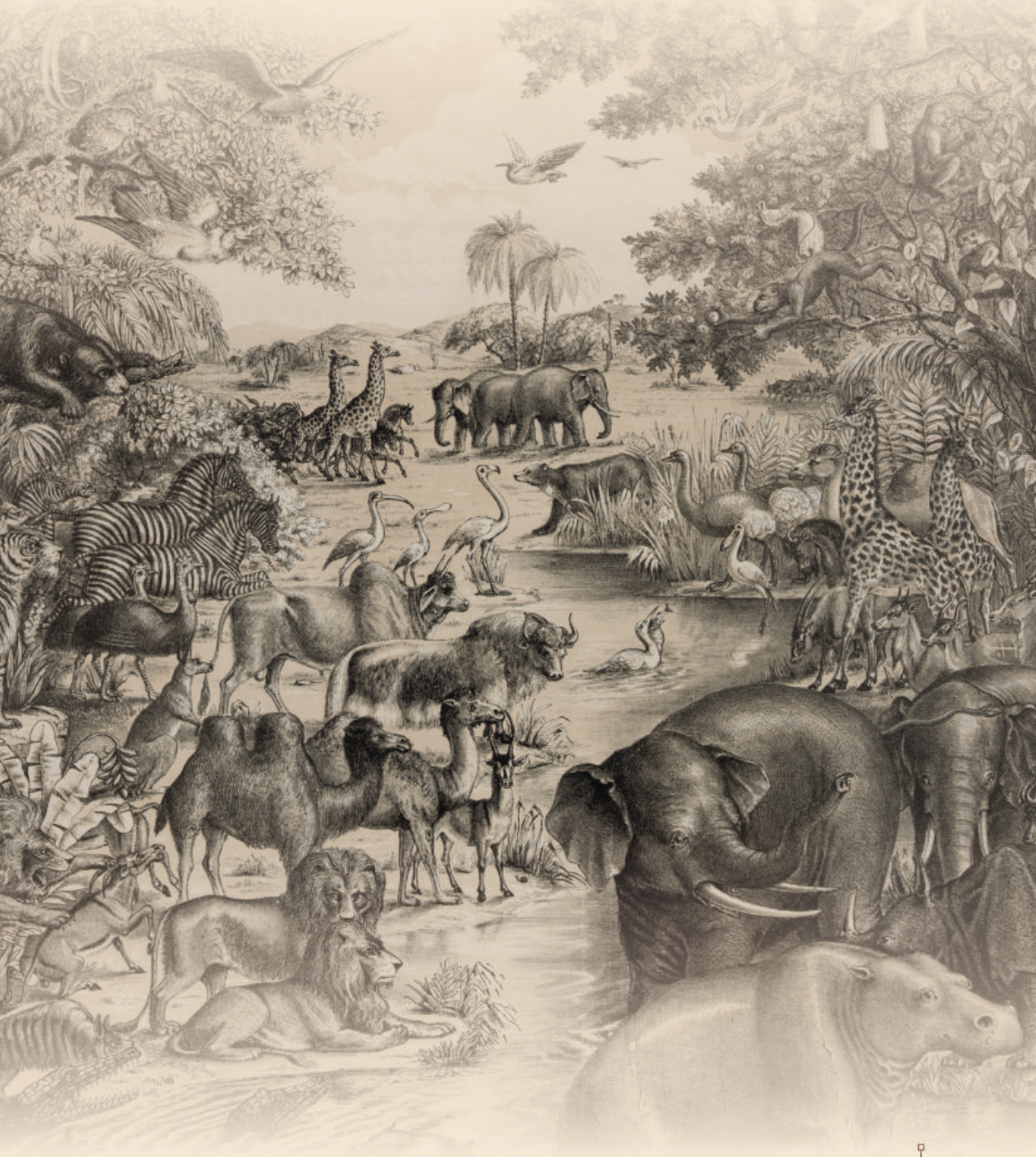
THE EARTHY NATURE OF THE BIBLE

Fleshly Readings of Sex, Masculinity, and Carnality



ROLAND BOER

The Earthy Nature of the Bible

This page intentionally left blank.

The Earthy Nature of the Bible

Fleshly Readings of Sex, Masculinity, and Carnality

Roland Boer

palgrave
macmillan

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world, this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN: 978-1-137-27315-4 (paperback)
ISBN: 978-1-137-27305-5 (hardcover)

An earlier version of Chapter 1 originally appeared as "The Second Coming: Repetition and Insatiable Desire in the Song of Songs" *Biblical Interpretation* 8, no. 3 (2000):276–301 and is reprinted here by permission of the publisher.

An earlier version of Chapter 3 originally appeared as "Keeping It Literal: The Economy of the Song of Songs." *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 7 (2007), article 6; DOI: 10.5508/jhs.2007.v7.a6, freely available online at http://www.jhsonline.org and republished in a traditional printed version in E. Ben Zvi (ed.), *Perspectives in Hebrew Scriptures IV: Comprising the Contents of Journal of Hebrew Scriptures, vol. 7* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2008), 151–67, and is reprinted here by permission of the publisher.

Earlier versions of chapters 4, 6, and 7 originally appeared as "The Patriarch's Nuts: Concerning the Testicular Logic of Biblical Hebrew" in the *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* 5, no. 2 (2011): 41–52; "Of Fine Wine, Incense and Spices: The Unstable Masculine Hegemony of the Books of Chronicles" *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* 4, no. 1 (2010):19–31; and "Skin Gods: Circumcising the Built Male Body" *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* 1, no. 1 (2007):35–44, respectively, and are reprinted here by permission of the publisher.

An earlier version of Chapter 5 originally appeared as "Too Many Dicks at the Writing Desk, or How to Organise a Prophetic Sausage Fest" in *Theology and Sexuality* 16, no. 1 (2010):95–108, and is reprinted here by permission of the publisher.

An earlier version of Chapter 9 originally appeared as "King Solomon Meets Annie Sprinkle" *Semeia* 82: *In Search of the Present: The Bible through Cultural Studies* (2000): 151–82 and is reprinted here by permission of the publisher.

First published in 2012 by PALGRAVE MACMILLAN® in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Boer, Roland, 1961–
The earthy nature of the Bible : fleshly readings of sex, masculinity, and carnality / Roland Boer.
pages cm
ISBN 978-1-137-27305-5 (hardback)—ISBN 978-1-137-27315-4 (paperback) 1. Sex in the Bible. 2. Bible. O.T.—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 3. Bible. O.T. Song of Solomon—Criticism, interpretation, etc. I. Title.
BS1199.S45B64 2012
221.8'3067—dc23 2012019798

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Scribe Inc.

First edition: November 2012

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To my mother

This page intentionally left blank.

Contents

Preface

After I had completed *The Criticism of Heaven and Earth*, an almost endless multi-volume work (Boer 2007a, 2009a; 2011a; 2012, in press), I was looking for a very different project to which I could devote my time and pleasure. Perhaps I should revise *Knockin' on Heaven's Door*, I thought. A few messages to the publisher put an end to those plans, for they wished to keep the thing in print. What about a follow-up book, in the same spirit and with the same interest in the underside of the Bible? Before I knew it, I was working on various pieces for what was to become *The Earthy Nature of the Bible*. To test the waters, I began to post some snippets on my blog, stalinsmoustache.wordpress.com, on Hittites and hippophilia, on patriarchal nuts, zoological zirmahs, and so on.

The responses were enough to suggest I was onto something, but what clinched the deal was the moment my mother began reading my blog. Apparently, she had heard rumors, a little gossip, and a little slander about my online activities. So when she had a chance—on a visit to my brother and his partner—she requested to read my blog. I was immediately informed via the grapevine (which had a foreboding that my mother would not be pleased). Forewarned and forearmed, knowing that a telephone call was forthcoming, I posted an open letter to my mother, which she didn't read (although many others did).

Finally, the call came.

"Roland, I have to talk to you about something."

"Oh yes, the blog," I said.

"How did you know?" she said.

"A little bird sitting on a vine," I said.

"I didn't get far," she said. "It was so disgusting, I had to stop!"

"Well . . . um . . . yes." I said.

"I thought you had perhaps gone off the deep end after your father's death," she said. "But I can certainly understand why some people don't want you to teach."

"Actually, mum," I said. "I am perfectly sane. I made a decision some time ago that I would not hold back on the blog, knowing full well that you or my children or other relatives would read it."

"Are you sure that's wise?" she said. "Your brother thinks you are a purveyor of pornography."

I laughed long and hard (and have told the story many times since).

"The point of those blogs on the Bible," I said, "is to show that the Bible is a very earthy and often crude text, uncomfortably so in many cases."

She paused. "Your father used to say that," she said.

I took that as the ultimate blessing, for he had died less than a year before but was very present in our conversations. It also meant that I simply had to dedicate this book to my mother.

Others also should be thanked. The sundry blog conversationalists—NT Wrong with his astute suggestions concerning translations and reading (he put me onto Allen Edwardes), W. John Lyons who maintains a healthy interest in the grimier matters of biblical interpretation, Remi Low the fellow revolutionary, Jim West who wrote an open letter to my mother in my defense, Christian Callisen (of ovenkitty.wordpress.com) the merchant banker become student with an eye for the absurd, the perversely indefatigable and indefatigably perverse Deane Galbraith, Stephanie Fisher who is willing to wade into any argument, Gillian Townsley who is prepared to admit that *bukkake* is a new term for her vocabulary, Queen Betty who I think comes from Australia but remains intriguingly pseudonymous, and all those I have not named or who lurk unnamed.

Thanks too to those who ensured the publication of early and now rather different versions of some of the chapters: J Cheryl Exum and Fiona Black, Ken Stone, Ehud Ben Zvi, Joseph Gelfer, and David Jobling. Wider afield, I also should thank those who have found reasons (which are entirely beyond me) why *this* zone of my work should be translated first. Milan Vukomanovic ensured that *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* was translated by Slobodanka Glišić into Serbian by XXVek (Belgrade, 2008). Milena Kirova also secured a Bulgarian translation, completed by Kornelia Slavova and published by Altera (Sofia, 2010). "The more outrageous, the better," was the word Milena received from the press when discussing which work should be translated. It does make me wonder whether they will be interested in this one as well—or the next one, for I plan a third volume, to be called *The Crude Text*.

Lastly, a word of thanks in an expected quarter: the final work on this book took place while sailing halfway around the world on the CMA-CGM ship, *M/V La Tour*. For almost the legendary forty days, we sailed from Melbourne to Tilbury, across the Pacific and then the Atlantic, via the Panama Canal. The peaceful passage of a container ship, away from the chatter of Internet and email, the vastness of the oceans, the chance to reflect on the bridge or party with the crew (singing karaoke with Filipino sailors is an experience not to miss)—all these provided a perfect setting for completing the book. So thank you to the crew and officers, especially to Rosalindo, Boyd, Victor, Ralph, Branko, and Drasko. And of course to Christina who shared the passage with me.

Somewhere on the Pacific Ocean
Lat 0°01 north, Long 97°37 west
On the ship *M/V La Tour*
July 2010

Introduction

What exactly does it mean to say that the Bible, especially the Hebrew Bible, is an earthy text? The following pages compose a series of fleshly readings in an effort to show how crude it really is and indeed can be. So dear reader, alongside discussions of terms for testicles, of the pervasive but futile spermatic spluttering pen(is) of the prophets, and of the decidedly queer nature of the detailed attention to interior decoration on Mount Sinai and in the books of Chronicles, you will also find teasingly sensuous engagements with the sexuality of flora and fauna, hooker hermeneutics, hairy queens and anal dildos, Jeremiah the masturbator, Ezekiel the autofellating prophet, prophetic hygrophilia, and the bestial and necrophiliac practices of the Hittites. But you will also find detailed engagements with the theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, and Claude Lévi-Strauss and Antonio Negri.

All of which raise the next question: why would I be bothered with such a work? One simple answer I have already given (in the preface): it is a complete change of focus—almost like a holiday for a Calvinist like me—after the completion of my five-volume *The Criticism of Heaven and Earth* and its weighty concerns with Marxism and theology. Another answer is that this book carries on the project of *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* (Boer 1999a), which I can honestly and in all modesty say has achieved something of a cult status not only among biblical critics but also in cultural studies. Initially I thought of that work as a one-off, and in many respects it has done its job, ensuring that I did not get the jobs I did not really need or want anyway, motivating one or more pious hypocrite to block an invitation to a theological establishment that I really did not want to visit, establishing a dubious reputation as one given to a little excess on occasion, as well as being rather well practiced in some of the more obscure techniques and terminologies relating to sex. However, as I wrote the occasional study along somewhat similar lines to that earlier work, it became clear that I was gathering the chapters for another work. Some thorough revision of those original pieces and a concerted focus on some new chapters—on the patriarch's nuts, the prophetic dicks at the writing desk, hooker hermeneutics, the orientalist camp of Allen Edwardes, and the curious peccadilloes of the Hittites and their Hebrew

friends—and the work came together as it is now. The organization into three sections—on the Song of Songs, masculinities, and paraphilias—is one that arose organically from within the studies themselves, simply indicating not only the subject matter of the chapters but also signs of my growing and ever-expanding interests in such matters.

Not such a simple answer, after all; the third answer too is not so easy. It comes from a challenge by Midas Dekkers: "Every sexual encounter is a breaking of bounds, an intrusion into an alien realm, every sexual encounter retains a whiff of bestiality . . . You find true satisfaction only when you let yourself go" (2000, 3; 1992, 9). Is this true? Or is Dekkers simply being provocative or a pervert or both? With the insertion of "biblical" before "sexual encounter," this sentence may be taken as the challenge I take up, the question I seek to answer in what follows.

A word on method and tone before I pass over to a synopsis of each chapter: the reader will soon notice heavy engagements with psychoanalysis at some points (but by no means all). "The Second Coming," "Skin Gods," and "King Solomon Meets Annie Sprinkle" all do so, extracting in very different ways insights from the thought of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, and occasionally Slavoj Žižek. In the other chapters, psychoanalysis is less obviously present. I understand psychoanalysis as one of the materialist methods, alongside ecocriticism (which appears in the studies of the Song of Songs as well as the last chapter on bestiality) and Marxism. If psychoanalysis is a materialism of the psyche, then ecocriticism is a materialism of nature and Marxism one of history. But that is to simplify matters too much, for each of them is interleaved with the other. Yet the underlying methodological assumption is that of Marxism, which is ingrained so deeply in my thought that it shows up in the fabric of almost every sentence, but above all in the very desire to seek out the earthy nature of the Bible.

As far as tone is concerned, it may be thickly theoretical, knowingly prurient, matter-of-factly open, but always with a suggestion of wicked humor (I hope). It is certainly not flat-footedly serious and mind-numbingly droll, a sure cure for those afflicted with insomnia (again . . . I hope). Unfortunately, for those few writers who have ventured into similar territory, a pall of deathly seriousness soon descends. Ullendorf's curious and neglected essay is one example, despite a promising title, "The Bawdy Bible" (Ullendorf 1979). The Bible is, it would seem for such an author, a dreadfully serious book, coming from God (however indirectly) and dealing with the weighty matters of life, death, and sex. Similarly grave but better known is Howard Eilberg-Schwartz's *God's Phallus* (1993). An arresting argument—that the ban on representing God's sexual body is a way of trying to defuse the homoerotic dimensions of males worshipping a solo male deity and that the Hebrew Bible struggles in particular with blocking access to God's penis—is vitiated by a triangulated earnestness: between his own faith, a sacred text, and the community to which he felt allegiance. The tension was too much, for Eilberg-Schwartz walked away from academic life when he was barely past the age of forty (Krondorfer 2009, 165–66). A little less earnestness and an ability to make a joke at his own expense would have helped immeasurably—something I hope runs through this book.

That is not to say that I have not studied the topics gathered here with the greatest rigor, perseverance, and stamina. It remains to provide a synopsis of those hard-wrought chapters, so that any aspiring reader may map their way through the book, dipping in where desired. As mentioned earlier, three parts structure the chapters, one concerning the Song of Songs, another masculinities, and the third paraphilias—for the straightforward but effective reason that each section has chapters dealing with these topics.

"The Second Coming: Repetition and Insatiable Desire in the Song of Songs" opens both the book and the first section. It asks, how might Freud, Lacan, and Žižek read the Song of Songs? Revealingly—so much so that I tarry for a time in order to identify the main features of Lacan's thought on desire. It turns out that it is intimately connected with repetition, and, by investigating some of the major items of Lacanian theory—fort-da, (M)other, graph of desire, rim, Law, pain, *jouissance*, the desire of desire—the close liaison between desire and repetition is established. Equipped with this distinctively perverse set of toys, I then read the Song itself in three stages. The triggers of desire are located in the function of edges, rims, Law, pain, and the (M)other. Repetition is investigated in terms of structure, phrases and words, descriptions and content. Finally I ask the haunting question, *che vuoi* (what do you really want)?

The second chapter, "A Fleshly Reading: Masochism, Ecocriticism, and the Song of Songs" is initially a reply to a piece by Virginia Burrus and Stephen Moore called "Unsafe Sex" (2003). A detailed assessment of an earlier version of the preceding chapter, as well as my treatment of the Song of Songs in *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* (Boer 1999a), the essay by Burrus and Moore takes up my challenge to the heterosexual feminist orthodoxies that have settled on the Song. However, while Burrus and Moore feel that the way to break through such orthodoxies is through the "counterpleasure" of sadomasochism (S-M), I reply by arguing that sadism and masochism are both problematically yoked together and all-too-human practices. Instead, I propose that we do not try to peer through the metaphoric screen of the Song but pay attention to the screen itself. There we find it is full of the pulsing, squirting, and moistly opening sensuality of nature, of plants, and animals.

