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1898 Sigmund Freud's Passover dream responds to Theodor Herzl's Zionist dream

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Sigmund Freud was not a Zionist. Despite Theodor Herzl's proximity in Vienna, Freud remained so aloof from Zionism that he hardly ever expressed himself concerning individual or national Jewish identity. Although on rare occasions he did acknowledge his Jewishness, he renounced nationalistic ideas. Developing a personal solution to the "Jewish Question," Freud never explained his views at length; Freudian methods of analysis suggest that this near-total silence derived from an avoidance or a disavowal (*Verneinung*). One of Freud's dreams is a "royal road" to his ambivalence toward Judaic traditions.

The decisive encounter with Zionism came in January 1898, three weeks after Freud lectured to the B'nai B'rith Society in Vienna and only a few months after the First Zionist Congress convened in Basel. At that time Freud saw Herzl's play *Das neue Ghetto* (The new ghetto); his reaction took the form of a dream, which he recorded in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Usually called the dream of "My son, the myop," this might also be known as Freud's "Passover dream." The manifest content of his dream is essential, for it responds to and interprets Herzl's play.

Over the past sixty years, numerous scholars have discussed Freud "as a Jew" or have compared his writings to Jewish sources. I will not retrace this uneven history of reception, because I do not share its basic assumptions; I am not concerned with those deliberate statements of Freud that affirmed his Jewishness while rejecting all religious beliefs. Nor do I insist that Freud directly borrowed psychoanalytic concepts or methods from ancient Jewish sources, although there is evidence of indirect influence. Rather, what interests me is Freud's ambivalence and the distortions it produces in his work. Yet my intention is not to criticize Freud for remaining something of a crypto-Jew, because his suppression of the Judaic component in psychoanalysis was virtually inevitable given the Viennese cultural and scientific contexts.

Biographical writers and psychohistorians have prepared the way for a literary interpretation of Freud's Passover dream as a reaction to Herzl's early play and later Zionist dream. For example, they cite a letter Freud wrote to Herzl in 1902, when he enclosed a copy of *The Interpretation of Dreams* for possible review in *Die Neue Freie Presse*. In this letter, Freud asked Herzl to keep the book "as a sign of the esteem in which I—like so many others—have for years held the poet and fighter for the human rights of our people." We need not take this letter at its word, but it serves well as a preface to Freud's more complex, and partially unconscious, message to Herzl.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, chapter 5, Freud discusses the materials and sources of dreams. He demonstrates that recent experiences are incorporated into their manifest content and gives the example of his own dream "that a teacher whom I know at our university says: *My son, the myop* (*Mein Sohn, der Myop*)" (*Td* 273 / *ID* 303). The German

and *Myop* signifies a nearsighted person, hence this phrase alludes to a son's inadequate vision. The dream consists of three parts; the second part is a dialogue, followed by a third scene in which Freud and his sons appear (ibid.). Freud fails to mention a number of relevant "day's residues" and postpones interpretation of this dream until a later passage.

Chapter 6, on the dream work, illustrates the mechanisms of distortion that purportedly give rise to dreams. At every turn, Freud intimates that the distortions bear meaning, like figures of speech expressing literal contents. Hence the subdivision heading, "Absurd Dreams," is a misnomer awaiting correction: even the most apparently absurd dream has meaning, or may be given meaning, with the help of the dreamer. The Passover dream is an intriguing example in which Freud uncovers meanings of an apparently meaningless mental product, which he calls "an absurd and incomprehensible word construction." Specifically, one linguistic innovation stands like a palimpsest over buried formations. Freud reveals certain associated materials, yet he merely begins the work of interpretation. Without claiming to have discovered the exclusive meaning of Freud's dream, we may extrapolate further from his associations. The present analysis focuses on significations linked to the intertextual relationship between Freud's Passover dream and Herzl's drama.

