heschel has drawn attention within this context to another aspect of Jewish tradition. With respect to the *niddah* laws and the purity of the vagina as treated therein, Heschel claims that the vagina is the human body part "discussed most in classical Jewish literature." (1998a: 95)[7] In order to assimilate to the bourgeois gender order, the Eastern European Jewish family structure, with its dominant mothers, had to be forgotten and "civilized." Pellegrini and Boyarin now read the Freudian myth of the repression of male sexuality in girls (albeit not his theory of the infantile non-discovery of the vagina) as yet another allegory in an effort to "escape from *Ostjüdische* gender-trouble." (Boyarin 1997: 354n152)

> The girl's passage from active, preadolescent masculinity to passive, mature femininity … also recalls the historical movement of Jews from Eastern Europe into the urban centers of Western Europe.… In Freud's subterranean geography of Jewishness, gender, and race, East is to West as phallic women are to angels in the house. (Pellegrini 1997a: 29; Pellegrini 1997b: 119-120)

Even in the inner-Jewish and Zionist discourse, as shown by Daniel Boyarin in "Homophobia and the Postcoloniality of the 'Jewish Science'" (2003: 178) and *Unheroic Conduct* (1997), Eastern European Jews, the so-called *Ostjuden*, and their "fundamental ways of the shtetl become conflated with those of the Orient" (Isenberg 2005: 101). They thus served, to the extent that they appeared to embody "Judaism's Oriental character and foreignness to Europe," as a negative model (Boyarin 1997: 280).[8] At this point the Oriental character of Jewish femininity is identical to a paradoxical image: the Jewish woman, on the one

7 Susannah Heschel (1998a) was prompted to ask, "Whose vagina is it? Or should the vagina be understood as a symbol, perhaps in parallel to the phallus, namely a symbol laden with the emotional significance that shapes gender identity? […] The laws of niddah turn the vagina into a transcendental sign of gender identity and Jewish status." (p. 95) The implications of this remark unfortunately cannot be pursued in the present text.

8 Boyarin quotes Jacques Kronberg *Theodor Herzl*, 1993. 24. In other Zionist writings, the Eastern Jews could also be idealized and turned into a source of cultural revitalization. (Kalmar/Penslar 2005)

hand, as a strong mother, then as *femme fatale* and sexual predator; and, on the other hand, as a transgressive, "masculine" virago.

Judith or the *Taboo of Virginity*

In order to shed light on the "ambivalent position occupied by Jewish women" (Pellegrini 1997a: 119; Pellegrini 1997b: 29) in Freud's works, it is important to examine the fissures in the concept of the passive, non-threatening femininity. Wherever Freud's mythos of the castrated woman shows flaws, according to my hypothesis, and where he himself speaks of a femininity that is anxiety-inducing or even threatens castration, it is possible to observe a return of the repressed material. First and foremost is the obvious mythicization of the woman, which is reminiscent of colonial images, such as the overdetermined formula of femininity as the "dark continent," (Freud 1959 [1926]: 212) whose mystery cannot be understood. Aside from his posthumously published essay *Medusa's Head* (1922), Freud is concerned with a threatening femininity, especially in *The Taboo of Virginity* (1918). In this text, which seems like a belated afterthought to *Totem and Taboo* (1913), the psychoanalyst works with ethnographic reports on the wedding rituals and taboos of the "primitive peoples" in Africa and Australia, and with stories of "his" neurotic patients. However, he also makes references to modern literature. All of the texts revolve around the fear that emanates from the virgin and around the taboos connected with her. Freud very quickly broadens the scope of the fear of the virgin into the man's fear of female sexuality and women in general, when he writes: "The taboo of virginity is part of a large totality which embraces the whole of sexual life and at its core is a generalized dread of women. One might almost say that women are altogether taboo." (Freud 1957 [1910]: 198) Just as in *Totem and Taboo* Freud not only draws parallels between the imaginary and ritual world of the "primitive man" and that of modern anxiety neurotics; instead he stresses that nothing of the principal fear and dread of the woman is obsolete, but rather that it is "still alive among ourselves" (ibid: 199). Upon closer examination as to what makes up the fear and what "imaginary" dangers are connected with the woman, Freud asserts the following:

> This dread is based on the fact that woman is different from man, forever incomprehensible and mysterious, strange and therefore apparently hostile.