The third chapter, "Making It, Literally: Metaphor, Economy, and the Sensuality of Nature," takes up where the previous chapter left off. Thus over against the widespread assumption that the metaphors of the Song of Songs refer to human erotic love, or indeed the older assumption that they are allegories for the relations between God and Israel, or God and the Church, this chapter asks what happens when we break such metaphoric connections. In other words, what happens if we take the metaphors at face value? The next step is to explore what happens when the metaphors are freed from their links with human erotic love: they take on a life of their own, one of fecund and fertile nature, an argument that takes me to an exploration of what the world view of such a fecund nature might be. My suggestion is that it may be understood as a utopian element—nature producing freely and of its own accord—of what I call the sacred economy.

Leaving the Song in the throes of natural passions, I slip out of the garden of sensual delights in order to deal with (mostly) biblical masculinities. Chapter 4, "The Patriarch's Nuts," is a study of the testicular logic or world view (ideology) of the Hebrew Bible, with a specific focus on *halatsayim*, *motnayim*, and *yarekh*. While the first two form a curious double pair, being both dual terms and two words for the same sense—testicles—the word *yarekh* has a far more complex semantic cluster, one that includes thigh, hip, hip joint, side, base, and of course balls. In dealing with the first two terms, I seek to uncover the way a gonad linguistic economy stretches out to include courage, strength, fear and trembling, active participation in their own right, and the pressing need for males to bind them up and protect them from harm (usually rendered with the innocent "girding one's loins"). From there I pass to the subtleties of *yarekh*, exploring the way this semantic cluster gives voice to the inner workings of a complex testicular economy. In particular, this section deals with the "yarekh shake" (Gen. 24:2, 9; 47:29); the excruciating knee in the nuts experienced by Jacob in Genesis 32; the prairie oyster stew of Ezekiel 24:3–4; the testicular base of the lamp stand in Exodus 25:31; and the vivid and active sense that attends *yatsa' halatsayim* (Gen. 35:11; 1 Kings 8:19 and 2 Chron. 6:9) and *yots'e yerekh* (Gen. 46:26; Exod. 1:5; Judg. 8:30), which is really the burst of sperm from the end of a man's cock as a designator of his offspring. Throughout a consistent effort is made to use a term for testicles no more than once.

The fifth chapter, called "Too Many Dicks at the Writing Desk, or How to Organize a Prophetic Sausage Fest," begins with an exposition of Ezekiel 9:2 and 3, especially the phrase *weqeseth hasofer bemotnayw*, which is usually translated as "a writing case by side" or "a writing kit on his loins" I propose "the scribal pen(is) on his balls"—a translation that makes graphically clear the inseparable connection between masculinity, writing, and prophecy. From there I explore the role of writing in both the production of and instabilities in prophetic masculinity. I draw upon three theoretical sources: the work of Lévi-Strauss concerning the "writing experiment," Christina Petterson's exploration of the role of writing in constructing the ruling class in colonial Greenland, and some of my older work concerning the autoreferentiality of references to writing and scribal activity in the Hebrew Bible. With these theoretical strings, the paper falls into two phases—what may be called "organizing the sausage fest" and "too many dicks." The first concerns the production of masculinity, the second its problems. So in the initial sausage fest I argue that the subtle and overriding process of producing masculinity in the prophetic books is through the representation of the act of writing—what may be called the act of the spermatic spluttering pen(ise)s. In attributing writing to the writing prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel), rather than merely "recording" what they said and did, the scribes write themselves into the story. Not only do scribe and prophet merge into one, with the written and writing prophet acting as a cipher for the scribe, but the scribe also easily slips into the zone of absolute power, one in which even God obeys his dictates. No wimps here, no effeminate and weakly scribes; writing is the means of constructing a very male ruling class. However, no hegemony is ever complete, able to rest

at peace in its power. In order to examine the way the scribal act of masculine production runs into trouble, I focus on the anomalies of this constructed coterie of ruling males, especially the way the all-powerful role of prophetic scribal activity becomes masturbatory. Both the story of "Jeremiah the bejerked" and the narrative of Ezekiel's autofellatio reveal the absurdity of the extraordinary claims made by the scribal prophet who constructs the world itself, let alone its masculine class structure in which he is supreme. In fact, we fold back to the fundamental creation story of Egypt, in which Atum-Ra masturbates into his fist and thereby creates the world.

The exploration of these chronic instabilities carries on in Chapter 6, "Of Fine Wine, Incense, and Spices," the concern of which are the forbidding books of Chronicles. Over against the dominant image of a solidly masculine zone, this chapter argues that the masculine hegemony of Chronicles is by no means seamless or firm. Making use of the theories of Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci, and Antonio Negri on unstable hegemonies and constitutive resistance, the chapter looks for signs of trouble in the dominant hegemony of the text. It does so by exploring the utopian/dystopian ripples around a very phallic temple, the overdone camp of the mighty warriors, and the concern with crucial matters of cultic performance, such as utensils, cooking, and interior design.

"Skin Gods: Circumcising the Built Male Body" is Chapter 7, the last in this section on masculinities. Here the Bible must wait its turn, emerging on stage for its own posing routine after I have explored the question of male bodybuilding. I begin by asking whether the body of the male bodybuilder is a substitution for his penis, that one part he cannot enhance through weights. Conventional wisdom would have us believe that it is, but I am not so sure. In search of an answer I slide from body, then to penis, to foreskin, and back again. On that search I make use of both Lacan and Freud. Lacan gives me a theoretical key with his idea of the "little object a" (*objet petit a*), the item that simultaneously is excluded from the system in question and what keeps that whole system together. It would seem that the bodybuilder's penis is precisely this *objet petit a*. However, Freud suggests to me that *objet petit a* is not so much the penis as the foreskin that is cut away in circumcision. The catch is that circumcision, the mark of the religion of Moses, also points to nothing less than the absence of God's body. From that point I return to the built body to argue that the ideal body is in fact a circumcised body, but one that is ultimately as unattainable as God's body.

The third part of the book opens with "Hooker Hermeneutics," a detailed response to Avaren Ipsen's *Sex Working and the Bible* (2009). The innovative core of this work is to read key biblical texts concerning prostitutes with prostitutes themselves, especially from the San Francisco chapter of SWOP (Sex Worker Outreach Project). The texts Ipsen reads with her prostitute comrades are those on Rahab (Josh. 2 and 6:22–25), Solomon and the two prostitutes (1 Kings 3:16–28), the anointing of Jesus (John 12:1–8; Luke 7:36–50; Mark 14:3–9 and Matt. 26:6–13), and the whore Babylon (Rev. 17:1–19:10). While naturally drawn to texts like those of Rahab and the two sex workers abused by Solomon, I find myself stunned by the reading of Jesus's anointing. Given the premise

that a central feature of sex work is anointing, then the very name of "Christ"—Christos, the anointed one (messiah)—has an intimate and inseparable bond with sex work. I also offer some criticisms, preferring the use of standpoint theory, a development within Marxist feminist analysis, over against the problematic "preferential option for the poor" from liberation theology and Roman Catholic social teaching. But what draws me most is the way this book emerges as reflection on a political practice—the programs for alleviating the constant victimization of prostitutes and the ongoing campaign for decriminalization in many parts of the world—a politics embodied in the very language of the book, caught as it is between the scholarship and the street.

Chapter 9 is a reworking of my infamous "King Solomon Meets Annie Sprinkle," which Alice Bach once gloriously described as "self-serving and icky," an "authorial misstep" (1998, 303)—perhaps the highest accolade I have ever received. Perceiving it now, after Ipsen's book, as an exercise in hooker hermeneutics, I seek the patterns by which 1 Kings 1–11 on Solomon's reign consistently represses and displaces its sexual codes. Here I make use of the three psychoanalytic concepts (the censor, libidinal investment, and the return of the repressed) in order to trace the way everything sexual about Solomon is held until the very last moment, acting thereby as a return of the repressed that swamps and undermines all that he has achieved. But all this is really a warm-up, some teasing and massage before the main event: I make use of Annie Sprinkle in order to circumvent the censor of this text, juxtaposing moments from her career and writing in order to expose hidden angles of Solomon's libido. Finally, taken by the intersections between Annie Sprinkle and the Queen of Sheba, especially the paraphiliac afterlives of the text in various traditions, I offer another ficto-critical piece, now with Annie and the queen merging into one as she arrives at Solomon's court.

The tenth chapter, "Orientalist Camp," seeks to recover and assess the work of Allen Edwardes from the 1960s, a sexologist, linguist, and biblical scholar who was part of the circle around R. E. L. Masters and Albert Ellis. In particular, the chapter focuses on the extraordinary *Erotica Judaica*, assessing the nature and effect of Edwardes's work. It argues that Edwardes may be seen in terms of "orientalist camp"—a category I introduce before situating Edwardes within the 1960s and sexual liberation. From there, the argument concerns the tensions within Edwardes's work between scholarly argument and ribald commentary, a tension that leaves its mark in one's own bodily response, in the main text and in the nature of the footnotes. In closing, I suggest that through this tension Edwardes challenges the polite conventions of (religious) scholarship.

Finally, in Chapter 11, "Hittites, Horses, and Corpses," I deal systematically with bestiality and necrophilia. Needing to restrict a topic that could well become a book in its own right, the chapter focuses on the Hittites—for the excellent reason that they are important in the Bible and that they permitted sex with horses and dead (and did not punish the occasional pig should it mount a man, nor the man mounted by an ox). A detailed treatment of these intriguing but understudied laws leads to the need to thoroughly redefine what is meant by gens or clan (and indeed incest). From there, I search for appearances of Hittites in the Bible,

finding them associated with the dead (Ephron's field in Gen. 23; the freshly dead Uriah, former husband of Bathsheba, in 1 Sam. 11; the hairy Esau and his Hittite wives in Gen. 26:34; 27:46; 36:2; and Ezekiel's genealogical taunts in Ezek. 16:3, 45). Horses and corpses aplenty, it seems. But only then, after I have teased out curious practices, innuendos, and longing looks in this family of sexual peccadilloes can we reassess those well-known texts concerning bestiality from Exodus 22:19, Leviticus 18:23 and 20:15–16, and Deuteronomy 27:21. They turn out to much closer to the Hittite laws than we might expect, for here too the clan and thereby incest needs to be thoroughly revised to include animals within its orbit.

So much for the chapters and their various topics. I do, however, need to make a final comment on earlier, barer versions of some of the chapters. Although each chapter has been carefully revised, permission has been granted for the following items: Chapter 1 was originally published in different form in *Biblical Interpretation* (Boer 2000b); Chapter 3 appeared as "Keeping It Literal" in *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* (Boer 2007b); Chapters 4, 6, and 7 were published in the *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* (Boer 2011b; 2010a; 2007d); Chapter 5 was published in *Theology and Sexuality* (2010b); and Chapter 9 was published in a volume of *Semeia*, when it was still a journal (Boer 2000a). In each case, I have gone through the chapters with a fine-toothed comb, removed some of the bugs still caught in their hairier regions and revised them more or less thoroughly.

This page intentionally left blank.

PART I

Song of Songs

The three chapters gathered here on the Song of Songs share a common agenda: to challenge "literal" readings of the Song, ones that assumed and continue to assume in various ways that the Song is about human love and sex (rather than about divine love).[1] How this can be a literal reading is beyond me, for it merely substitutes one allegory for another, a carnal allegory for a divine allegory. The Song has as much to say *directly* about human sex and love as it has about divine love—that is, almost nothing. So interpretations that take, in all the senses of the word, the Song literally as about sex between human beings must make allegorical moves comparable to the long-standing patristic and medieval tradition, which took it as an allegory of God's love for Israel or the Church. In my *Knockin' on Heaven's Door*, I began the process of disputing such "literal" readings by taking them as far as they will go. Responding to a challenge from Stephen Moore (personal communication), I attempted a carnal allegory of the Song, a pornographic reading titled "The Schlong of Schlongs."[2] That carnal allegory touched on a range of questions regarding the function of sexual language and poetry, narrative and sexual description, explicitness and realism, repetition, fetishism, and the range of sexual practices suggested in the Song, such as sex between variously gendered partners, bestiality, intergenerational sex, group sex, water sports, menstrual sex, fisting, discipline, and so on.

The first chapter, "The Second Coming," carries on that task of constructing a carnal allegory, although now I zoom my voyeuristic and porn-tinted lens in on a very specific question: Why does repetition, the compulsion to repeat, feature so prominently in the Song of Songs? The answer takes us deep into Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan before emerging to read the Song in a very different way.

The second chapter, "A Fleshly Reading," continues to challenge the orthodoxy that the Song speaks about human sex (and love). The first sought to push what is really another allegory, a carnal allegory, to its logical conclusion: you

want humans fucking and sucking, it says, well, here they are. By contrast, the second chapter moves on from such concerns, via a treatment of sadism and masochism, to ask what it may mean to focus on the metaphoric screen that so many try to pull aside to see what is "really" going on in the Song. But what if we look at the screen itself? Since it talks about nature, does that mean that plants and animals have their own fleshly sensuality? Here is the first emergence of a widening and thickening interest in paraphilias that will become obvious as the book proceeds.

The third chapter, "Making It, Literally," takes this concern with the metaphoric screen to another level, seeking a rigorously literal reading that cuts the metonymic transfer of metaphor, delivering us a succulent, oozing, dripping, and sensuous flora and fauna with, at one level, scant concern for human beings and that, at another level, suggests an economics of allocation.

CHAPTER 1

The Second Coming

Repetition and Insatiable Desire in the Song of Songs

> As it draws to its end, interpretation is directed towards desire, with which, in a certain sense, it is identical. Desire, in fact, is interpretation itself.
>
> —Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*

In pursuing a carnal allegory of the Song of Songs,[1] I wish to answer a specific question: why does repetition, the compulsion to repeat, feature so prominently in the Song of Songs? Rather than turning to theories of Hebrew poetry, my suspicion is that Jacques Lacan's reflections on desire may have a contribution to make. Why Lacan? For Lacan, desire—*désir*, the French translation of Freud's *Wunsch* (wish), which gives the word the stronger sense of a continuous force—is central to psychoanalytic theory. And it is particularly the sexual dimensions of desire that are foregrounded in psychoanalysis. It may seem slightly perverse, a sort of looking awry to gain another angle on our question, to talk of desire as an area in which the answer to the question of repetition may be found, except that the two—repetition and desire—unavoidably rub together, tingling and arching, perpetually inciting and exciting one another in Lacan's work. So too in the Song, where we find that desire is incited through edges and rims, Law, pain, and the (M)other. These then fold into reflections on repetitions of structure, phrases and words, descriptions and content, so as to arrive at the final Lacanian question: *che vuoi* (what do you really want)?

Desire (Un)satisfied

> The only thing of which one can be guilty is of having given ground relative to one's desire.
>
> —Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*

For Lacan, desire is the "metonymy of our being" (1992, 321), the very name that may stand in for existence itself. The definition around which Lacan's discussion turns again and again is that one's "desire is the desire of the Other" (1994, 115; 1991b, 146), who is simultaneously the Mother (Žižek 1991a, 265). Desire begins, then, as a dialectic; it is never one's own, but the desire of, or on the part of, the (M)other that one appropriates, in a Hegelian move, for one's self.[2] All this should be framed by Lacan's fascination with the hysteric, who then becomes the paradigm of desire (see Žižek 1996, 167).

From Mirror Stage to Fort-Da

The hysteric will return, not unexpectedly, at various points in my discussion, but I begin with the infant, with whom desire appears through both the mirror stage—"in which the individual makes a triumphant exercise of his own image in the mirror" (Lacan 1991b, 146)—and the famous fort-da game. Out of the former rivalry and competition emerge, but Lacan goes further, suggesting that desire is generated not merely through the image but also through the body of the other, which is the point of self-consciousness and identification; only by assimilating oneself to the body of the (M)other do people recognize themselves as bodies.

In the fort-da game—a highly overdetermined moment in the Freudian corpus (Freud 2001, 18:14–18; Lacan 1994, 239)—the child hurls something away only to search for and retrieve it or to haul it back again when the string was attached. (Freud was observing his 18-month old grandchild, who was left with the baby-sitting grandfather while its mother was away and was playing with various objects, especially a wooden reel on a string.) "O-o-o-o" repeats the child upon successfully launching the projectile, which was interpreted as "fort" or "gone" by Freud; the retrieved object was greeted with "da" or "there." These acts were accompanied, Freud notes in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, "with an expression of interest and satisfaction" (2001, 18:15). Anyone who has followed the example of Freud's very scientific mode of research—in my case observing my own children at about the same age—will find that children are given to flinging things away continually, watching to see where they go and then demanding them back again from anyone who happens to be close by, or else attempting to retrieve the objects by themselves, so that the process may be repeated ad nauseam—to the exasperation of everyone but the child.