This dream report, together with other dreams and letters, has led a recent critic to speculate on Freud's "Rome neurosis." For Freud, Rome was a place of exile in the Christian era, as Egypt was for Joseph and as Babylon was for Daniel after the fall of the First Temple in Jerusalem. Freud recounts his dream:

As a result of certain events in the city of Rome, it is necessary to evacuate the children, which also takes place. The scene is then in front of a gateway, a double door in the ancient style (the *Porta Romana* in Sienna, as I am already aware during the dream). I sit on the edge of a fountain and am very dejected, close to tears. A female person—an attendant or nun—brings the two boys out and delivers them to their father, who was not myself. The older of the two is clearly my eldest; I do not

see the face of the other one. The woman who brought out the boy requests a kiss from him in parting. She is remarkable for having a red nose. The boy refuses her the kiss, but while reaching out his hand in parting says: *Auf Geseres*, and to both of us (or to one of us): *Auf Ungeseres*. I have the notion that the latter signifies a preference. (*Td* 426 / *ID* 477–78)

In his first interpretive gesture, Freud provides two literary associations. He mentions *The New Ghetto* and quotes the scriptural words "By the waters of Babylon, we sat and wept." Both allusions conceal as much as they reveal. Nowhere in his interpretation does Freud discuss the play *The New Ghetto*, nor does he even name its author. And although he cites Psalm 137 (from Luther's translation), he never discusses its exilic sentiments.

Freud explicitly states that "this dream is constructed upon a tangle of thoughts which were provoked by a play seen in the theater, *The New Ghetto*" (*Td* 427 / *ID* 478). This remark names an unusual "day's residue" of *thoughts*—rather than characters, images, or events—that were incorporated into the dream. Freud specifies that "the Jewish Question, concern over the future of children to whom one cannot give a fatherland, concern about raising them so that they may become independent [*freizügig*], are easy to recognize in the corresponding dream thoughts" (*Td* 427 / *ID* 478). The present example, which involves dream thoughts that respond to a mental conflict, differs from most instances in which the manifest dream alludes to recent occurrences. Freud cannot have been entirely comfortable with this, because his overarching dream theory conceives the dream as "the (disguised) fulfillment of a (suppressed, repressed) childhood wish" (*Td* 175 / *ID* 194). Mature, rational reflections on the Jewish Question should not enter into the latent dream thoughts, and according to Freud, such conscious ideas play an indifferent part in the manifest content. Nevertheless, this particular concern draws from emotional conflicts and from a childhood source: "The dream situation, in which I rescue my children from the city of Rome, is incidentally distorted by its reference back to an analogous occurrence

tives who, many years ago, were given an occasion to relocate their children on another soil" (*Td* 429n / *ID* 481n). Freud envies those who escaped earlier with their children.

Freud also mentions a related experience, associated with the mental asylum that he saw in Sienna: "Shortly before the dream I had heard that a person of my faith had to give up his strenuously obtained position at a public mental asylum" (*Td* 427 / *ID* 478). In recalling this event, Freud alludes to the anti-Semitic policies of Karl Lueger, mayor of Vienna from 1897. Herzl's drama and the experience of Freud's acquaintance place in question the standing of Jews in turn-of-the-century Vienna. We know from other contexts that Freud worried about his own prospects and whether they might be hindered by his "Mosaic" descent.

Freud concentrates his interpretive efforts on discovering the significance of the seemingly meaningless words *Auf Geseres* and *Auf Ungeseres*. Confronted by these "absurd" phrases, Freud acts like a classical philologist, but one who subjects his own mental product (rather than an ancient text) to analysis. He also follows the traces left in his dream language, much as etymologists analyze collective linguistic phenomena. Beneath the layer of modern German, taking the place of *Auf Wiedersehen*, *Auf Geseres* reveals affinities to Yiddish, Aramaic, and Hebrew. Freud's manner of dealing with this linguistic plurality elucidates his relationship to these languages, and his associations indicate his troubled sense of the modern Jewish condition.

In attempting to gloss *Geseres*, Freud does not rely exclusively on his own knowledge. He enigmatically refers to unnamed sources: "According to the information that I have received from biblical scholars, *Geseres* is a genuine Hebrew word, derived from a verb *goiser*, and may be best conveyed by 'commanded suffering, doom.' According to the use of the word in Yiddish [*im Jargon*], one might think it meant 'weeping and wailing'" (*Td* 427 / *ID* 478).