> The man is afraid of being weakened by the woman, infected with her femininity and of then showing himself incapable. (ibid: 198–199)

In Freud's analysis, fear of the woman appears as a general male fear. It is not culturally or historically specific; it is expressed among the Australian Aborigines as well as modern neurotics. In fact, the fear comes closer, since "in all this there is nothing obsolete, nothing which is not still alive among ourselves." (ibid: 199) As Pellegrini correctly emphasizes, the specific masculinity, which according to the antisemitic stereotype is particularly threatened by an infectious femininity, was definitely culturally defined around 1900. This masculinity that feels threatened by femininity can only be a masculinity "in which male Jews, within Freud's own historical experience, were dangerously implicated" (Pellegrini 1997a: 122; Pellegrini 1997b: 33). As if to avoid this association, however, Freud quickly shifts to the "general" gender difference as the reason for men's narcissistic rejection of women:

> Psychoanalysis believes that it has discovered a large part of what underlies the narcissistic rejection of women by men, which is so much mixed up with despising them, in drawing attention to the castration complex and its influence on the opinion in which women are held. (Freud 1957 [1910]: 199)

As we know from his famous sentence, for Freud "the castration complex is the deepest unconscious root of anti-Semitism." (1955 [1909]b: 36n1) His essay *The Taboo of Virginity* (Freud 1957 [1910]) does concentrate, however, on gender difference. It does not settle down with the reference to the castration complex as the reason for men's revulsion of women; instead, it goes so far as to claim that the danger emanating from the virgin is in fact real, though the only evidence provided for this "real" danger are fantasy images. As an example, Freud offers the dream of one of his patients, in which she wants to castrate her groom on their wedding night. Freud takes his second example from modern literature, here the tragedy *Judith* (1840) by Friedrich Hebbel, which tells the story of Judith and Holofernes. Freud wrote: "The taboo of virginity and something of its motivation has been depicted most powerfully of all in a well-*known* dramatic character, that of Judith in Hebbel's tragedy *Judith and Holofernes*." (Freud 1957 [1910]: 207) Clearly following Hebbel's sexualizing tendency, "Freud recasts the biblical heroine as a *femme fatale* who beheaded Holofernes not as an act of Jewish patriotism, but of sexual refusal." (Pellegrini 1997a: 129; Pellegrini 1997b: 33, 45) Quite a few painters have linked the two "Beautiful Jewesses": the actively killing Judith to the figure of Sa-

lome, especially when it comes to the presentation of the severed male head – Holofernes' or John the Baptist's – on a tray or even a platter.

Fig. 2: Domenico de Pace Beccafumi: Judith with the Head of Holofernes (ca. 1510), Wallace Collection, London; Fig. 3: Antiveduto Grammatica: Judith with the Head of Holofernes (1610), Nationalmuseum Stockholm; Fig. 4: Tizian: Salome with the Head of John the Baptist (1570), Museo del Prado.



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Freud supports Hebbel's transformation of the heroic Jewish widow Judith, who kills the tyrant to save her people, into a fascinating, beautiful orientalized virgin who beheads the tyrant, whom she desires, in a mixture of sexual paroxysm and revenge. He follows the sexualizing reinterpretation of the story without hesitation, even viewing it as the reiteration of "an ancient motive," elevating a Judith "purged" of all historical, biblical qualities to the archetype of "dangerous femininity": "Beheading is well known to us as a symbolic substitute for castrating; Judith is accordingly the woman who castrates the man who has deflowered her." (Freud 1957 [1910]: 207) Through his sexualization of Judith, Freud unwittingly reproduced the mainstream antisemitic discourse, in which the mediating figure of the *belle juive*, which was clearly still ambivalent around 1900, became a "fusion of the virgin and the whore" that "is inflected by a racialized difference." (Pellegrini 1997b: 33) It is precisely in Freud's sexual demonization of Judith that the repressed Jewish context, albeit displaced and distorted, returns. Elements of the antisemitic discourse, of misogyny and homophobia, were inherited from the mainstream culture. The fear of de-masculinization, however, was genuine. In the light of a post-

colonial approach, Freud's essentializing of misogyny and castration anxiety "appear as an elaborate defense against the feminization of Jewish men." (Boyarin 2003: 186) At the same time, the abject femininity of these sexualized and orientalized Biblical figures, which goes beyond the dichotomous gender order, comes close to the monstrous.

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