For Freud this process signaled first of all the pattern of loss and retrieval analogous to the disappearance and return of the mother herself (Lacan warns against reading the reel as a replacement for the mother [1994, 62]), but it is also the awakening of sexual desire, that which Lacan calls the process of desiring

the desire of the Other, the desire of the (M)other—that is to say, of the analyst whose desire becomes that of the analysand (Lacan 1994, 156–59). Here the fundamental connection between desire and repetition first appears: the child does not play the fort-da game once, but repeats it ad nauseam, reiterating the desire for the Other's desire over and over again. Indeed, Freud goes on to note (in a repetition of interpretive possibilities that is itself symptomatic of the argument) that children will repeat over and again exactly the same game, the same story, the same pleasure (Freud 2001, 18:17), whereas adults tire from such repetition and seek variation. As a forerunner to my comments on pain in the following, I would add Tania Modleski's suggestion that the child's game is also masochistic (Modleski 1988, 69), for it substitutes the pain of the presence/absence pattern of the loved object—the mother—with the game in which presence and absence are controlled and thereby pain itself controlled and desired.[3] Eventually the Mother becomes the permanently lost object, and the desire of the Other reveals itself as impossible to know and attain.

Graphs of Desire

The dialectic of desire, as Lacan is wont to call it, is also mapped in the curious four-stage graph of desire (1977, 302–17).[4] Although Lacan intones that the diagram is for a wide range of uses, its use here is to "show where desire, in relation to a subject defined by his articulation by the signifier, is situated" (1977, 303). I am less interested in the first and second stages—dealing respectively with the constitution of the Lacanian barred subject ($) through being stitched into the chain of signification and the relation between the ideal ego and the ego-ideal, between imaginary and symbolic identification—than in the third stage, where desire exposes itself. Here the crucial question is *che vuoi?*—what do you really want? Of course, the reason for asking this question is that one's ostensible demand is not what is really wanted: "You demand something of me, but what do you really want, what are you aiming at with this demand?" (Žižek 1989, 111). For Lacan, this is desire—that which lies behind the explicit demand, that which invariably counteracts the demand. The key is misrecognition, *méconnaissance*: the subject cannot fail to recognize that what he desires presents itself to him as what he does not want, the form assumed by the negation in which the *méconnaissance* of which he himself is unaware is inserted in a very strange way—a *méconnaissance* by which he transfers the permanence of his desire to an ego that is nevertheless intermittent and, inversely, protects himself from his desire by attributing to it these very intermittences (Lacan 1977, 312–13). To take but one example, borrowed from Žižek's: in Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*, an everyday, carnal, passionate man comes to the slow, painful, and unwanted realization that he is the son of God, that he has an unbearable mission to save humankind. Yet despite the interpellation by the ultimate (M)other—God—he resists, even on the cross, evading it, denying it. This is the source of the "temptations." He is a hysterical Christ, saying in effect to his Other, "I'm

demanding this of you, but what I'm really demanding of you is to refute my demand because this is not it?" (Žižek 1989, 112).

The Lacanian triad of need-demand-desire arrives at a similar conclusion. A need is that which expresses something real and natural—water, food, sleep, and so on. A demand, however, is that which lies behind the need: thus a baby who cries because she is hungry satisfies her need with the nipple, warm milk, and breast that she may caress and knead, but her demand is attention, affection, and the warm sounds of mothering provided during the feed. Desire, the third item in the triad, is neither one nor the other; it is "neither the appetite for satisfaction, nor the demand for love, but the difference that results from the subtraction of the first from the second, the phenomenon of their splitting (*Spaltung*)" (Lacan 1977, 287). Desire is then the subtraction of need from demand, the casting away of demand from its connection with need, whereby it attains the status of the want that is not what one demands.

From Penetrator to Penetratee

This is but a first step on the way to arguing that the prime function of desire is the perpetuation of desire itself, for that is what one ultimately desires, the refuted demand. However, such a deviant satisfaction is not so easily attainable; in order to get there I return to the graph of desire (Lacan 1977, 302–17), going beyond what I have discussed previously. The graph is made up of four bulbous items in a series, somewhat like elongated balloons. In each step of the graph, the swelling, balloon-like items swell ever larger and longer. And as they do so, lines cut across the bulge, increasing from a single line to four in the largest and most impressive of the bulges.

As was Lacan's wont, all manner of quasi-mathematical symbols and signs appear sprinkled over the bulging members of the graph. But rather than spend inordinate amounts of time trying to decipher the meanings of the symbols, lines, and their relationship to one another, I increasingly have the suspicion that the graphs operate at levels different from what we might expect—that Lacan himself was teasing his audience with his doodling, pretending to explain his arguments in graphic form but doing nothing of the sort, producing spur-of-the-moment squiggles that masquerade as profound diagrams. Indeed, Lacan occasionally hints at the graphic effect of his graffiti, in this case being struck by the way the third graph represents a bottle opener or universal key (Lacan 1977, 312). To my eye (one may easily find them on the Internet), the series suggests nothing other than the gradual penetration of a bulbous dildo, an overengorged penis, or other phallic object into an orifice—vagina, anus, mouth, or whatever. In graphs one and two, the penile trajectory negotiates the first entry into the orifice, while in the third it pushes further, although not without some uncertainty. Finally, in the fourth graph a second barrier is penetrated, although this line is the moment of castration, the "mark of the cut" (Lacan 1977, 315). It is nothing less than the experience of the penetrator (male or female with dildo, penis, or other item) during penetrative sex: once the penile object has disappeared into the mouth,

anus, vagina, or other orifice, fully inserted up to the hilt, is there not an inchoate fear of castration? "Will I get it back?" is the unexpressed question of the penetrating sexual partner. Of course, the point here—the *che vuoi?*—is that the desire is not one of penetration and then of the recovery of the penis or its substitute, but rather a desire to be penetrated, to have the opportunity to absorb, bite off, and swallow someone else's penile projection. This is what the penetrator really wants; this is desire itself.

Rheumy Rims

Through what do these engorged projectiles penetrate? For Lacan they are the various margins and borders produced by the castrating cut: "Lips, 'the enclosure of the teeth,' the rim of the anus, the tip of the penis, the vagina, the slit formed by the eyelids, even the horn-shaped aperture of the ear" (1977, 314–15). And these margins and rims are those that cut off the projectiles—"the mamilla, faeces, the phallus (imaginary object), and urinary flow" (Lacan 1977, 315). It is precisely the rim that tips over into a major trigger of desire, which begins, as Lacan observes in his seminar on ethics, with the dialectic of disgust and envy: "There are really two major aspects of desire as it may emerge in the fall of sexualization—on the one hand, disgust produced by the reduction of the sexual partner to a function of reality, whatever it may be, and, on the other hand, what I have called, in relation to the scopic function, *invidia*, envy. Envy is not the same thing as the scopic drive, nor is disgust the same thing as the oral drive" (Lacan 1994, 172–73).

As always, Lacan crisscrosses other related questions—here the scopic and oral drives—but what is interesting about this consideration of the economy of desire is that it comes at the close of a fascinating exploration of the erogenous zones, especially the "rim"—that is, not only the mouth and anus in particular but also other "rheumy" rims such as eyelids, ears, and navels. (These rimmed zones have wider implications for the descriptions of body parts in the Song of Songs, although that is another task.) What counts here is that the economy of desire, the play between disgust and envy, is connected with the materiality of these erogenous zones, these rheumy rims.

Law, Perversity, and Pain

If we set this treatment of the dialectic of disgust and envy in a wider context, we find that it is but one element in the discussion of the Law, perversity, and pain. Here the excessive moment that constitutes desire itself makes an appearance, the moment of *jouissance*. This is the realm of *objet petit a*, the excess, the leftover, that which does not compute, the useless remainder, which is crucial for the very constitution of the whole, manifested in a myriad of ways (note that Lacan calls the child's wooden reel in the fort-da game *objet petit a* [1994, 62]). Of course, for Lacan, this leftover, *objet a*, symbolizes the central lack of desire precisely in

the sense that it is the focus of desire itself. I will need to return to this dialectical paradox.

Let me begin with the Law, the Lacanian reading of which needs to be interrogated much further in relation to the whole idea of Torah in the Hebrew Bible.[5] Lacan finds a binding together of the Law and desire in the commandment against coveting one's neighbor's house, ox, male and female servants, wife, and other possessions in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, as also in the dialectic of sin and law in Romans 7 (although here he replaces sin with "the Thing" [das Ding]): "The dialectical relationship between desire and the Law causes our desire to flare up only in relation to the Law, through which it becomes the desire for death" (Lacan 1992, 84).[6] Desire is excited through its prohibition, through the moment of censorship that seeks to banish it, yet this restriction rubs and excites desire to an even greater intensity.

In fact, the very nature of the Law is that it is constituted by its transgression: breaking the Law is the basis of its existence. This operates not only at the mundane level where transgression allows the Law to come into play but also in the popular perception that it is precisely the agents of the law, especially the police, who live somehow beyond the law. No one else but they may use their sirens to get that hamburger for lunch or break the speed limit for that much-desired donut and coffee. In short, law enforcement and corruption have a deep symbiotic relationship. And this is where desire comes into play, for the desire of which Lacan speaks in relation to the Law is that which seeks to break the law in order to attain its fulfillment. To twist the dialectic a little further, it is therefore this excess, the "challenge to the gallows" that produces enjoyment that is precisely obedience to the Law, the fulfillment of one's Duty where that involves excess (Žižek 1991a, 239).

It is time to mate the two areas of disgust/envy and Law/desire in terms of Lacan's infatuation with Marquis de Sade, who was for Lacan the fulfillment of Immanuel Kant. For in Sade's narratives the combination of Law, desire, and disgust takes place through perversity: "One doesn't have to read very far for this collection of horrors to engender incredulity and disgust in us, and it is only fleetingly, in a brief flash, that such images may cause something strange to vibrate in us which we call perverse desire, insofar as the darker side of natural Eros enters into it" (Lacan 1992, 232). And how is perversity, the perverse desire that fascinates me in this essay, realized? Through pain. "In brief, Kant is of the same opinion as Sade. For in order to reach *das Ding* absolutely, to open the flood gates of desire, what does Sade show us on the horizon? In essence, pain. The other's pain as well as the pain of the subject himself, for on occasions they are simply one and the same thing" (Lacan 1992, 80).

It is, then, pain that opens "the flood gates of desire," that releases perverse desire, that allows one to go past the edges and rims. The first quivers and ripples of desire become the waves of a perverse flood released by pain. It is as though pain is the key that unlocks the desire first incited and triggered by the rheumy rims, the slits and lips I mentioned previously, the erogenous zones that are constituted by their fringes. In fact, my consideration of the Law, perversity, and

pain may be regarded as an extended reflection on these rims, which will be central in my reading of the Song.

The Desire of Desire

Of course, satiation is then merely a matter of transgressing the rim or edge, the Law, the Censor, of engaging the perverse and the disgusting. Or is it? Here I need to return to the idea of *objet petit a*—the excess or useless remainder—for beyond these boundaries is supposed to be the excess that will fulfill desire, the moment of satiation enabled by pain itself. Yet the point of desire, the excessive moment, is revealed as being empty—*objet petit a*, the forever lost object, Mother—and here may be found the reason for Lacan's argument about the insatiability of desire, the desire of desire. *Objet petit a* is that emptiness that is the basis for the system itself to function: what is desired is absent. This is the beginning of a reading of "fantasy" in Lacan: it is the fantasy that supports desire, not the object desired. That is, desire is focused not on the object that would lead to satisfaction, but rather on the object that causes it. But this object that causes desire is none other than *objet petit a*, the insatiable void, that lies at the heart of fantasy, the "ever more complex signifying ensemble" (Lacan 1994, 185). Thus we get Lacan's formula ($<>a): the barred, dislocated subject ($) is constituted by its desire (<>) for *objet a*.

Given the emptiness of that which is pursued—the desire to slip past the rim, Law, or pain—Lacan makes his well-known move concerning the desire of desire. The point of desire is not its fulfillment, for this is impossible, but the perpetuation of desire itself. A person will continually seek to sustain the conditions of desire—the unattainable satiation, the satisfaction just around the corner—so that she may continue to desire. It is a desire of desire. Or, in the case of wish fulfillment in dreams, "it is certainly true that the satisfaction of a wish does give pleasure but, as is well known, the dreamer—I don't think I am going too far when I find here a Lacanian emphasis in a certain way of posing the problem—does not have a simple and unambiguous relationship to his wish. He rejects it, he censures it, he doesn't want it. Here we encounter the essential dimension of desire—it is always desire in the second degree, desire of desire" (Lacan 1992, 14).

For instance, the desperate desire to see through a change in the political situation, so that the oppressors will be overcome and a genuine democratic system be enabled, actually expresses the wish that nothing will change, for "I fear such a change more than the plague itself, since I know very well that it would make me lose my footing and force me radically to modify my whole strategy" (Žižek 1991a, 71). Or the desire to piss in a dream is always one whose fulfillment is postponed. Endless situations present themselves—a bush, a corner, a luxurious toilet, a mountain-top view—but as soon as one gets comfortable and looks forward to release, there is an interruption, such as a group of people or a telephone call. Until of course, it is not possible to hold on any longer, and one pisses in bed—precisely not the satiation hoped for. And then there are the inevitable

sexual dreams in which the moment of satisfaction, or orgasm, is always forestalled and denied. Until of course . . .

The dialectical twist in all this is that desire turns out not to be the desire for satiation, for the achievement of the object of one's desire, but rather for its continual postponement, for the very condition that desire itself will not be fulfilled. Žižek finds this insight with the hysteric, the point where the issue of unsatisfied desire is raised by Lacan: "The fact that, in order to cure the hysteric of all her symptoms, the best way is to satisfy her hysteric's desire—which is for her to posit her desire in relation to us as an unsatisfied desire—leaves entirely to one side the specific question of *why* she can sustain her desire only as an unsatisfied desire" (Lacan 1994, 12). The issue then is why she can do so and not flag in the unsatisfaction of her desire. Is she deluded? Does she hope to be satisfied only to be frustrated? Not at all, for it is precisely the hysteric's "conversion" that highlights the truth of desire: the impediment to desire becomes the object of desire. "The impeded desire converts into a *desire for impediment*; the unsatisfied desire converts into a *desire for unsatisfaction*" (Žižek 1991a, 143–44). This is a desire not only for desire but also for a lack of desire, a blocking of desire: the condition of desire—the hollow void beyond the rim (*objet petit a*)—is also its negation. This desire for desire itself, which is also the desire for an impediment or negation, functions to keep desire alive: "One has to maintain desire in its dissatisfaction" (Žižek 1996, 96).

Does not pornography then express the truth of desire? For its function is not to provide guidelines for "real" sex, or even incite desire that is then sought out with a flesh-and-blood partner. Rather, it stimulates fantasy, inciting desire through such fantasy that cannot but be unsatisfied in the usual understanding of sexual fulfillment. Even more, fantasy itself turns out to be the prime sexual experience—insofar as it perpetuates desire itself—rather than the poor substitute for real partners? Hence the incessant repetition of porn itself, the production of ever new images, films, and stories that are always the same, tapping into "the practiced power of discrimination which consumers of pornography show in their endless search for new sources of arousal which will 'repeat' familiar pleasures" (Ross 1993, 237).

Let me summarize what has become a lengthy exposition, teasing out the key elements of Lacan's articulation of desire (with a little help from Žižek, who sits by during the lovemaking session, offering tips at how better to do this, how to touch there, etc.). I began seeking the intersection of desire and repetition, finding it first in the (child's) mirror stage and the game of fort-da, where desire emerges in the repeated analogy of the mother's absence. From there I moved on to trace the way that desire constantly fools us or, rather, that it requires a misrecognition of what we desire. That is, the key is to recognize that what we ostensibly seek in the fulfillment of desire is not what we initially believed we were seeking. Thus the fearful penetrator (via Lacan's graphs) who dreads castration actually gives voice to a desire to be penetrated; the rims and edges we constantly seek to surpass in the pursuit of desire—bodily rims (vagina, anus, mouth, nose, eyelids, ears, etc.) or boundaries of transgression (Law, perversity, disgust, and

pain)—function not as ends in themselves but as triggers of desire and its transgression. All of which comes together in the most profound estrangement effect of Lacan's piecemeal comments on desire: we seek not an elusive object of desire at all but, like the *objet petit a*, the perpetuation of desire itself. The only way to do so is remain unsatisfied, at least in the conventional terms in which desire is understood. Here lie the building blocks of my treatment of the Song.

Before we turn to the Song, let me return to Lacan's curious statement with which I began this discussion of desire and repetition. What does it mean to compromise desire, to give ground relative to one's desire? It is to accept temporary substitutes for the thing of desire itself, to give up on the ideal fantasy that sustains desire. This is unforgivable.

The Satiated Song

> The truth, in this sense, is that which runs after truth—and that is where I am running, where I am taking you, like Actaeon's hounds, after me. When I find the goddess's hiding place, I will no doubt be changed into a stag, and you can devour me, but we still have a little way to go yet.
>
> —Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*

> Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of spices.
>
> —Song of Songs 8:14

In opening up and rolling on some of the preceding ideas to the text of the Song of Songs I may give the impression, reinforced by the structure of this chapter, that such an act is very much a one-way love affair. However, the Song of Songs has its own determining role in the selection of methods that may be appropriate. For this text comes to me and others who read it now as one that is always-already read, as one that exists in a chiaroscuro of interpretation and reception, one whom I must share with other, previous and present, partners. So the low-level murmur that surrounds the Song and of which it is a part speaks "about sex," and this applies more to the allegorical overdetermination of the Song than the wash of "literal" readings that have flowed forth with the rise of the various cultural dominants of capitalism, such as realism and modernism (although the seeds of this explosion lie with interpreters like Rashi in the eleventh century).[7] Given this, it seems as though the Song itself demands a psychoanalysis, as though it beckons—even demands—that Freud, Lacan, and Žižek become part of the discussion. Indeed, with the text itself on the couch, one would expect that the desire of the text will be that of the other, of the analyst, whoever that may be.