Freud simultaneously claims and disavows knowledge of the Hebrew and Yiddish his dream employs. Through Yiddish, *Geseres* had entered

heard the word used in this way, and he considers one incident a source for the dream: "Many years ago, when this son of Professor M.—who today is an independent thinker—was still in school, he became ill with an eye infection which, the doctor declared, aroused concern. . . . 'Why are you making such a *Geseres*?' he prevailed upon the mother" (*Td* 428 / *ID* 480). The "absurd" *Auf Geseres*, then, echoes an expression meaning "to make a fuss" (*machen ein Geseres*), specifically in relation to an illness of the eyes or a deficiency of vision. The initial "concern over the future of children" reemerges as a concern lest they become shortsighted or one-sided—like the Cyclops. Although Freud suggests that this particular memory is the main impetus for his verbal innovation, his philological observations point to deeper determinants.

Freud begins to gloss *Geseres* by disclaiming responsibility for the explanation: "According to information that I have received from biblical scholars [*Schriftgelehrten*]. . ." Here the standard English translation is particularly misleading, for it renders *Schriftgelehrten* as "philologists." Had Freud consulted the leading Christian philologist of his time, in fact, he would have discovered that *Geseres* is *not* a "genuine Hebrew word"; it is, rather, an Aramaism. The Aramaic word *gezerah* signifies a decree; by extension, Yiddish *gesere* came to mean "evil decree" and, by association, "misfortune." It derives from the Hebrew root *Gimmel-Zayin-Resh* (meaning to cut or separate). Although Freud attributes his slightly inaccurate information to a rabbinic source, he cannot deny knowing enough to know that his dream employs Judaic materials. Unconsciously, Freud carries an awareness of the Hebrew language, which he learned as a child. He also knows a number of Yiddish words and is familiar with the Passover ritual, one of the few Jewish customs that his parents retained in Vienna. Significantly, the Aramaized meaning of the Hebrew root *Gimmel-Zayin-Resh* occurs in the Passover ritual, when the Maggid recalls that Pharaoh "decreed [*gazar*] only against the males."

In the process of interpreting his dream, Freud evokes the flight from Egypt and the matzoth

that Jews eat in memory of the Israelites' hasty departure. He paraphrases: "During their flight from Egypt, the children of Israel did not have time to allow their dough to rise, and even today at Easter-time eat unleavened bread in memory of this" (*Td* 427 / *ID* 479). Freud's association derives in part from the similarity he hears between *Ungeseres* and *ungesäuertes Brot*, unleavened bread. What is the meaning, then, of *Auf Geseres* when spoken by Freud's eldest son? Freud himself suggests that his child confirms a theoretical position associated with Wilhelm Fliess by "acting, as it were, in consideration of bilateral symmetry" (*Td* 429 / *ID* 480). This far-fetched interpretation screens other meanings. Freud concludes that, in general, "the dream is often most profound where it appears most mad" (*ibid.*); bizarre elements assume meaning when placed in the context of associations. Yet Freud does not complete his interpretation of *Auf Geseres*, because of his own "myopic" perspective. Placing greater emphasis on the Greek allusion to one-eyed Cyclops, Freud deemphasizes Judaic components.

Freud's one-sided reading of his Passover dream occurs in several stages. From the outset, he diminishes the importance of Herzl's play in producing the dream. Although he writes that this dream "is constructed upon a tangle of thoughts which were provoked by a play," he neither acknowledges its Zionist author nor discusses any aspect of *The New Ghetto*. Prior events may, however, be more than incidental precipitants of the manifest dream content; a dream may respond to recent experiences, as the dream of Irma's injection responds to Freud's (and Fliess's) unfortunate dealings with Emma Eckstein. Dreams do not exclusively represent repressed childhood wishes: as contemporary theorists have suggested, the meanings of dreams are often more immediate.

Freud's Passover dream responds both directly and indirectly to Herzl. Because Freud's dream confronts central issues in *The New Ghetto*, the question arises: How does Freud's dream interpret Herzl's play?

On about January 5, 1898, Freud was among the first to see Herzl's play *The New Ghetto* in Vienna. Because Herzl had become known as the

organizer of the First Zionist Congress in August 1897, his play naturally awakened Freud's "concern about the future of children to whom one cannot give a fatherland" (*Td* 427 / *ID* 478). Nevertheless, Herzl's early play is not Zionist; it merely raises the issues that Zionism later sought to resolve.