The following discussion has three phases. I begin with a consideration of the triggers of desire in the text, picking up questions of edges and rims, Law, pain, and the (m)other, all of which spark desire in the first place. Then I move onto the matter of repetition, exploring the various types of repetition, including poetic structure, phrases and words, descriptions, as well as the content. Finally, I ask the text, myself, and the reader, *che vuoi* (what do you really want)?

Rims and Edges and Other Perversities

While the Law does not appear explicitly in the Song, a few moments of restriction function as the prohibition that incites desire. The first is the mention in 1:6 of the elder brothers of a young woman, who hold her back, who keep her there to mind the vineyard (her body?). The second are the watchmen, whom a roaming woman meets on her nocturnal wanderings. Twice she meets them (3:3; 5:7) and on the second occasion they beat her. The third involves Solomon's men of valor (3:7–8), sixty mighty men guarding Solomon's palanquin. Further, the restriction on kissing outdoors, expressed through the wish that the other was the speaker's brother in 8:1, hints at the Law, as do the walls, battlements, door, and boards of the little sister in 8:9.

These five textual moments, with their evocations of guarding and preventing access, all speak of the Law, which must be breached. But in moments of deep hypnosis the text calls out, "Do not stir up or awaken love until it desire!" (2:7; 3:5; 8:4). Those commentators who read these as the addition of a later editor keen to tone the rampant sex of the Song, to take a cold shower and delay satisfaction for a more appropriate moment, are right for all the wrong reasons. For are not these warnings the signals of a very Freudian repression, the presence of a Law that only incites one to get excited? Added to all this is the rabbinic reading of the Song as an allegory of the Torah itself, if not its key (Boyarin 1990).

Yet the two elements that trigger and release desire in the Song are those of the rim and perversity. The rim and its variegated associates appear, as might be expected, throughout the Song. The key here is a crux of interpretation, the (key) hole or opening (*ḥaḥor*) of 5:4.[8] Often translated as "door latch" or "keyhole," and occasionally posited as vagina (but never anus), the full phrase is the enigmatic "hand from the hole." While the tentative groping of one or two commentaries read here penis ("hand") and vagina ("hole")—both terms suspended in quotation marks to convey this carnally allegorical meaning—the hole is not stipulated, and signification of the hand is by no means fixed. For a Lacanian reading, it matters not what the hole may conjure up—keyhole, door latch, vagina, anus, mouth, nostrils, ear holes, eye sockets—for it is the hole itself that is of interest. After what I have argued earlier, the generic hole, with its obligatory rim, is of course part of the economics of desire, the trigger for desire in the rim itself.

Interpreters who read it as "keyhole" are right on another level, since this "hole" functions as a key in its own right, unlocking a vast realm of rims and openings. As with the fetishistic imagery of the Song as a whole, these edges and fringes appear in the realms of plant and animal, as well as built objects and the human body. As for the plants, an almost unending range of fruits and flowers are mentioned, each of them with their outer surfaces, rimmed openings and ripe bursting forth, exploding beyond the skin. Apart from fruit in general (4:13; 7:14 [ET 13]),[9] we may be enticed by raisins (2:5), apples (2:5; 7:9 [ET 8]), figs and blossoming vines (2:13), budding vines, open grape blossoms, and blooming pomegranates (6:11; 7:13 [ET 12]; see 4:13), and clusters of the vine (7:9 [ET 8]). Indeed, the repetition of certain items, such as pomegranates (4:13; 6:11;

7:13 [ET 12]), vines (2:13; 6:11; 7:9 [ET 8], 13 [ET 12]), and apples (2:5; 7:9 [ET 8]), apart from the strong come on of a more sexual nature, anticipates the issue of repetition itself. Flowers and their petals have a closely related function, commonly signifying the "flower" of a bodily orifice, whose lips may be likened to the petals of a flower: such are the flowers in general (2:12), buds, blossoms, and blooms (6:11; 7:13 [ET 12]), henna blossoms (1:14), crocuses (2:1), and lilies (2:1, 2, 16; 4:5; 5:13; 6:2–3; 7:3 [ET 2]).

Built structures also appear, such as walls (2:9; 8:9, 10), a tent (1:8), a (mother's) chamber (3:4), a palanquin (3:9), and a house and its chamber (8:2), and natural structures, like clefts of rock and mountain (2:14, 17). Yet what is significant about such structures are their fenestration and portals, the openings in the surface. Thus the windows and lattices provide one type of opening (2:9), curtains another one that may be opened and closed (1:5), and doors a third (7:14 [ET 13]; 8:9).[10] At a certain level, fruit, plants, and buildings may be read as a vast and delectable fetishization of human bodies, with their surfaces, rims, edges, and openings. Indeed, the greatest number of such rims and brinks are those of bodies, especially—as Lacan would no doubt have been both pleased and unsurprised to note—of the eyes (1:15; 4:1, 9; 5:12; 7:5 [ET 4]; 8:10), mouth (1:2; 4:3), cheeks (1:10; 4:3; 5:13; 6:7), teeth (4:2; 6:6; 7:10/9[11]), palate (2:3; 5:16; 7:10/9), and, most appropriately, lips (4:3, 11; 5:13; 7:10/9).

Apart from the incitement to desire generated by such a cornucopia of openings, fringes, and peripheries, what they also intimate, with an invitation in the eyes and the pouting lips, is a passive penetration fantasy, a desire not so much to penetrate as be penetrated, which must not be read immediately in terms of the constructions of male and female. For the construction of gender in the Song is highly fluid, as are the various possible sexual connections—female, male, plant, and animal bodies all intermingle without any demarcation between them.[12]

These rims are not merely dry and abrasive openings, rubbed red and raw through futile efforts at stimulation; they are in fact moist, rheumy, and slippery ones, lubricated, drenched even, by the succulent presence of fluids and moisture throughout the Song. It is a wet Song. Fragrant, viscous, and runny, a whole range of fluids and spices saturate the text: some may be drunk or eaten, such as wine (1:2, 4; 5:1; 7:3 [ET 2], 10/9; 8:2), honey (4:11; 5:1), milk (4:11; 5:1, 12), and pomegranate juice (8:2); others soak the body with fragrance (4:10, 11, 16), like oils (1:3; 4:10), perfume (1:3), nard (1:12; 4:13–14), myrrh (1:13; 3:6; 4:6, 14; 5:1, 5, 13), frankincense (3:6; 4:6, 14), nectar (4:11), saffron (4:14), calamus (4:14), cinnamon (4:14), and aloes (4:14); and then various forms of water appear—fountains (4:12, 15), living water (4:15), flowing streams (4:15), dew (5:2), and night sprinkles (5:2). Apart from the inclusion of items from nature in the erotic register, once again in a pervasive fetishism, this wet list may also be read as an allegory of bodily fluids and sex: not merely lubricants of the vagina or cum but also female ejaculate, mucus, milk, urine, sweat, tears, saliva, menstrual fluid, blood, vomit, and feces. (I will return to the implications for the construction of sexuality later in the chapter.) The dry and raw rims of the Song have become slippery, oozing, and spraying fluids out, absorbing and sucking

others in. But these fluids are more than mere lubricators, flooding as they do the Song itself.[13]

With the slippery rims there is at least one incitement to desire, but another runs alongside it—perversity. Rising to the surface, somewhat shyly, are a series of elements that produce some level of disgust, of the strange vibration of perverse desire, of the darker side of Eros. As far as humans are concerned, there are suggestions and references to intergenerational sex (3:4; 6:9; 8:2, 5), incest (1:6; 3:11; 5:1–2; 4:9, 10, 12; 6:9; 8:1), pedophilia (8:8–9), group sex (1:3–4; 2:7; 3:5, 7–11; 5:1, 8, 16; 8:4, 11, 13), and even some discipline (5:4, 7). And then there are the flora and fauna brought into the sexual play: fruit and flowers do not produce,[14] for Western readers, a level of disgust comparable to the sexualization of animals in the Song, with all the associations of bestiality that they bring.[15] There are flocks (1:7, 8; 4:1; 6:5), kids (1:8), a mare (1:19), gazelles (2:7, 17; 3:5; 7:4 [ET 3]; 8:14), fawns (7:4 [ET 3]), wild does (2:7; 3:5), foxes (2:15), and a stag (2:17; 8:14). Flora, fauna, and human bodies coincide in the *wasfs*, the perverse descriptions of ambiguously gendered bodies (4:1–5; 5:10–16; 6:4–10; 7:2–6 [ET 1–5]). Following Fiona Black (2006), it seems to me that these are less citations of erogenous zones, of the erotic descriptions of sexual bodies, but rather an evocation of grotesque bodies.

And then there is the mother who appears seven times (1:6; 3:4, 11; 6:9; 8:1, 2, 5), although in various forms, as the mother of sons (1:6) with her house and chamber of conception (the primal scene?) as a place of sexual retreat (3:4; 8:2); as one who crowns her son at his wedding (3:11); as a mother of a darling daughter (6:9); and as a breast (8:1) and in labor (8:5). She is the ultimately desired object, and the Song with its metaphorical evocation of female bodies, especially the breasts, may be read on one level as a series of love songs to the (M)other. Notably, the mother here is mother of both males and females. Yet she is also the ultimate grotesque object, the dangerous and undesirable one who must be avoided and thereby acts as a trigger for desire itself. Of course, for Lacan the mother is not only the generator of desire in the child but also the moment of the Real, marking the unattainability, the inability to satisfy that desire. And is not the very repetition of the mother in the Song a Lacanian signal, comparable to the fort-da game, in which the pain of separation and desire are managed masochistically and repeated ad nauseam? Indeed, I would suggest that the desire of the Song is the desire of the Other, of the Mother herself: this means that the Song is a song not of desire for the mother, but of the desire of the mother, which readers then try to appropriate. But the only (M)other here is Yahweh.

Most of the items I have listed have a perverse erotic charge, a charge generated through both fetishism and perversity. The fetish functions through a foreclosure of the erotic drive and the resultant focus on a particular item, a metonymic object: it has its appeal through the excessive eroticization of a particular thing, be it body part, clothing, fabric, flora, fauna, or language itself (the ultimate fetish of the Song), while the perverse relies on disgust to generate "perverse desire." Desire is generated here not through a conventional eros (is that possible anyway?) but through the metaphorical perversity of the text. And it is precisely

this perverse excess that incites desire. The Song is full of images of sexual excess and transgression: "It is only fleetingly, in a brief flash, that such images may cause something strange to vibrate in us which we call perverse desire, insofar as the darker side of natural Eros enters into it" (Lacan 1992, 232).

Law, the rim and the rind, fluids, perversity, and the mother all would seem to act as inciters of desire. Yet there is one final element that operates at a different level here but may well have the same function, and that is language itself. The very language of the Song operates as a barrier, using metaphor, allusion, simile, and hyperbole to speak of sex. It is as though that sexual speech may not be uttered directly, as though something prevents such a discourse. But this is another form of the barrier or the rim that incites desire both by its blockage of what lies inside and by enticing one to enter.[16]

Repetition, Once Again

Thus far I have been tracing the ramifications of Lacan's first major argument about desire—that it is generated and excited by the child's relation to the mother, and by edges and perversity. But what of my earlier reflection on the question of repetition? Desire may be excited, but is it fulfilled or fulfillable?

Let me begin by casting my eye askance, by looking awry for a moment. Interpreters have often been nonplussed by the lack of coherence in the Song, given to asserting rather than arguing the unity of the text and the singular identity of the lovers. Although poetry is less likely to bear narrative unity, and despite valiant efforts to determine such unity in the Song (Goulder 1986), it is markedly plotless. This means that the assumption of one pair of lovers, pursued most thoroughly by Francis Landy[17] (1983a; see also Wendland 1995) but lying behind the vast majority of recent critical work as an alternative unifier of the Song, must also be discarded (so Brenner 1989, 28–29).[18] As with pornography, the sexual bodies are forever interchangeable. Even the poetic structure, a final refuge for unity, is basically "open and loose" (Grossberg 1990, 70; Keel 1994, 16–17; and against Exum 1977 and Deckers 1993).[19]

But what I have just proposed is but the weak form of an argument for incoherence. The stronger form argues that erotic/pornographic material is necessarily lacking in coherence and unity, for the story or poem is merely the pretext for sexual acts themselves, a vehicle for the sexual numbers (Williams 1989, 130). The two—poem/story and sex act—are mutually exclusive (Goulemot 1994 [1991], 141; Michelson 1993, 43–44; Žižek 1991b, 111). You cannot have a good story and great sex, for too much unity and story diminishes the sexual focus. Rather, what counts is the rhythm of the sexual episodes themselves, the repeated efforts at sexual closure—conventionally signaled by the money shot—which indicate profound inability to achieve such closure and satiation. It is, then, the repetition of sex, of the stages, combinations, and sequences of acts that arises as the major feature of literature like the Song.

However, repetition operates at a number of levels, permeating not merely the allegorical fucking and sucking but also the words and structures of the text

itself. At the simplest level, certain words and phrases are repeated throughout the Song. I will use but one example, that of wine, which in its very repetition opens out onto a plethora of other connections in the Song. Thus in the immediate clause of 1:2b, it is compared with love that is "better than wine." In 1:4 it is still compared with love, although now in a plural that seems to be the speech of the "maidens." Love is much better than wine in 4:10 yet again, although here it is the love of "my sister, my bride" rather than a male figure as in the preceding references. The possessive "my" is unclear here: although the overwhelming hetero assumption is that it is a male speaking, it may very well be read as a female voice—the gender identification is at best unclear. Apart from love, the immediate associations of these wine references in 4:10 are oils, fragrances, and perfumes. By 5:1 the association with love has gone, to be replaced with milk: "I drink my wine with milk" it reads, in a scene that has been variously read as a dream sequence, euphemistic sex sequence, as a mark of sexual frustration, and so on. In 5:1 a triple comparison appears, constructed in terms of three word pairs and three verbs: the gathering of myrrh with spice, eating honeycomb with honey, and drinking wine with milk. Is the milk and/or wine of the mother, bride, or sister, or does it signify the fluids of sex? If so, then menstrual fluid cannot be avoided as a referent. In 7:10/9 wine appears in a *waṣf*, a simile for the palate; although, in an elaboration of the mingling of wine and milk in 5:1, the pendulous foci of this description are the (mothering) breasts. Indeed, in 7:9 [ET 8] the breasts are compared to clusters of the vine, producing milky grapes or alcoholic breast milk. The simile is somewhat extended in this verse, where the Hebrew encounters a rough patch, "going down for lovers" and "gliding over lips." Above all, it is the very liquidity that seems to be an issue in the simile, overflowing the rim and running everywhere. Finally, "spiced wine" is drunk in 8:2 upon the wished-for entry into the mother's (who else?) chamber. Here the metaphorical load is thick, so to speak, for it is paralleled with "the juice of my pomegranates," the sexual trail of fruity, juicy, and menstrual euphemisms by now squelchy and slippery underfoot. Is this what the love of 1:2 is all about in the end—milky wine, breasts and grapes, juicy and spiced wine, and menstrual fluid? At least the potential for satisfaction may be tasted in a cocktail of associations. And wine is merely a sample that may be replicated with other words, such as kisses,[20] breasts, gazelles, lilies, mothers, and so on.

The next level at which repetition occurs is that of larger structural units. Here the absence of poetic coherence that I noted earlier makes its presence felt: it is unclear who speaks in many places, where the transitions are from one speaker to another, and what, if any, the gender of the speaker is, especially with the *waṣfs*. Further, the most obvious repetitions at this level of larger textual slabs are the *waṣfs*, the grotesque, perverse, and erotic elaborations on male and female bodies (4:1–5; 5:10–16; 6:4–10; 7:2–6 [ET 1–5]). A female body appears to be the subject of three *waṣfs* (4:1–5; 5:10–16 and 7:2–6 [ET 1–5]), while a male body turns up in 6:4–10. Two focus on the upper body (4:1–5; 6:4–10), and although the assumption here is that a female body is being described, they may also be read as *waṣfs* for a drag queen. The other two take in the lower realms, one beginning

with the head, moving down to the legs and finishing with speech and some more general items (5:10– 16); the other begins with the thighs and moves up to the hair of the head (7:2–6 [ET 1–5]). Although the gender marks are stronger with these two—the former a male, the latter female—it is instructive to read them with alternative sexual identities in mind, for most of the terms apply across conventionally understood genders, blurring assumed distinction. Further, the voice that describes is distinctly queer: hetero readings tend to assume that males describe the females and a female the male, but the verbal patterns and suffixes of the *waṣfs* in no way make this clear. Males may describe males and females lasciviously describe females or even drag queens—in short, gender is highly indeterminate. Along with a small example in 1:9–10, the most curious feature is the quadruple repetition of the *waṣfs*, particularly with their insistent sexual register. Why repeat? Why not one, or at least one to pin down some gender difference?

Finally, there is the repetition of content itself. Here the rhythms of nature pulsate, the natural imagery of the Song giving out to repetition. The seasons play with one another, the budding of spring moving to the ripeness of summer and then to the products of the harvest in autumn. So also with the human desires of the Song, which move through a perpetual cycle of incitement and attempted satisfaction. For Jill Munro, "this movement is more circular than linear, as absence yields to presence in a never-ceasing game of hide and seek. In its own way, however, even this circular movement tells a 'story,' for it is by means of this movement that the themes of longing and fulfillment, absence and presence, seeking and finding are explored" (1996, 146).

But the content also excites at another level. In my *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* I attempted a carnal allegory of the Song, a reading of the Song as a vast sexual allegory, for the explicitly sexual dimension is as allegorical as the wildest flights of medieval theological fancy. This exercise required a threesome: the Song, myself, and the delectable realm of pornographic theory. In this light, the text provides numerous metaphorical descriptions of and allusions to various sex acts. Indeed, the Song spills out a whole vocabulary of sex. Alongside the obligatory Hebrew "to know" (*yd'*), there are pasture a flock (1:7, 2:16; 6:2) or kids (1:8), lie down (1:7), embrace (2:6; 8:2), hold (3:4), hold captive (7:6 [ET 5]), stir up (2:7; 3:5; 8:4), awaken love (2:7; 3:5; 8:4), ravish (4:9), come (2:8; 4:16; 5:1), come up (3:6; 4:2; 8:5), arise (2:10, 13), lead and bring (8:2), knock (5:2), open (5:2, 5, 6; 7:13 [ET 12]), bud and bloom (7:13 [ET 12]), gather lilies (6:2), give forth fragrance (1:12), be sweet to my taste (2:3), feed (2:16; 4:5), eat fruit (4:16; see also 5:1), drink (5:1), pour out (1:3), bathe feet (5:3), and thrust a hand into a hole (5:3).

Apart from this incessant terminology of sex, the whole Song may also be read allegorically as a series of sexual episodes, a poetic porn text: group sex in 1:2–4; a male-female combination with some extras, including shepherds and a bestial fantasy, in 1:5–2:7; animals and humans in 2:8–17; a man with a dildo in 3:1–5; an ode to the phallus and a gay scene in 3:6–11; water sports, especially piss and ejaculate, between two females in 4:1–15; a female-male SM sequence in 4:16–5:9; queer savoring of a grotesque male body in 5:10–16; swinging in 6:1–3; a

lesbian sequence in 6:4–12; group female scopophilia in 7:1–7 [ET 6:13–7:6]; breast fetishism and female ejaculate in 7:7–10 [ET 6 – 9]; and an orgy in 8:1–14. Read in this way, the very repetition of a range of sexual acts in this material is a precursor to pornographic literature and film, where all that counts is the sex itself. Everything else is extraneous to this end: "In an erotic text, the important thing is to move from one episode to another" (Goulemot 1994 [1991], 74).[21]

Che Vuoi?

So we come back to Lacan. While Peter Michelson (1993, 42–43) argues that repetition functions as an aphrodisiac, lending itself to the buildup of erotic excitement, Lacan's suggestion is more plausible: the prime purpose of desire is not fulfillment but the replication of desire itself—that is, desire seeks not its consummation but the eternal prolongation of desire. The repetition I have traced at various levels—words and phrases, images, poetic structure (especially the *waṣfs*), and content—may be understood as the pursuit of fulfillment that forever falls short. The search for satiation—the object of desire—is futile, for that object is empty, void. Therefore, desire remains unfulfilled, perpetually repeating itself and thereby replicating desire, "desire in the second degree, desire of desire" (Lacan 1992, 14).

If, as I have suggested, the Song both triggers desire and is caught in the perpetual bind of its insatiability, Lacan's question becomes urgent: *che vuoi*? What is that you—the text, me, you—really want? Is it language (allegory), the desire of desire, or denial of desire? Is it the Law, prohibition, refusal? What I really want—and I suspect this text as well as you—is not the "real" thing, but fantasy. Indeed, it is misdirected, a misrecognition, to see the traumatic fantasy structure of the Song as somehow sundered from "real" sex, which is then the ideal, natural human activity to which one aspires, anything else being at best a poor substitute, if not a degradation, whether erotic allegory or pornography (as argued by Gagnon 1988; Griffin 1981; Blonsky 1992, 103–24).[22] Masturbation, images, narrative and poetry, simulated or virtual sex, insofar as they produce fantasies, are not so much substitutes for the real as the real thing themselves. Actually, sex with "real" partners is a substitution for simulated sex, for fantasy: "Lacan's thesis that 'there is no sexual relationship' means precisely that the structure of the 'real' sexual act (the act with a flesh-and-blood partner) is already inherently phantasmatic—the 'real' body of the other serves only as a support for our phantasmatic projections" (Žižek 1994a, 210; see also Dean 1993, 11).[23] What I really want is my fantasy.

CHAPTER 2

A Fleshly Reading

Masochism, Ecocriticism, and the Song of Songs

Like the untitillating spectacle of a strip show, the Song of Songs has bared more than enough of its flesh in the critical frenzy of interpretation. And yet for some reason that is beyond me, "flesh" is always assumed to be of the human variety, muscle covered with skin, neglecting that vast and delectable realm of the flesh beyond human beings. While this chapter obviously leaks and dribbles across the previous chapter, sharing some basic assumptions about reading the Song, it also tries out some new practices, crossing that very thin and artificial boundary between human and nonhuman flesh.

My concern, then, is flesh. I begin with human flesh, especially via the delectable Leopold von Sacher-Masoch and the essay "Unsafe Sex" by Virginia Burrus and Stephen Moore (2003). From there I pick up once again my interest in nonhuman flesh and ecocriticism, with whom we made acquaintance in the previous chapter, only to take them much, much further.

On the Varied Uses of Rubber

Having first stirred a full room at the Society of Biblical Literature Meeting of 2001 before appearing later in print, Burrus and Moore's essay argues that feminist interpretations of the Song could well do with a good dollop of queer theory, especially concerning the dark, hidden, and tantalizing recesses of sex that feminist interpretations avoid. Reluctant to deny feminist biblical scholars a rare oasis—hence the designation, common among such feminist scholars, of the Song as SoS—in a sacred text that gives little relief from its multiple and overlaid patriarchies, on their reading that particular oasis, with all its wet and succulent pleasures, turns out to be a mirage after all. One by one the assumptions of such

readings dissipate the closer we draw, weary and thirsty, to the text: that the Song celebrates one on one heterosexual love and sex;[1] that a woman speaks, or at least that it is her fantasy; that the sex and/or love is equal, mutual, untrammeled[2]—in short that it is both *heterosexual* and *egalitarian*.[3]

Feminist Fantasies of SoS

What much feminist criticism of the Song has achieved, they point out, is to trouble the heteronormative interpretations, those that explicitly or implicitly take it as an expression of love or even true love that leads to a lifelong commitment usually hedged in with a legal document known as the marriage certificate and the occasional fruit of one's loins. The problem is that such criticism does not go far enough. It takes but a small step and for two reasons: while untrammeled heterosexuality might avoid the trap of heteronormativity, it falls foul of a transhistorical assumption concerning heterosexuality itself and for that matter homosexuality. Here Burrus and Moore clearly buy into the now long debate concerning the invention or construction of both categories in the nineteenth century, citing works by Jonathan Katz (1995) and David Halperin (1990). In fact, this whole question is central to the drive of the essay itself. The feminism that interests them "seeks not to 'reinvent' heterosexuality but rather to subvert or evade it," particularly through "retrieving the eroticism of an ancient text" that slips through the "ham-fisted clutches" of heterosexuality and homosexuality (Burrus and Moore 2003, 34).

As Burrus and Moore artfully dodge those clutches, they pick up the second problem with the sexual orthodoxy of feminist interpretations—namely, the fantasy of egalitarian sex. But they are also very keen on slipping by the censor, particularly as they draw nearer to my own work. So it is that pornography and sadomasochism (S-M)—along with the inevitable theory—enable them to dupe the censor *and*, they hope, take feminist criticism with them, waving farewell as they go to any vanilla notion of egalitarian sex.

Counterpleasures, or the Unhappy Yoking of Sadism and Masochism

The first step in that trek is pornography and here they embrace my work rather tenderly.[4] I am not going to quibble with them, for it is a generous reading that seeks to extend or, if you like, open up the issues I raise further. Apart from relishing my efforts at X-egesis, recognizing the "calculated misstep"[5] of these essays that seeks to break the sexual orthodoxy of scholarship on the Song, and identifying the complexity, heterogeneity, and instability of the discourses concerning sexuality and especially pornography within feminism, I am also indebted to them for focusing precisely on the relationship between my readings and feminist biblical criticism (nearly all my references are to the wider debates concerning sexuality and pornography outside of biblical studies). But they have also made me realize something I have repressed concerning those essays, partly due to the (expected) divergence of responses to them, and that is that I quite obviously

enjoy the subject matter and its writing (hence this book as [w]hole, let alone the subject matter of the Song).

The most important part of their engagement is also the most juicy, the point where my work "brings scholarship on the eroticism of this text for the first time to the perimeter of the contested and messy territory of feminist discourses on sex and sexuality, *where purity proves elusive and pleasure is ever mingled with danger*" (Burrus and Moore 2003, 37; emphasis added). And that perimeter is the whole delectable realm of the "counterpleasures"—the title of a key text by Karmen MacKendrick (1999) on which they rely—of S-M. This *is*—with none of the usual qualifiers like "perhaps"—the most interesting part of their essay, where they step beyond the boundary that they feel I longingly consider but hesitate to cross. Or is it that the path I take is different from theirs, as this volume will attest? In my earlier engagements with the Song (Boer 1999a: 53–70; 2000a), as they rightly point out, I follow in the tracks of the Divine Marquis de Sade, so much so that my reading of the Song "is an exceedingly slow one-handed read" (Burrus and Moore 2003, 38) with its mixture of high theory and the staccato of endless variations on sex acts. Now, while there is much to be said for a long, slow fuck on a Saturday morning, they are absolutely correct in saying that my reading of the Song performs a necessary Sadean failure. And they are also right in arguing, by contrast, for the *masochistic* feel of the Song, the way nothing much "really" happens except to leave the reader more and more in suspended sexual frustration. The Song is, then, one long masochistic tease characterized by absence, concealment, and the perverse and painful pleasure of denial.

In this respect Song of Songs 5:6–7 becomes the interpretive key that unlocks (or should I say the rope that allows them to tie up?) the whole Song. The choice is astute, for in a biblical book that most feminist biblical critics regard as a good text for all the right reasons, Burrus and Moore pick on the one text with its wounding, beating, and stripping of a woman—or at least it is assumed to be a woman—that is usually passed over in silence or attributed to the one glimpse of patriarchy in the Song. Reading around the edges of one of the few critical explorations of 5:6–7 by Fiona Black and Cheryl Exum (1998), as well as the queerest of Church Fathers, Gregory of Nyssa, who becomes one of the women of the Song, along with a splash of my own exegesis, Burrus and Moore argue that the logic of 5:6–7 is subversively masochistic, and in this respect it opens a window into the twilight world of leather, rope, furs, chains, and pain in the rest of the Song. In the same way that the source of pleasure in masochism lies in the perpetuation of lack, of desire, of want, so also the Song goes nowhere, never offers satisfaction or closure. In other words, the Song is good for you for all the wrong reasons.

Now, I have quite deliberately misread their argument here, for they speak of *S-M*, following MacKendrick, as the model of "counterpleasures," of the decentered, desubjectified pleasures of pain and refusal. Yet their argument relies on the logic of *masochism*. Indeed, a common mistake of these discussions is to fuse sadism and masochism as if they were two sides of the same coin: one person loves to inflict pain and the other equally loves to suffer pain. What could be a

more natural pairing? The problem is twofold: a sadist inflicts pain on an unwilling subject and the pleasure for the sadist is to see the subject's resistance to undesired pain, even to the point of death. Should the subject enjoy pain, then, the sadist's pleasure dissipates. A masochist, by contrast, derives immense pleasure from the painful and perpetual delay of satisfaction. Crucial to the masochistic structure, with its bottom and top (who cannot be a sadist) is the contract to which both parties are held, and the norm is for the *bottom to seek a top for such a contract*. Freud of course developed both categories from literary texts and I for one find the novels of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch infinitely better than those of the marquis, Donatien de Sade.

Where sadism does come into play in Burrus and Moore's reading is with the feminist criticism of 5:6–7 as a "sheerly oppositional imposition of will . . . that is at once oppressive and repressive" (Burrus and Moore 2003, 49). By contrast, what is really a masochistic reading, the contractual pleasure of a willed imbalance of power, is then the queer contribution to discussions of the Song. In the end, they do seek an alliance between both, between feminist and queer, or sadist and masochist, angles.

In the last part of this chapter I want to return to 5:6–7 in the larger context of 5:2–8, but let us remove just a little fur and teasingly hint that the reason the Song is so masochistic from a human point of view is because of the fecund riot of plants and animals throughout this text. In order to get there, however, I must turn for a moment to ecocriticism.

Of Plants and Beasts and Other Fleshly Pursuits

I am not interested in the versions of ecocriticism that are off with the pixies, far too much entwined with the conglomerate of New Age spiritualisms, suggesting that the real problem with our current economic order—capitalism—is a loss of spiritual connection with the earth. Rather, I understand ecocriticism in the strong sense—namely, as a political approach: it arises from and contributes to political, social, and cultural change in terms of a natural, material environment of which human beings are not only a part but also profoundly construct. Further, as is now widely recognized, ecocriticism is very much concerned with making connections, specifically of a materialist nature.[6] As far as the first point is concerned, rather than the more neutral definition of Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (1996, xviii)—"ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment"—I follow the definitions of Michael Branch and Michael Cohen. As Branch and company point out in the introduction to *Reading the Earth*: "Implicit (and often explicit) in much of this new criticism is a call for cultural change. Ecocriticism is not just a means of analyzing nature in literature; it implies a move toward a more biocentric world-view, an extension of ethics, a broadening of humans' conception of global community to include nonhuman life forms and the physical environment" (Branch 1998, xiii).

Or, in Michael Cohen's terms, "ecological literary criticism must be engaged . . . Ecocriticism needs to inform personal and political actions" (Cohen 1999,

1092–93). My only addition to such definitions is that they tend to leave the agency with human beings. What happens if political change arises as a response to nonhuman activity? Or, to put it more bluntly: given that the ultimate contradiction we face now is between the unlimited growth of capitalism and a limited planet, the possibility for political change—the breakdown of capitalism—may well lie with large-scale environmental collapse (see further Boer 2009b).

As for the second point—the making of connections—there is wider agreement: "Ecocriticism expands the notion of 'the world' to include the entire ecosphere. If we agree with Barry Commoner's first law of ecology, 'everything is connected to everything else,' we must conclude that literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but, rather, plays a part in an immensely complex global system, in which energy, matter, *and ideas* interact" (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996, xviii).

I would also like to stress the phrase "material world," for ecocriticism is very much a materialist approach. Up until now (in my writing) I have concerned myself largely with what I felt were the two great materialisms—namely, Marxism and psychoanalysis—the one demystifying the patterns of human history and the other of the human psyche in thoroughly materialist terms. If one took on the name of historical or dialectical materialism, the other might be termed a materialism of the psyche. But both approaches are in fact human materialisms, resolutely concerned with human beings and not the materialism of the nonhuman world. By taking the nonhuman world as its basis, ecocriticism shifts the emphasis away from human beings. In short, ecocriticism's political nature and its critique of anthropocentrism interest me for this chapter.

What bearing does all this have for a reading of the Song of Songs? Am I suddenly going to go a shade of green, grow my hair long, and roll a joint before dipping into the text? That wouldn't be such a bad thing, but I wouldn't mind some sex as well. Quite frankly, what I want to do is introduce the greenie to the porn queen, the ecocritic to the lascivious purveyor of bad sex, and see whether anything more than a one-night stand comes of it. This means that we won't be joining an Audubon Society walk into the bush, unless we want to use our binoculars for other purposes: attention to the manifold presence of plants (flowers, trees, blossoms, fruit, etc.) and animals (gazelles, stags, foxes, and all manner of furry and not-so-furry animals) will not be an end in itself. Rather, if the Song is indeed "about" sex in some way, then that sex can hardly be restricted to human beings, no matter how good or bad it might be, however much you might like some chocolate or nuts or strawberry thrown in with your vanilla sex.

A Fleshly Reading

Two pieces of theoretical equipment thus come together in my reading of specific texts: the masochistic logic of the Song that Burrus and Moore identify and the propensity of the Song to go bush, as it were, to revert to images of flora and fauna with the greatest of ease. In the fecund jungle of this text, the vast majority of critics try to push their way through the screen of leaves and branches in order

to catch the lovers at it—not sure whether they will see men and women or perhaps God and the Church going hell for leather—or chase off the assorted stags, gazelles, foxes, sheep, and turtledoves as so many hindrances. And the strategy in these readings is, as Adorno wrote of Søren Kierkegaard, to volatilize the images into metaphors: the natural images become mere metaphors for human sexuality (Adorno 1989, 13).

Let us take three texts: 5:2–7 lies on the human side of the divide with nature and it is not for nothing that critics have focused their binoculars here. By contrast, both 7:11–14 (ET 7:10–13) and 2:8–13 begin to cloud that vision with succulent plants, bursting seeds, and more animals than the Amazon jungle. In what follows, I introduce readings of these texts that will be taken up in the next chapter, especially in relation to the second chapter of the Song.