Herzl's title alludes to several discussions within the play. "The new ghetto," according to the protagonist Jacob Samuel, has invisible walls. In spite of the Jewish Enlightenment, which enabled Jews to leave the old ghetto, another ghetto with subtler boundaries remained. Jacob states that "the ghetto is the separation which I do not want, which pains me and which I am supposed to bear" (II.v.). During the same scene, after Jacob is snubbed by his Christian friend, he paraphrases the message he has received: "Away, Jew! Back to the ghetto!" Throughout the play, Jacob strives to escape this ghetto, implicitly aiming at assimilation as a solution to the Jewish Question. He discovers that this resolution is impossible, however, and is destroyed by his quest.

Jacob Samuel, the protagonist of *The New Ghetto*, is a young and idealistic lawyer who marries at the start of the play. His wife's circle of Jewish financiers contrasts with that of Jacob's non-Jewish university friends. Known to defend workers, Jacob is approached by a representative of the coal miners; he agrees to take on their case as they prepare to strike. Because the coal mine is jointly controlled by Jews and non-Jews, Jacob makes special efforts to prevent a scandal that would result in anti-Semitic retaliations. When he tries to act as mediator, he falls victim in the financial battle between Count Schramm and two Jewish businessmen. Early in the play, a local rabbi anticipates Jacob's death by telling a medieval tale. The legend of Moses of Mainz functions as a parable of the Jewish condition in Europe: "Moses was an honest youth, son of a merchant, and wished to become a scholar. One summer night he sat with the ancient books of our sages and studied. Suddenly he heard a call for help in the night. He leaned out of the windows; it was not in the ghetto. Someone was crying outside, in front of the ghetto. The wailing became ever more horrible. Deeply moved to see his need

... when he did not return and his mother was consuming herself in anxiety, she also stood and went out to look for him. . . . The next morning Moses was found stabbed in front of the opened gate to the ghetto, and near the corpse sat his mother, smiling happily. . . . She had become insane" (III.iv.; my ellipses).

In attempting to save a life, Moses of Mainz loses his own. Anti-Semitic murderers lure their victim outside ghetto walls only to murder him. This story corresponds to Jacob's self-perception at the close of Herzl's play. Like Moses, Jacob has sought to be of assistance beyond the ghetto walls and is mortally wounded in a duel with Count Schramm. "Tell the Rabbi," Jacob says on his deathbed, that he has died "like Moses of—Mainz!" (IV.vii.). One may add, in light of the fact that Herzl wrote this play in Paris in 1894, that Count Schramm's anti-Semitic actions resonate with the contemporaneous Dreyfus Affair. Moreover, Jacob follows the example of the biblical Moses, who led the Jews out of their Egyptian servitude, and he consequently falls victim of opponents who wish to prevent Jews from leaving the new ghetto. His final words reaffirm the collective ambition: "Jews, my brothers, one will only allow you to live again—when you. . . . Why are you holding me so tightly? . . . (Murmurs.) I want—out! . . . (Very loudly.) Out—of—the—ghetto!" (IV.viii.; ellipses in original). In responding to the Jewish Question, this play is evidently more assimilationist than Zionist. According to Herzl's drama, however, turn-of-the-century Vienna does not permit Jews to escape the new ghetto. Jacob's struggle to escape, like Moses of Mainz's attempt to save a life, is suicidal. Herzl's play shows his evolving commitment to the Jewish cause, and Freud identified with the predicament of its protagonist.