Usually regarded as a dream sequence—"I slept, but my heart was awake" (v. 2) is a bit of a giveaway—5:2–7 is a favored text among critics. Often taken as a climax among this disparate collection of poems, it offers much yet delivers little. After the call from her lover (v. 2), the next three verses are awash with sensual expectation: the woman is undressed and has bathed her "feet"; her lover thrills her "heart" by putting his "hand to the latch"; and she opens to him, her hands and fingers dripping with "myrrh" as they grip the "bolt." As we saw in the previous chapter, one could bluntly read these terms as genitals (feet), vagina (latch), vaginal lubrication (myrrh), and penis (bolt). In this light, in verse 2, the head "wet with dew" and locks "with night sprinkles" become penis and semen. Let us not be coy about this, for if we read these verses in the sensual way many critics have done, then you need to make these connections. And it makes little difference whether it is a dream sequence or "real" sex (how real can you get in a written, poetic text?). I have suggested elsewhere (in the first chapter and in my *Knockin' on Heaven's Door*) that what we have here is a fisting scene, but I have other appetites at the moment. The objection to be made is that in being so matter-of-fact, I have removed all the erotic and playful sensuality of this text, ripping away the veil that makes it so maddeningly enticing. Yet it is precisely the veil itself that is so alluring, rather than what may or may not lie behind, so let us see of what it is made.

Of all the poems in the Song, this one is perhaps the most anthropocentric: the main actors are a male and a female (at least they seem to be so, but not elsewhere) and we have the watchmen of verse 7. They interact in a sensual dance that *hints* at all sorts of possibilities, offering much yet delivering little. For just when we think we have sprung them in the act itself, that annoying thing called language comes in the way: the woman does after all speak of her feet, of latch and bolt, and of myrrh; and the man speaks of dew and night sprinkles. Even here, in this all-too-human poem, the consistent pattern of the Song appears and suddenly we find pleasure delayed, or rather pleasure in delay and denial.

I have left until now the last part of this poem, the denial of verse 6 and the beating scene of verse 7, for in the content of these verses we find the masochistic logic of the whole Song as Burrus and Moore so deftly point out. An interpretative key, if you will, that unlocks the gate of interpretation. Here a woman *is*

being beaten (to paraphrase Freud), although of course it takes place in the convoluted layers of fantasy or dream within a text that is itself phantasmic. But the troubling question is whether such a fantasy is of the willed dynamics of power or, as Fiona Black argues, a literary punishment for the woman's transgression of patriarchal boundaries by daring to speak in the Song (2001, 101–2). Burrus and Moore puzzle over this problem without realizing that the problem lies at the heart of masochism itself: the unresolvable question over willed or forced pain generates the dynamic of masochism, for often the contract (willed) explicitly includes the unexpected use of force.

Here I will mention a further issue before turning to the other texts: the masochistic logic of the Song applies as much to the question of sex within the Song as to the relationship between critics and the Song. Let me stretch Burrus and Moore out a little. Verse 6 with its fourfold pattern manifests with a cold beauty (see Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*) the pleasurable denial of masochism: "I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had gone. My soul failed me when I spoke. I sought him but found him not; I called him but he gave no answer." Then verse 7 links that denial with pain: "They beat me, they wounded me, they took away my mantle." The fine line between pleasure and pain, between willed and unwilled submission is the source of both the enticement and fear of masochism. But what is troubling here for many critics is that this text presents them with the unbearable truth of their (I really should write *our*) own relationship to the text, for critics too would like to tear the mantle from the text and find out what is really going on beneath these layers of metaphor, yet they can't: the masochistic contract between text and interpreter simply will not allow it.

Sex-Mad Nature

The nature of that metaphorical screen or mantle is crucial. We have already seen it in action in the first part of 5:2–7, but let me pick up 7:11–14 (ET 7:10–13). Here we have another almost idyllic scene: someone (and it is worth reminding ourselves that the first person in Hebrew is gender neutral) calls a man to "go forth into the fields" (v. 12 [ET v. 11]), to stay in the villages and then go out early into the vineyards. Now a lusty and hearty hump in the fields is always a good thing, but this not what the text says. Apart from the weak "there I will give you my love" (v. 13 [ET v. 12]) before we know it the text is full of budding vines, opening grape blossoms, and blooming pomegranates. While we might respond that it is rather nice to notice these as you stroll through the fields, by the end of this poem nature engulfs not merely the couple but also the text itself: "The mandrakes give forth fragrance, and over our doors are all choice fruits, new as well as old, which I have laid up for you, O my beloved" (v. 14 [ET v. 13]). Here we need to show a good deal of discipline and resist the temptation to think of these images as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and so forth (what Adorno would call resisting the volatilization into metaphor). And if we pause in our mad rush to find the sex we know is in there somewhere and consider the images a little more closely, what do we find? A text saturated with sex and fecundity:

vines, grape blossoms, pomegranates, and mandrakes bud, open, bloom, and give out fragrance. This is nature gone sex-mad! Sap rises and leaks out, plants pop, flowers spread, blooms—well, bloom, and fragrance is everywhere.

Now, I must admit that the pure sexual sensuousness of nature is not everyone's cup of tea, that only the odd greenie will get wet feeling up the erotic bark of a tree branch, or perhaps get a hard-on when the fleshy leaves of a jungle plant brush a cheek on passing. But this is where we really do cross the border that masochism has opened up, for once we shift our attention to the metaphorical mantle that generates the masochistic logic of the text, then the fleshly sex of the Song becomes a different ball game. Here I want to throw a few animals into the mix from another text that in many respects echoes 7:11–14 [ET 7:10–13]—that is, 2:8–15. Along with the flowers and vines and figs, the sexual potpourri now includes the odd stag and gazelle (v. 9), a turtledove (v. 12), a dove (v. 14), and some pesky foxes (v. 15). I am quite sure that this is definitely not what does it for most, and I am not suggesting that we race off into the bush looking the first furry animal that might wish to copulate with you or me. But at the risk of stating the obvious, human beings are in fact one species among many others, and we do have sex in very similar fashions and for much the same reasons.

At this point, I need to pause and leave fuller discussion for the next chapter, where I pick up the Song's second chapter in particular to see what a sensual world without human beings might look like. But in order to wrap up this discussion, it seems to me that feminist biblical criticism of the Song needs not only the queer counterpleasures of S-M (or rather, masochism) as Burrus and Moore argue but also the possibilities that ecocriticism suggests. For the path that Burrus and Moore have opened with queer readings like theirs really only begins to get interesting when it crosses the human-nature divide and leaves anthropocentrism behind.

CHAPTER 3

Making It, Literally

Metaphor, Economy, and the Sensuality of Nature

Toward the close of the preceding chapter, I began asking what a disciplined literary reading of the Song of Songs might be (i.e., one that attempts to read the metaphors at face value) to focus on what I called the metaphoric screen rather than assume something lies behind it—either the theological truths of medieval exegesis or the carnal and very human romps of modern interpretation. Yet that chapter was really an initial foray, requiring more systematic analysis.

So here I engage in precisely that careful study of the images as they are, without assuming a complex web of metaphoric connections. However, I wish to go further still: beyond dealing with the metaphors at face value, I also seek to identify the world view or ideological framework of the Song of Songs. The catch is that texts do not give out their world view so easily; it is there, but only indirectly. So we need to find a means of looking awry, redirecting our attention to other features that show up that world view despite the text. Those with eye for theory will detect two overlapping strategies operating just below the surface. The first is an interpretive double shuffle: initially, I block the role of metaphors, cutting the tie (or tenor) between metaphoric vehicle and referent, concerning myself purely with the images; once freed from the terrible burden of having to refer to the synagogue, church, life of faith, or human bodies with the plumbing connected in various ways, the text is able to come into its own as a fecund natural world. But at that moment it begins to speak of another reality—namely, an economic one. In other words, I read the text as allegory of economics. Second, this chapter might be regarded as an exercise in estrangement—an effort to make the text strange again so that we see it differently. In order to carry out such an estrangement effect, I focus on three matters: metaphor, ecocriticism, and Marxism.

Let me state my argument before unpacking it. I argue that the Song of Songs, or rather the second chapter that is my focus, operates according to what may be called an allocatory world view. Rather than represented directly, it shows up in the fabric of the language, particularly its imagery. So we need to look elsewhere in order to locate it; hence my focus on metaphor, breaking the metonymic axis, and then exploring what world is constructed when the images of nature coalesce.[1]

Metaphor, Ecology, and Marxism

I may be given the epithet "Captain Obvious" for pointing out that the Song deals in metaphor and its hangers-on such as simile, metonymy, synonymy, hyperbole, and the ever-present allegory. There is nothing particularly new in such a point, and perusing the recent commentaries of Cheryl Exum (2005) or Diane Bergant (2001), or the older ones of Marvin H. Pope (1977), Francis Landy (1983a), and Michael V. Fox (1985), let alone the collection of comments from the venerated "fathers" of the tradition (Norris 2003), I can find adequate discussions of metaphor. Yet they all stay with the idea that metaphor involves the relation, however subtle or crude, complex or simple, between two terms that have no immediate connection. Or, to put it in more technical terms, the vehicle and referent are connected by the tenor—the link that opens up all manner of multifaceted and delicate connections between the vehicle and the referent.[2] For example, "his banner over me was love" makes use of a characteristic (the tenor) to set up a series of links between the banner (vehicle) and love (the referent). The key lies in leaving precisely what that characteristic might be unnamed, for the metaphor may go off in all manner of directions. A banner announces, goes at the forefront of the army, flutters in the wind, stands above the tent, flies from a turret, and so on. And love may flare up, wane, become bumpy—each verb of course being a metaphor in its own right. In the Song the metaphors come primarily from plants and animals, but we also find them drawn from geography, art, architecture, and the military.

This is all very well if one assumes that the mechanism of metaphor remains intact. Or rather, let me speak of the "metonymic axis." That axis is none other than the tenor that links the two items, vehicle and referent, in a way that is metonymic—they come together by means of the tenor. However, what happens if I block or break that metonymic axis, closing down or cutting the link between vehicle and referent? What if the metaphor is no longer a "thinly veiled erotic" allusion (Exum 2005, 115)? What if the vehicle floats free, no longer anchored to a referent? What if the "banner" from my earlier example is not necessarily connected with "love"? These questions, which comprise my effort at estrangement, will exercise me in what follows.

As for ecocriticism, since I broached that topic in the previous chapter, albeit for my own willful misuse, let me summarize the main points that I will use here. I understand ecocriticism not in a weak liberal sense (the study of literature in relation to its environment) but in strong, materialist sense: a critical approach

committed to economic, political and social change in terms of a natural, material environment from which human beings themselves emerge—what Michael Branch calls a move to a "more biocentric worldview" in which material connectedness is crucial (Branch 1998, xiii). My own take on this approach is to point out that ecocritics tend to leave agency with human beings (who are responsible, after all, for constructing the category of nature in the first place and for developing ecocriticism itself). In order to undermine this anthropocentric bind of ecocriticism, I ask what it would look like if political and economic change should arise as a response to nonhuman activity and agency, if the impetus came from outside human control. In this respect, ecocriticism becomes an anthropofugal materialism, taking its place beside Marxism and psychoanalysis.

What, then, of Marxism, my third port of methodological call? Despite the fact that ecocriticism brings out that dimension of Marxism that is so often forgotten—namely, the inseparable connection between theory and political practice—there is a profound question that Marxism poses for ecocriticism. Here I draw on one of David Harvey's best essays, "What's Green and Makes the Environment Go Round?" (1998). Deploying a standard Marxist move, he argues that although human beings may be formed by nature, they also form nature itself. In other words, the natural environment may shape a particular social formation, but that social formation fundamentally shapes the natural environment that shapes the formation. Thus the availability of raw materials, the types of animals and plants available in an area, and the climate, rainfall, and fertility of the soil obviously influence the nature of the social formation that may arise. It is not for nothing that a hunter-gatherer existence characterized life in large parts of Australia for millennia, while the naturally occurring pig, goat, sheep, and cow in Mesopotamia profoundly influenced the development of a sacred economy there. But mode of production also shapes nature. For instance, in Australia the introduction of a host of plant species since British colonization in the late eighteenth century, along with animals such as the cat, dog, goat, deer, camel, water buffalo, and rabbit—all of which have gone "feral"—means that nature in Australia means something far different under capitalism than it did under an earlier mixture of hunter-gatherer economy and settled agriculture economy. Add to this the fact that much of the arable land is shaped by a mix of fertilizers and pesticides and any notion of an Australian "nature" is impossible to separate from capitalism.

All this may seem like common sense, but too often one comes across the assumption that nature has ultimate precedence, setting the agenda for language, culture, textual production, and society.[3] Harvey's argument puts paid to that assertion. But his argument also puts a new spin on Barry Commoner's first law of ecology that I mentioned previously: "Everything is connected to everything else." If Commoner's law of interconnectedness overcomes the opposition between human beings and nature, asserting that human beings are part of a much larger nature, then Harvey shows that more extensively than other species human beings are part of nature by profoundly shaping it. There is nothing more or less natural, he points out, about a freeway overpass than a field full of grass and trees.

Thus what we know as nature is held together and sustained by capitalism—all the way from agribusiness, with its pesticides, herbicides, patented hybrids and genetic modification, to forest management and national parks.

Harvey's focus, as a Marxist geographer, is on capitalism. I assume, however, that Harvey's points are not restricted to capitalism, but that they apply—with all the appropriate modifications and attention to difference required—to other very different modes of production such as the one(s) in which the Bible came together. In other words, I am interested in how Harvey's argument relates to a text produced in a distinctly non- or precapitalist environment. The question remains, however, as to how my three areas of metaphor, ecocriticism, and Marxism come together for reading the Song of Songs. Let me put it as follows: to begin with, if I block the metonymic axis and focus on the released vehicles of the multitude of metaphors in the Song, it turns out that most of these vehicles are flora and fauna. Second, once the connection to human beings that is assumed in the metaphors of the Song is gone, the animals and plants take on lives of their own, one of sap-filled fecundity and one that is open to the insights of ecocriticism. However, before we get too enthusiastic about such an "anthropofugal" or nonanthropocentric reading, about ecocriticism as the savior of biblical criticism, if not literary criticism as a whole,[4] my final step picks up the point that "nature" is a construct, not merely at the hands of language but also at the hands of social and economic formations. Such an anthropofugal reading is an interpretive fiction, for the Song of Songs is, after all, a product of human hands and minds. So I am also interested in how the flora and fauna of the Song are constructed by human beings.

Breaking the Metonymic Axis

The theory is all very well, but let me see how it works out with the text.[5] I take as my initial sample the collection of poems conveniently if somewhat arbitrarily gathered into Chapter 2. Here we find a series of metaphors, similes, and images that have fallen into a distinct pattern, if not a certain hierarchy, with interpretation of the Song. The vast weight of interpretation assumes that the Song is anthropocentric, that it speaks of love and/or sex between human beings. To the aid of that assumption come a few explicit metaphors. By "explicit metaphors" I mean those that provide the full works of vehicle, tenor, and referent, and for which the referent is one or more human beings. For example, "your eyes are doves" (Song 1:15) provides us with a human referent ("your eyes") to which the vehicle ("doves") is connected via the tenor. In other words, these explicit metaphors are anthropocentric. Yet another large group of metaphors is implicit; that is, they may supply a vehicle, but the referent is left out. In this group we find metaphors like "the rains are gone" and "the flowers appear on the earth" (Song 2:11–12). There is no explicit connection made with human beings in these metaphors, and yet in some way they are drafted in to do the work of anthropocentric metaphors. The reason: these implicit metaphors come under the spell of both the anthropocentrism of the poems and the explicit metaphors.

What if the rains that are gone are not the bondage of Israel in Egypt, or the reign of Jewish Law, but simply the winter rains? What if the blossoms that appear are not the saints, apostles, and martyrs (see Pope 1977, 394–97) but simply the flowers of spring? That is, what if we release these implicit metaphors from the service of anthropocentrism? They become metaphors without referents, or rather images at large, freed from human-centered power of the explicit metaphors. The first step of my reading, then, is to reverse the hierarchy. Rather than a hierarchy of anthropocentrism, explicit and then implicit metaphors, I would like to privilege the lowly, ragtag implicit group. Let us see what we have:

> Sustain me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples (v. 5)
> By the gazelles or the does of the open field (v. 7).
> For look, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone (v. 11).
> The blossoms appear on the earth,
> the time of singing has come,
> and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land (v. 12).
> The fig tree ripens its unripened fruit,
> and the vine-buds give forth fragrance (v. 13).
> My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff,
> Let me see your form,
> Let me hear your voice,
> For your voice is sweet,
> And your form is beautiful (v. 14).
> Catch us foxes, little foxes,
> who spoil vineyards, for our vineyards are in blossom (v. 15).
> He grazes among the lilies (v. 16)
> Until the day breathes and the shadows flee (v. 17).[6]

Released from the connections with human beings, the natural world that appears before us is one at the end of winter and its rains. A day begins and shadows fade, there are blossoms, fig trees, vines and vine-buds, vineyards, lilies, ripening fruit, fragrance, raisin cakes, apples, gazelles, does, a dove,[7] turtledoves, foxes, and even the odd cleft, covert, cliff, and uncultivated field (*sadeh*). One or two items do have some human taint, but they are few and do not diminish the picture. For instance, the vineyard is cultivated by human beings. At a stretch the vines and fig trees might also fall into such a group, but there is nothing in the text that suggests such a connection, except perhaps by association with the vineyards. Finally, the imperatives "sustain" (*smk*) and "refresh" (*rpd*) in verse 5 are second-person-masculine plural, and may refer to men (the plural is intriguing), but the masculine plural is also the general plural with no specific referent needed (human or otherwise). The overwhelming number of these items, the flora and fauna, the rhythm of days and seasons and even landforms, *taken on their own* are anything but anthropocentric. And there is nothing about them that suggests that they might refer intrinsically to human love. Indeed, they are hardly metaphors in any sense of the term, for the mechanism of vehicle, tenor,

and referent must be imposed on them. It is best, then, to speak of a collection of images, a collection that constructs a distinct natural world in its own right.

So much for the images that once were implicit metaphors. What happens to the explicit metaphors in light of my argument then? To begin with, the metonymic axis is fully functional, at least initially. In each case they make the connection between human beings and the various items, whether flora, fauna, geology, or indeed the built environment. Yet at this point I need my machete in order to cut this axis and release the metaphors from their human connections. Let us see how this might work. I begin with listing the explicit metaphors.

> I am a crocus of Sharon, a lily of the valleys (v. 1).
> As a lily among thorns, so is my lover among the
> daughters (v. 2).
> As an apple tree among the trees of the forest,
> so is my lover among the sons.
> In its shadow I delighted to sit,
> and its fruit was sweet to my taste (v. 3)
> Look, he's coming now,
> leaping over the mountains,
> bounding over the hills (v. 8)
> My lover is like a gazelle, or a young deer.
> Look, there he stands, behind our wall,
> Gazing in through the windows,
> looking through the lattice (v. 9)
> Turn, my lover, be like a gazelle,
> or a young deer upon rugged mountains (v. 17)

Similar images appear to those of our previous collection. In this case they are flowers such as crocuses and lilies (if indeed they can be identified so readily from Hebrew), trees such as apple trees, trees of the forest, even some thorns, and then the fruit of the apple tree. As far as fauna is concerned, there is a gazelle and a deer (a standard pair for the Song), twice in different metaphors. Finally, apart from the odd rugged or broken mountain or valley, we also come across built structures like a wall, window, and lattice. But just when we thought we were safely in the realm of metaphor, the literary device slips to simile. The first "I am" is a metaphor, and the vehicle is both a crocus and a lily, either in the valley or among brambles, but the rest are in fact similes, for the connection is made via an "as" (*ke*) or a "like" (*le*). Indeed, there are two extended similes: the apple tree simile goes as far as mentioning its shade and its sweet fruit; the gazelle-deer simile stretches to the animal leaping and bounding over the hills, and then looking in through the windows and lattice while standing by the wall.

What about the referents for these metaphors? They are, surprisingly, rather muted. To begin with, the first person is ambiguous, at least in terms of gender.[8] Thus the possessive suffix, on words such as "my lover" (*dodi*) and "my friend" (*ra'eyati*), or "my taste" (*hiki* in v. 3) do not indicate the gender of the pronoun. At least we can assume they are human, but that is not the case with the third

person masculine suffix on words such as "its fruit" (*firyo*) and "its shade" (*tsillo*), or indeed the emphatic third-person pronoun—"it"—in verses 8 and 9 (*zeh*). In each case it could be either "its" (i.e., the apple tree) or "his," or it might be "it" (the gazelle or deer) or "he." At least the first-person-possessive pronouns do refer to humans, as also the separate first-person pronoun, *'ani*, at the beginning of the first verse and the verbal suffix, "I sat," in verse 3. We might argue that the ambiguity over the third-person pronouns is part of the magic of metaphor. But a slippage does set in, one in which the anthropocentrism is not as secure as it might seem.[9]

All the same, there is enough to make human beings the referents of the metaphors and similes in this chapter. The "I," "he," and "my" become the referents to which the metaphoric vehicles are connected. Thus "my friend" is like a lily, the maidens are like brambles, "my lover" is like an apple tree, the young men are like trees in the wood, and so on. Or with the metaphors, we find the lover morphing into an apple tree, with "his/its fruit" and "his/its shade" (v. 3). Of course, these connections trigger all sorts of questions and associations: Why is a lover like an apple tree with fruit and shade? Why is a lover like a lily in the valley or among thorns? Are these sexual—phallic trees and their "fruit," or cunt-like opening flowers in the thickets? Do tree and lover end up being connected so much that the sensuality of the tree is that of the lover and vice versa?

I have written enough to show how the metaphors and similes function, and indeed I have written previously and elsewhere of the myriad sexual allegories such metaphors and similes generate. But my agenda is different here, for the question is what happens when we break the metonymic axis between the flora and fauna of this text and their human referents. The cut should not be too difficult to make, since the link is not as strong as it might have been. Let us see what we end up with: a crocus of Sharon, lily of the valleys or among thorns, an apple tree with its fruit in the trees of the forest, a gazelle or a deer on the mountains, or perhaps by a wall, window or lattice. Once we remove the various personal pronouns and connectors, the items of the explicit metaphors and similes slip away from the humans and join their comrades in the earlier group of images that were once implicit metaphors.

A Fecund World

I have not sought to isolate the metaphoric vehicles merely on a whim or perhaps as an exercise in literary dilettantism. Rather, there is a distinct agenda that arose first from lingering with the ecocritics—namely, to resist the pull of anthropocentrism. Yet when I pondered the Song in more detail, it soon turned out to be a willing partner, for it all too readily gives up its footing in the human realm. Taken on their own, the implicit metaphors are hardly metaphors at all, but images in their own right. And the explicit metaphors are attached to their referents only by slippery and ambiguous pronouns—not the strongest connections one might want.

What we have is a rather large collection of bits and pieces from the natural world. Let me rearrange them slightly and undertake a little botanical and zoological analysis—all based on the Song itself. As far as the plants are concerned, fig trees grow figs; flowers (perhaps crocuses and lilies) spring up from the earth; vines and vineyards blossom and spread their perfumes; the branches are laden with raisins; and apple trees are heavy with sweet and refreshing fruit. The first day of spring, it seems, is in the air—after all, the shadows flee, the winter is past, and the rains have done their thing (v. 11). The sap is rising, so to speak, and we are in the midst of a fecund, pulsating world of ripening and opening plants. One might make the mundane point that such images of spring are entirely appropriate metaphors for the sensuality of sex and love. Yet this is to my mind a belittlement of the fecund world that the text creates.

Now for some zoology: gazelles, does, and deer bound and leap (or perhaps stand and look) over hills, fields, or rugged mountains; turtledoves are singing; and foxes run through the vineyards, helping themselves to the free food. Although there are some suggestions of a built environment with the mention of lattice, wall, and window, the world evoked is one of open fields and wild mountains; in short, the natural earth itself. There is, however, a distinct feature of the animals at a syntactical level: they are the active agents in a series of participles, often in the causative form of the Hebrew verb (*hiphil*). Thus in verse 9 the gazelle or deer is standing (*'omed*), is gazing (*mashgiyach*), and is looking (*metsits*); in verse 15 the foxes are spoiling (*machabbelim*) the vineyards. The agency lies with them. Indeed, the inability to rope the foxes into the overriding concern with metaphors of human love has disconcerted more than one commentator (see Bergant 2001, 31–32; Exum 2005, 128–30). Spoilers to the vineyard and metaphor itself, they operate in a world of their own. It turns out that the plants too are agents, subjects of their verbs: the flowers "appear" (*nire'u*; v. 12), the fig tree "ripens" (*chaneta*; v. 13), and the vines "give" (*natenu*; v. 13).

Less a series of free-floating images, severed from their anthropocentric anchor, for what emerges is a distinct world. The text constructs a natural world with its own agency, a world that operates perfectly well without human beings.[10] Even more, it is a fecund, sensual, and pulsating world, eager to get on with the job of sprouting, pollinating, mating, and reproducing. Too often the sensuality of sex is assumed to be a peculiarly human trait: only human beings, it is implicitly assumed, flirt, parade, chase, and lust all for the sake of that elusive moment of sex. But that is a rather impoverished idea of sex, for the world of nature beyond human beings is far more varied and sensual in its celebration and pursuit of sex than human beings might ever be able to achieve.

Allocation

Before I get too carried away, bounding with the deer on the mountains, or perhaps sinking into orgiastic raptures with the flowers, I do need to remind myself that this fecund world is after all constructed by a text, a text produced by one or more human beings at some point or other. It is worth reiterating the

commonplace point that the idea of "nature" is a human construct, indeed that ecocriticism itself is a discourse by human beings about nature and not in some strange way the voice of "nature" itself. In a sense, then, the effort to produce an "anthropofugal"—over against an anthropocentric—reading is a fiction.

Yet it is a fascinating fiction, although now for another reason, a distinctly economic one. Economics? The Song couldn't be further from the realm of economics with its celebration of a fecund nature or, if one wants, of human sex. The underlying assumption of my argument is that economics is prevalent in the Song, but that we need to look awry to find it. One might reverse the point and say that economics has a knack of turning up when one is least expecting it. So far I have traced a path through the language of the Song, particularly its penchant for metaphor, which has allowed me to get as far as the fecund world of the Song. And it is that fecund domain of nature in the Song's second chapter that gives off all manner of economic signals. To begin with, the plants produce of their own accord. Apples appear on apple trees, figs on fig trees, grapes on vines, and before the fruits come the flowers with their various pollens and smells. As for flowers such as crocuses and lilies, they spring from the earth where they will.

While the animals do not produce young in this passage, preferring to stand and look or gambol over mountains, the agency of the animals is a crucial signal of what is going on here. As I pointed out earlier, they are the active agents of a number of verbs, a feature the plants seem to have acquired as well. Note what the plants actually do: they "appear," "ripen," and "give" (vv. 12 and 13), especially fruit and flowers and smells. Human beings can do what they will—there are suggestions of cultivation (vineyards in v. 15) and husbandry (grazing in v. 16)—but they cannot actually make the plants and animals produce. Nor does the Song fall back on the position that some deity is responsible for making the plants and animals produce, for the Song is notable for the absence of any reference to a deity.

The natural world of the Song is, then, a fecund, self-producing world, a point that will turn out to be the key to its economic assumptions. However, before exploring that point further, let me finally consider the human beings themselves.

> He brought me to the house of wine,
> and his banner over me is love (v. 4)
> I place you under oath, daughters of Jerusalem . . .
> that you do not excite or awaken love until it desires (v. 7)
> The voice of my beloved!
> My lover answered me said to me:
> "arise, my friend, my fair one, and come away" (v. 10; see v. 13)
> My lover is mine and I am his (v. 16).

Three items interest me in these verses, three signals of economic assumptions. The first is what I might call the agency of "love" (*ha'ahavah*) in verse 7. The daughters of Jerusalem are not to "excite or awaken love until it desires." Is this a profound comment on the nature of love, or of "lovemaking," as Exum

translates *'ahavah* (Exum 2005, 117–19)? Perhaps. But the verbs suggest something further: love (*'ahavah*) is the subject of "excite" (*'wr* in the *hiphil*), "awaken" (*'wr* in the *polel*) and then "desire" (*chpts*). Love is therefore the agent, and in that capacity it echoes the agency of the plants that "appear," "ripen," and "give." In other words, something arises of its own accord, whether that is fruit, flower, scent . . . or love. Its awakening is inexplicable: one may assist in some way, but it arises in its own time and in its own way. Love, like the plants and indeed the animals, is self-sufficient and self-producing. It is of the realm of nature, of the flora and fauna of the Song, drawing near to what we might now call instinct than any flights of emotion.

The second signal comes in what appears at first sight to be a statement about the mutuality of love: "My lover is mine and I am his" (v. 16). Now while I might be suspicious about such a verse as an ideological screen that in the end supports gender hierarchies, dowry systems, and the use of women as exchange objects, the point I want to draw out here is somewhat different. There is a pattern of mutual giving, or allocation. I might paraphrase it as, "My lover gives himself to me and I to him." This ideology of mutuality, if I may call it that, belongs to the fiction of love[11]—that it does not necessarily partake of power plays, of the instincts for reproduction, security, and economic exchange. What we find, in other words, is that love itself is part and parcel of an ideology of mutual allocation: it is given and taken in turn.

Perhaps this signal of allocation is a little too flimsy, so let me reinforce it with a third and more robust signal. Verses 4, 10, and 13 present a work-free environment: rather than the toil required to plough, seed, water, weed, and harvest various crops or indeed to pasture, protect, and nurture animals, what we find is that everything is already available. It simply produces of its own accord and all one needs to do is reach out and pick something to eat. We might imagine a Song that foregrounds work—something like, "Come, my lover, and help me with weeding the barley field" or perhaps "My lover is better than the tribute gatherer"—but that would be a somewhat different collection of poems. Rather, the call in verses 10 and 13 is, "Arise, my friend, my fair one, and come away." And where do they go? Into a somewhat bucolic, even Edenic, realm of self-producing nature, where the flowers, figs, apple trees, and vines fill the air with scents and their branches and vines hang with fruit, albeit with an occasional fox tearing about the place. Or they go into the wine house (*beth hayyayin* in v. 4), the food and wine laid out before them, to feast and drink to their heart's content.

The three signals now come together: when the human beings do actually appear in their own right, they operate in a world of mutual giving, the inexplicable and almost instinctual self-production of love, and the sweat-free availability of food. On top of this, the plants and animals live happily in their own fecund, self-producing world, oblivious to the human beings. All these characteristics indicate that the Song ought to be considered an important text within the pastoral genre, broadly conceived. Bucolic and Edenic it is, and the connections to the garden in Genesis 2 are not fortuitous.[12] However, here I want to suggest that what is operating in this world—one that is, I repeat, a constructed

literary one—is what might be called an economics of allocation. Rather than an economics of extraction, in which produce is extracted from the ground or tax is extracted from those who enable such production, the Song operates in terms of a very different logic—one of allocation.

All too briefly, under such an allocatory economics (see further Boer 2007c), the key items that produce do so apparently of their own accord: the land, animals, plants, and women produce food and young inexplicably. One may attribute such activity to a deity or three, as we find elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, or indeed in the ancient Near East, but the crucial economic feature of such production is that there needs to be a complex system of (re)allocation in order to ensure the (un)equal distribution of the produce. Different but overlapping modes of allocating the produce turn up at various points, such as kinship, patron-client relations, or the military: according to these modes, crops, animals, women, and land are allocated and reallocated.

The catch with all this is that the Song is not merely a reflection of an economic system. For this reason, I have focused on its language and the unwitting world it creates—the natural "scenery" as it is sometimes disparagingly termed. Further, it does present an ideal pastoral world, even a fantasy of escapism. However, in the very act of producing such an ideal world for lovers to inhabit, it can only construct that world out of the social, economic, and cultural tools available. So the question then is, what tools does it use? We might distinguish two levels in an economics of allocation, one that concerns the self-producing agents of earth, plants, animals, and women, and the other that focuses on the ways in which such producing agents and their produce may be distributed. The second chapter of the Song only implicitly refers to the modes, or regimes of allocation—the banqueting house, the mutual giving of lovers to each other, although elsewhere in the Song we do find hints of kinship in 6:9; 8:1–2, 8, patron-client relations in 1:4 and 9, and the military in 3:6–11. Its main concern, however, is with the first level—namely, the fecund, self-producing realm of nature. It constructs a world that operates at the primary level of self-production.

Conclusion

My effort at estranging given readings of the Song—that it is about human love, or rather, sex—has led me on a path through the thicket of literary matters, ecocritical concerns and out into economics, of all places. At first I sought to break the metonymic axis of the Song's metaphors, or at least those in its second chapter. Such a move then led me to consider how the world of nature is constructed by this text and it turned out that this constructed world makes sense within what I have called an economics of allocation, particularly at the level of self-production. It seems, then, that rather than a bucolic world of infatuated love, this is a very economic text. Lest the charge of reductionism be laid at my feet, particularly with my move to economics as the "ultimately determining instance," I would point out that any text does not and cannot exist in a vacuum. It is part of a larger network in which politics and economics loom large.

In fact, I would go further and argue that the Song as we have it could be told and written only within a certain social formation. Its achievements—and many continue to be amazed at what it does achieve—and its limits are determined by that social context. My thesis, then, is that it is a small piece of the culture of an allocatory economics, an economics that inescapably seeps through the way in which the world—a fecund, natural world—of the lovers is constructed. Love may not make the world go round, but it ensures that the economy does.

PART II

Masculinities

The second part concerns a more recent interest of mine—namely, masculinities. I had been rather suspicious of this particular form of scholarship, suspecting it merely perpetuated the age-old concern of men with themselves. But as will soon become obvious, I have found a way to approach what is really a vibrant area of scholarship. The four chapters gathered in Part II each contain their own discrete arguments, but they share a common agenda: they increasingly problematize masculinity from a variety of perspectives. It begins as a suggestion in Chapter 4, where the patriarch's nuts turn out to be squashably vulnerable. By Chapter 5, "Too Many Dicks at the Writing Desk," that questioning becomes a focus on the ludicrous image of the supposedly all-powerful scribal prophets sucking on their own spermatic spluttering pen(ise)s. The forbiddingly masculine book of Chronicles, my concern in Chapter 6 ("Of Fine Wine, Incense, and Spices"), leaves itself wide open for a queer reading. All of which folds back to the penis in Chapter 7 ("Skin Gods"), where bodybuilding becomes a lateral way of dealing with the castrating iconoclasm of the Hebrew Bible itself.

A brief word on the generic variation between the chapters: the first three are more conventional scholarly studies, digging deeply into terminology and texts. "Skin Gods" is as much a cultural studies piece as it is one of biblical criticism. But since my work often disregards disciplinary boundaries, this chapter has its rightful place here as well.

This page intentionally left blank.