The social standing of Yiddish in Freud's Vienna is apparent from its place in Herzl's drama: only the rabbi and the unmannered character named Wasserstein use the so-called Jewish *Jargon*. Wasserstein asks whether Jacob Samuel is meshugge enough to refuse his relatives' financial support (I.iii.). Later, anticipating Herzl's Zionist rhetoric, the rabbi refers to God's role in leading the Jews out of *Mizrajim* (I.viii.). Both *me-*

shugge and *Mizrajim* (like *Auf Geseres*) have Hebrew origins but were incorporated into colloquial Viennese speech through Yiddish. Unlike Wasserstein and the rabbi, the more assimilated and educated characters in Herzl's play never lapse into Yiddishisms. Although he adopts the metaphors of Egypt and Zion then, in his later writing Herzl predictably decrees: "The stunted and oppressed *Jargons*, which we now employ—these ghetto languages—we will give up [*abgewöhnen*]." In fact, Yiddish was already a repressed subtext for German-speaking Jews, many of whom had Yiddish-speaking parents, and their language was one of the most complex knots of ambivalence. Hence it is not surprising that Freud's published essays seldom employ Yiddish idioms, whereas his private letters to Martha Bernays in the 1880s and to Wilhelm Fliess in the 1890s contain numerous Yiddish words. The exception among Freud's published papers is *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (*Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten*), in which Freud analyzes a wide range of Jewish jokes containing Yiddish.

In June 1897, the summer of Herzl's First Zionist Congress, Freud wrote to Wilhelm Fliess: "I'll admit that recently I have been planning a collection of profound Jewish stories." *The Interpretation of Dreams*, published less than three years later, contains some examples and a further reference to Jewish anecdotes that "conceal so much profound and often bitter wisdom about life" (*Td* 206 / *ID* 227). Freud printed the Jewish stories he had been collecting in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, together with other materials that disguise the earlier design. In many respects, the joke book is a second dream book: when studying dreams, Freud resorts to his own dream reports, and when studying wit, he refers to his favorite jokes—those of Jewish popular tradition. His theories demonstrate that both dreams and jokes have a manifest content that conceals deeper meanings, and both employ condensation, displacement, reversal, and wordplay. As Freud wrote fragments of an implicit autobiography based on his dreams, he later sketched scenes from Jewish life and embedded these collective self-portraits in his psychoanalysis of wit.

Freud's jokes and anecdotes characteristically reveal something (a *Tendenz*, or tendentious message) that has been hidden. Much like the dream work, according to Freud, the mechanism of jokes involves a transformation that disguises covert obscenity, aggression, or criticism. A second-order disguise is at work in Freud's discussion of such disguises. If we wish to interpret the concealed layer of meaning in his book on jokes, two passing phrases provide points of departure. When Freud begins to relate Jewish jokes, he apologizes for their source: "We ask for no proof of nobility from our examples; we do not inquire into their descent, but only into their efficacy" (W 49 / J 49). In another context, Freud regrets that he has not been able to "divest" (*entkleiden*) a story of Yiddish. The socially disadvantaged language recurs at several stages, specifically acknowledged as a source of humor (W 103, 108 / J 108, 114).

Freud remains somewhat uneasy with the folk humor and Yiddish "jargon" he embeds in an analysis of mental processes. The suppression of socially inferior Yiddish is apparently integral to one story Freud tells. This joke allows the teller to expose what assimilated Jews have concealed; namely, meaner origins. Presumably a converted Jew, the baroness of this story knows (as did Freud) a smattering of Yiddish:

The doctor, who has been asked to attend the Baroness at her delivery, declares that the moment has not yet come, and therefore suggests to the Baron that they play a game of cards in the neighboring room. After a while the Baroness' cry of pain reaches the ears of the two men. "*Ah mon Dieu, que je souffre!*" The husband leaps up, but the doctor counters, "It's nothing; let's go on playing." A little while later one hears the woman in childbirth again: "*Mein Gott, mein Gott, was für Schmerzen!*"—"Don't you want to go in, Herr Professor?" the Baron asks.—"No, no, it is not yet time."—Finally, from the neighboring room one hears the cry of an unmistakable: "*Ay, vey, vey*"; then the doctor throws down his cards and says, "It's time." (W 78 / J 81)

Freud only partially analyzes this anecdote. He writes that the woman's pain gradually breaks through the layers of her cultivated manner, until

her "original nature" (*ursprüngliche Natur*) finds expression. French culture cedes to German as the pain intensifies, and finally Yiddish slips out. The baroness's origins are revealed, not by an inchoate primitive wail, but by an Eastern European accent; her "original nature" was Jewish. Assimilated Jews may laugh in comfort at this circumstance that acknowledges pretensions and the suppressed past. Freud himself declines to discuss the Yiddish his joke contains; nor does he deal with issues surrounding the assimilated or converted Jew in modern European culture.

Most relevant to the issue of collective identity is a submerged allusion to Zionism. Freud leaves the political and ethnic dimensions untouched when he analyzes this anecdote: "Itzik has been declared fit for the artillery. He is obviously an intelligent fellow, but inflexible and not interested in the post. One of his superiors who is well-inclined toward him takes him aside and says: 'I want to give you a tip: *Buy yourself a cannon and make yourself independent!*'" (W 56 / J 56).

We know that this independent artillery man is Jewish from the Yiddishized form of his name, Itzik. The anecdote plays on stereotypes of Jews' aversion to military service and resistance to authority. Because Itzik cannot subordinate himself to the artillery unit, his superior ironically suggests that he start his own army. This is a patently ridiculous idea, exaggerating the tendency that is evident in Itzik's behavior. While it obliquely satirizes Zionist aspirations, the joke reflects Freud's own concern with independence. In this context, one may recall a post-Freudian witticism that is popular among Yiddishists: "What is the difference between a language and a dialect? A language has an army and a navy." Power and authority have, indeed, always given German priority over Yiddish in Western culture.

In 1905, the Itzik joke assumed special pathos. Many Jewish Socialists participated in the failed revolution of 1905, and following Herzl's death the Zionists continued to struggle for the Jews' political independence in a Jewish homeland. Both the Socialists and the Zionists sought to assert themselves, with or without weapons. In fact, there were almost no Jewish artilleries, not to mention armies or navies, during the period

cannons, Jews had only textual canons.

Herzl's early play and later Zionist dream understandably provoked Freud's reflections on the future of his children. In the analysis of his Passover dream, Freud cautiously states that he wishes to raise (*erziehen*) his children in such a way "that they may become independent [*freizügig*]" (*Td* 427). Alexander Grinstein notes that this central phrase may also mean to "become . . . liberal minded." In the standard edition of Freud's works, however, James Strachey translates *freizügig* as being able to "move freely across frontiers" (*ID* 478), which emphasizes the territorial problem of the Jews. This alternate translation resonates with Herzl's play, which also arouses thoughts about Jews' potential freedom to move—beyond the walls of the new ghetto.

At a rare moment in Herzl's play, a Jewish woman addresses herself to an aristocratic non-Jew. Jacob's sister-in-law expresses concern over the upbringing of her children and asks Count Shramm to make inquiries about a certain governess: "I will of course take only a person who has served in good houses. . . . You understand: it's important with children. One really wants to give them a finer education [*Erziehung*]" (I.vii.). She would like her Jewish children to receive the same genteel upbringing as aristocratic Viennese. The non-Jewish governess in question reappears in the Passover dream, perhaps conflated with Freud's own childhood nanny, as the "attendant, nun" who cares for his children in Rome. This passage also recalls the moment when Jacob's mother explains: "I accustomed myself to a better way of speaking than Jewish-German [*Juden-deutsch*], so that he [her son] would not have to be ashamed of me" (I.iv.). She thus sets herself apart from the socially backward Wasserstein.

Despite supervision by a Christian attendant, in Freud's dream the eldest son reverts to Yiddish, or at least compounds Viennese German with layers of Yiddish, Aramaic, and Hebrew. Freud's hope that his children may become *freizügig*, independent or liberal-minded, does not mean that they must become Christian. Fulfilling in a disguised manner Jacob Samuel's wish to escape "the new ghetto" of modern anti-Semi-

ism, Freud's children are educated from Christian Rome. They benefit from the "finer education" a non-Jewish attendant provides, but they also part from her while expressing a preference for Freud in something like the ancestral mother tongue.

This returns us to the enigmatic words *Auf Geseres* and *Auf Ungeseres*. Freud refuses to read the decree that these words pronounce. He guesses that the Yiddish signifies "weeping and wailing," although *Gezeres* more accurately refers to ordinances or edicts, typically directed against Jews. *Gezeres* were linguistic events, pronouncements that determined the fate of the European Jewish community. In 1421, for instance, the Vienna *Geserah* led to the execution and expulsion of the Jews. Such a catastrophe in exile pervades the atmosphere of Freud's dream, starting with his allusion to the Babylonian exile as lamented in Psalm 137.

Freud limits his imaginative creation, then, by declining to honor the manifest dream thoughts. As the Babylonian Talmud asserts, "A dream that is not interpreted is like a letter that is not read" (Tractate Berakhot 55b). Although Freud says that he treats the dream as a "holy text" (*Td* 492–93 / *ID* 552), he does not probe the deeper meanings of the *gezerah* his son utters; nor does he discuss his pained sense of the Jews' precarious position in their Viennese exile. Myopic in his own way, Freud chose to underestimate the crisis Herzl perceived and dramatically depicted in *The New Ghetto*.

We must, then, reinterpret the words of Freud's eldest son. Saying *Auf Geseres* and *Auf Ungeseres* means, as Freud himself indicates, allotting leavened bread (*gesäuertes Brot*) to the nun and unleavened bread (*ungesäuertes Brot*) to himself. As if to assert the difference and repudiate assimilationist hopes, Freud's son affirms his awareness of Passover customs. His "finer education" has not eliminated all traces of Jewish tradition. Furthermore, *Auf Geseres* and *Auf Ungeseres* are condensations of fuller statements that might read: *Auf Ihnen—Geseres*, "Upon you [nun]—decrees," and *Auf dir—Ungeseres*, "Upon you [father]—the negation of decrees." The son's supposed consciousness of bilateral symmetry might

then emerge as an awareness of Jewish-Christian antipathies. Freud's dream further responds to the Jewish Question by recalling both a history of persecution and the central ritual of Jewish memory, the Passover Seder. In his assimilated Viennese context, however, Freud never employs the word *Passah* (or *Pesach*), but instead refers to Passover as *Osterzeit*, Easter-time. This linguistic quirk aptly reflects Freud's cultural dilemma, which demands euphemistic self-denials. In any case, Freud gives meaning to his apparently meaningless verbal combination by associating it with the Jewish practice of eating unleavened bread in memory of the Exodus. This association is all the more reason for his concern that his children become independent.

Freud's Passover dream represents and responds to the uneasy position of assimilated Jews in turn-of-the-century Vienna. Confronted by anti-Semitic policies such as those of Karl Lueger, the post-Enlightenment version of ancient and medieval *gezeres*, Freud's dream work sought a solution. At the same time, repressed Yiddish and Hebrew signifiers remained present, awaiting expression. Because it was impossible to escape "the new ghetto," as Herzl's play showed dramatically, Freud's dream found a linguistic compromise. In the dream, his son employs an "absurd" expression that posits continuity with the Jewish condition and ritual, and which casts him as an opponent of persecution. This act and its consequences differentiates Freud's son from Freud's father, whose public humiliation Freud never forgot (*Td* 208 / *ID* 230).

Before his marriage, Freud considered conversion but remained a Jew. In Herzl's play, this path is represented by a Dr. Bichler who has attempted to escape "the new ghetto" through conversion. The ingenuous Emanuel Wasserstein asks why he converted, to which Dr. Bichler responds, "What I did is the individual solution of the question. . . . Or rather, an attempt at a solution. . . . For—between us—it solves nothing" (l.i.). Freud apparently also reached this conclusion.

Freud experienced ambivalence toward the antithetical options of assimilation and separatism that Herzl presents in his early play. *The Neu*

Ghetto initially aims at the former solution to the Jewish Question; on his deathbed, Jacob still cries out that he wants to escape the ghetto. In spite of his and others' efforts at assimilation, however, the problematic separation remains. The story of Moses of Mainz epitomizes the hazardous position of European Jews: a single step beyond ghetto walls may expose one to murder. The technical "bilateral symmetry" Freud discusses might, hence, suggest a delicate balance between Christianity and Judaism. His dream of *Auf Geseres* and *Auf Ungeseres* neither cedes to the assimilationist temptation nor embraces Herzl's Zionism. The Passover dream confronts contemporary perceptions of the Jewish exile and, in the absence of a Moses to lead the return to Palestine, seeks an elusive equilibrium.

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