CHAPTER 4

The Patriarch's Nuts

Concerning the Testicular Logic of Biblical Hebrew

> The intention of every male eater [of testicles] is quite clear: to increase his potency. The best thing of course is to use the testicles of the most potent animal. In Spain these are regarded as the fighting bulls from the bullring, and of these the fiercest fighting bulls from the most renowned bullrings. Consequently, in the famous *Florian* restaurant in Barcelona you are served a bull's testicles, accompanied not only by garlic and parsley, but by the name of the bull, its weight, a brief history, the pedigree, the place and time of its death and the name of the matador responsible.
>
> —Midas Dekkers, *Dearest Pet* (Dutch *Lief Dier*)

The Hebrew Bible is full of balls. And given that those of us of Middle Eastern background are among God's hairier creatures, the Bible is full of some shaggy baubles indeed. It is all very well in the polite circles of (usually religiously driven) academia to speak of the dominant patriarchies of the Bible or of the masculinities that saturate many of its texts, but these are convenient abstractions, a relieved stride toward the euphemisms that enable us to avoid the earthiness and crudeness of those texts. So in order to acknowledge that crudity and give it its rightful place—and as a useful introduction to this section on masculinities—I prefer to speak of nuts, onions, oysters, apples, footballs, call them what you will.[1]

This chapter is a simple exercise in linguistic terminology; more specifically, it investigates the words used in Hebrew to designate testes. I undertake this assignment with two basic assumptions concerning language. The first is that words never operate in isolation; they are part of semantic clusters that produce both the richness of language and difficulties for translators (at a microlevel). The second is that the mechanisms of language are like architecture, for that machinery provides a direct window onto the zeitgeist (or, as I prefer, the ideologies) and thereby the social formation of its users.

Clusters and Ideologies

Let me say a little more concerning these theoretical points before fondling a few biblical bangers. The idea of semantic clusters works in two directions. A semantic cluster may be described as a clan of meaning, in which a word sharing the same root belongs to the same clan. This is particularly true of Hebrew, where often verb, noun, and adjective may share the same consonantal root and thereby belong to the same clan. Second, semantic clusters operate in a situation where the same word may be used for a range of (although not always clearly) related meanings. For example, the word *yarekh* may mean genitals, thigh, hip, hip joint, side, base, deepest hollow, or recess. In this case, these various senses are obviously connected, but one applies—or so goes the advice to budding translators—the most appropriate sense depending on the literary context. In what follows, I operate with a somewhat different assumption—namely, that whenever a word is used, it evokes, however implicitly, the other senses of its semantic cluster. That is, I am interested not in the sparseness of meaning but in its richness and fullness. At least a couple of implications flow from these points: the idea of semantic clusters illuminates the perpetual problem of lack of fit in translations, for what we have so often is a partial overlap between two semantic clusters rather than a tight fit.[2] Further, semantic clusters also lead to the delectable uncertainty of translation, the sense that one can never be absolutely sure that this word is the best one for a translation.[3]

My other theoretical point is that the workings of language provide an unwitting insight into ideology. In brief, I take ideology in the classic Marxist sense as unfolding in two related directions: It designates false consciousness, specific beliefs, or opinions concerning a vital matter (privilege, wealth, etc.) that not only are mistaken but also support an unjust status quo. But ideology is also—and more neutrally—a way of mediating the complex reality of the world and our places within it (see Barrett 1991, 18–34; Larrain 1983a, 1983b; Dupré 1983, 238–44). If the first type of ideology can be dispensed with, the second is here to stay. And if the first requires critique, the second needs description and understanding. Much more may be said on ideology, but that is not my task here (see, for example, Žižek 1994b; Eagleton 1991; Jameson 2009, 315–63), save to make one further point: the power of ideology increases in a direct ratio to its ability to remain hidden, to seem natural and part of the way things are.

How, then, does language provide a window into ideology? I do not mean the oft-repeated assertion that the way to understand people and culture is through their language. Or rather, I take this self-evident truth and give it a twist: it is not the content of the language that counts, the ideas and beliefs it seeks to express directly, but the forms and structures—or what I call the machinery and workings—of language that provide unwitting insights into the deeper patterns of ideology, precisely those that everyone assumes to be natural. This is where the analogy with architecture is illuminating: in the same way that the form—the patterns, lines, and fashions—of architecture expresses most directly the zeitgeist of an age (Jameson 1991, 97–129; 1998, 162–89), so also does the form of

language give voice to the structuring ideological assumptions of those who deploy it.

The same applies to the albondigas of the Bible: three terms appear with significant frequency: *yarekh*, *halatsayim*, and *motnayim*. Each in its own way shows the extraordinary pervasiveness of a gonad economy that rivaled any in the ancient world. One or two other words also occur, such as *'ashek*, as in the poor man with the crushed testicle (*meroah 'ashek*) in Leviticus 21:20 who is forbidden, along with anyone else who has a blemish, from approaching the altar for offerings. *'Ashek* is but a solitary occurrence, although it does include within its cluster *shkhh*, which appears only as the Hiphil participle *mashkim* in Jeremiah 5:8, where the Jerusalemites are described as "horny [*meyuzanim*] stallions with massive clangers [*mashkim*]," or, as the irrepressible Allan Edwardes suggests, "they were big-ball'd horses, well-hung stallions" (Edwardes 1967, 95).[4] In what follows, I begin with some relatively brief comments on *halatsayim* and *motnayim*, since they are relatively straightforward, after which I move onto the intriguing and many-folded *yarekh*.

Of Loins, Their Binding, and So Forth

The two more obvious terms in the lizard logic of the Hebrew Bible are *halatsayim* and *motnayim*. Strictly speaking, both terms overlap so much that they are usually translated as "loins," a wonderful euphemism that is supposed to designate that section of the body between the ribs and the hip bones (*halatsayim*) or the muscles binding the abdomen to the lower limbs (*motnayim*)—abs, in other words. Yet there is one curious, usually unexplained feature of both terms, hinted at in the brilliant older translation as "loins": both words end in the rare dual form. As any student of introductory Hebrew knows, two classes of dual forms remain: one less obvious (waters, heavens, Egypt, Jerusalem), the other far more obvious, for they refer to natural pairs relating to the body: eyes, ears, hands, feet, and lips (but also shoes, horns, and wings). A question springs forth: why are the terms usually rendered loins or abs in the dual form? We are clearly in the territory of the little boys, of frick and frack. In fact, one wonders whether the Bible is engaged in emphatic overkill, for not only do we have the rare dual form for *halatsayim* and *motnayim*, but we also have two terms that mean the same thing, as the parallelism in Isaiah 11:5 shows all too well: "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his balls [*bemotnayw*]; and faithfulness the girdle of his nuts [*halatsayw*]"; or as I prefer: "The loin-cloth of justice clings to his *halatsayim*; the underwear of faithfulness to his *motnayim*."[5] Is this a case of naming each of the twins with a name that evokes its brother?

With that basic linguistic point established, it is possible and somewhat astonishing to see how extensively the sperm factory has spread itself through the terminology of human emotions, activity, and life. These skittles may actually bless someone (Job 31:20); tremble (Isa. 15:4[6]); have phantom pregnancies (Jer. 30:6; see Carroll 1986, 574–75); and be strapped up with undies—or, as it is quaintly put, a loincloth (Job 38:3; 40:7; Isa. 5:27; see further in this chapter),

even the "underwear of faithfulness" (Isa. 11:5) or, if one is feeling down, sackcloth (Isa. 32:11). And these references apply purely to the minority member of this pair—*halatsayim*.

The term that hangs lower, is larger, and dominates the scene is *motnayim*. I wish to stress three features of these tallywags. First, they are the seat of courage and strength (Job 40:16; Nah. 2:2; Prov. 30:31; 1 QH 2:7; 8:33). Perhaps the greatest assertion of this power is not the sword that may hang over the vital region, but the spermatic spluttering pen. In a rare moment of scribal self-referentiality, we find in Ezekiel 9:2, 3, and 11 the curious phrase *weqeseth hasofer bemotnayw*, usually rendered as something like "a writing case at his side." While *qeseth* is a hapax legomenon that most assume to be a "writing case" or perhaps "inkpot," I would suggest a tool of the one to follow, who is none other than the *sofer*, the scribe (one who writes and numbers); it is the participle of the verb *sfr*. In other words, what we have here is "the scribal pen(is) upon his potatoes"; *qeseth hasofer* is nothing less than another term for this überscribe's dong. Or as Sir George Mansfield Cumming-Smith, the head of the British spy service (1909–26), said when he heard that semen is an excellent invisible ink, "Every man his own stylo."[7]

Despite all this power, they may also be broken (Ezek. 21:11 [ET 21:6]), loosed (Isa. 45:1), crushed (Deut. 33:11; Sir. 30:12), afflicted (Ps. 66:11), filled with anguish (Isa. 21:3; Nah. 2:11), burnt in illness (Ps. 38:7), or be struck through (Deut. 32:22; Sir. 32:22). You may also, with due preparation, peer at God's whirlygigs (Ezek. 1:27; 8:2), but you will never quite be the same again (see more on Jacob's nuts later in this chapter). More than seeing the world from the end of one's penis, these bullets are the seat and source of a man's strength. It is not for nothing that Rehoboam says to the Israelites who demand a relaxing of the onerous conditions of service from Solomon's rule, "My limp cock is thicker than my father's cubes" (1 Kings 12:10; 2 Chron. 10:10; see especially Boer 1996[8]).

The second item worth emphasizing is that a man's love apples are not merely the object of a verb, for they may also be the subject, actively setting an agenda of their own. So we find that doohickeys not only may well be full (Isa. 21:3), arise (Deut. 33:11), shake (Ps. 69:24 [ET 69:23]; Ezek. 29:7—on emendation), stand up (Ezek. 29:7), be a flood marker (Ezek. 47:4),[9] and even boast (1 QH 10:33) but also—should one forget to observe due hygiene—fester away (Ps. 44:20 [ET 44:21]—with emendation). We saw the same situation with *halatsayim* a little earlier, where a man's bolivers may take on a mind of their own and bless someone, if not God himself.

At one level, these preliminary conclusions should come as no surprise, for the overlaid and often conflictual patriarchies of the Bible are well known—at least at a general, theoretical level. However, in the nitty-gritty realm of language we can see how pervasive and entrenched that world of the willie is. The basic sense of *halatsayim* and *motnayim*—duals, we must remember, that refer to a man's marbles—soon spreads to include courage, strength, and weakness, so much so that they take an active role in the world apart from their owner. Their

importance is indicated by the fact that they become the place where one hangs all that is vital, along with the vitals that already hang there.

Yet—and third—as with any hegemony, this one of the booboos is not always as swaggering as one might expect. Those squashy, wrinkled pouches also show some vulnerability, as they are susceptible to crushing, trembling, even unwelcome burning feelings, and the odd festering. Hence the overwhelming concern with "girding one's loins" in the Hebrew Bible. As we might expect by now, "girding" is a euphemism for a much more specific act. What a man actually did was strap up or bind (*hgr* and the noun *hagor*) his punching bag as part of getting dressed and preparing to head off somewhere (Exod. 12:10; 2 Sam. 20:8; 1 Kings 2:5; 20:32; 2 Kings 4:29; 9:1; Dan. 10:5; so also the hapax legomenon of *shns* in 1 Kings 28:42), or more strongly, he captured and imprisoned them (*'sr*) as one does enemies (Job 12:18). Even more specifically, a man puts on the close-fitting loincloth (*'zr* and the noun *'ezur*), a term that should really be rendered the "egg bag" (2 Kings 1:8; Isa. 11:5; Jer. 1:17; Ezek. 23:15). In Jeremiah's words, "the egg bag [*ha'ezur*] clings to [*dhavaq*][10] a man's eggs" (Jer. 13:11), so much so that it can disappear into the "crevice of a rock" (Jer. 13:5)—as Jeremiah is in fact instructed to do in this passage. As Howard Eilberg-Schwartz points out (1993, 101–2), albeit without the specific reading of *motnayim*, this reference comes from Jeremiah's parable of the "loincloth," in which the closeness of the cloth to a man's balls is a somewhat erotic image of the closeness of God to the men of Israel.[11]

Precisely how a man strapped himself up said much about his toughness and/or importance. For instance, to wear a leather cock sack (*'ezur 'or*) was obviously a sign of the rugged wilderness and thereby the ruggedness of its wearer—as we find with the "shaggy man" (*be'al se'ar*) Elijah in 2 Kings 1:8 (Gray 1970, 464). On the other hand, if a man had done wrong and feared divine wrath, then rough and scratchy sackcloth would take the place of the loincloth (1 Kings 20:31–32; Jer. 48:37; Amos 8:10), which suggests that the biblical mark of repentance was the act of scratching one's crotch, obsessively. And of course one longed to take it off at the first opportunity (Isa. 20:2).

Under normal circumstances, a careful strapping of a man's seeds would be done with a soft cloth so that they did not bounce about on a long trot (Jer. 13:1–4). But if one happened to be a priest, then one took extra care. The deep importance of wrapping and strapping a man's soft marshmallows is exhibited no better than in Exodus 28:42 (see also Ezek. 44:18). We are on Mt. Sinai with Moses and Yahweh, with the latter holding forth on the interior decoration of the tabernacle and the priests garments (Exod. 25–31) in what turns out to be the main reason Yahweh called Moses to Sinai in the first place. In the text in question, Yahweh provides Moses with instructions as to the garments the priests are to wear in the future (George 2009, 5–6), especially the *mikhnese-vad*, which are to cover everything from *motnayim we'adh yerekhayim*. Usually one finds the first phrase rendered as "linen breeches," which misses the soft, silky nature and high quality of what are really underpants—so "best-quality linen undies." And in the phrase *motnayim we'adh yerekhayim* we have not so much a zone of the

body described—from "loins to thighs" as most would have it—but an emphatic usage that stresses the importance of the priests' nicknacks. *Motnayim* we have met and *yarekh* we will meet shortly, but it is worth noting that *yarekh* appears here in a rare dual form, *yerekhayim*. In that light, I would suggest that both words really refer to the same vulnerable sacks, so let me suggest "crystals and diamonds"—to enhance their value, of course. In sum, these priests are to have "the finest linen underwear to cover their flesh, especially their vital diamonds." They must be afraid of something if they need such protection, for no matter how much a man might try to protect them by binding a loincloth around his bijoux de famille, they remain exceedingly fragile.

Yarekh: Shaken, Kneed, Stewed, and Luscious

Thus far I have been interested in the obvious terms for ping and pong, noting how they form a crucial matrix for understanding the world view of biblical Hebrew. But now I come to my prize exhibit, a far more subtle term that evinces the full workings of semantic clusters: *yarekh*. The basic sense of *yarekh*, at least according to Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm's lexicon, is the "fleshy part of the upper thigh" (2001, 1:439) or, more generally, the region between one's hips and upper thighs. Within its semantic cluster we also find thigh, hip, hip joint, side, base, hollow, or recess. But it also means couilles.

The Yarekh *Shake*

So let us begin our exploration of *yarekh* with what I would like to call the "yarekh shake"[12] of Genesis 24:2 and 9, as well as Genesis 47:29. In these cases, one grabs another man's genitals and makes an oath. So in Genesis 24:2–3 we find, "Put your hand on *yerekhi* and I will make you swear by Yahweh, the God of heaven and the earth," while in Genesis 47:29 the text reads, "Put your hand on *yerekhi* and promise to deal loyally and truly with me." The implication is, if you do not abide by this oath, may Yahweh rip your bloody rocks off! Or, as Ullendorf puts it in his quaint prose, "The sacredness attributed to this organ would lend special solemnity to an oath of this character" (1979, 445).

The context for the first *yarekh* handshake is Abraham's concern in Genesis 24 that he may well be in the grave before Isaac gets around to choosing a wife.[13] So Abraham calls on his old, trusted, and nameless slave to swear that he, the slave, will not procure a wife from among the Canaanite women but find one from among Abraham's own relatives (the incest taboo notwithstanding). Eventually the slave will set out to bribe Rebekah to come and marry Isaac (Gen. 24:10–61), but not before Abraham tells him to grab Abraham's own nutmegs and swear that he will find a relative for Isaac to marry. Verse 2 has the instruction and verse 9 its execution, although one gains the impression from the way the story is structured that the slave has taken hold of Abraham's swingers when instructed to do so in verse 2 and then fondles the patriarch's doodads during the entire exchange between the two of them (until verse 8). This is certainly the literary effect of the

passage in which the well-hung origins of the Abrahamic religions sit snugly in a servant's hand.

The context for the other occurrence in Genesis 47:29 is very similar. Here the aging and fading Israel/Jacob calls on Joseph to grab his father's danglers and promise not to bury him in Egypt, but to take him back to Canaan and bury him with his fathers. Here we find the same phrase: "Put your hand on my *yarekhi*."

A number of features stand out in these two stories: the one who has his cojones fondled is old and close to death; only the one who swears the oath grasps the family jewels of the one to whom he swears; handling a man's shaggy bearings has profound legal implication;[14] the oath concerns clan matters, either finding a woman for a son among one's own relatives or ensuring that one is buried with one's ancestors; *yarekh* obviously concerns a range of very legal matters in relation to continuity and descent, in short, what issues from the patriarch's chestnuts (on that see the following text).[15]

Jacob's Nuts and Co.

May the same be said for other occurrences of the term? In some cases, yes, but in other cases *yarekh* would need to swing a little to incorporate the sense of low hangers. Let us take the more obvious instances first, for here we find that translators—for the sake of good religious decency—are all too keen to hide these biblical jingleberries from public view, slipping on a pair of briefs if not a full cloak as soon as possible. One such case concerns the knackers of yet another patriarch in Genesis 32, which should really be called the story of Jacob's nuts.[16] At this moment in the narrative, Jacob is about to return to Canaan to meet his brother, Esau. Both are resplendent in clans, cattle, and armed men, but Jacob is left alone at the ford of the Jabbok where he wrestles all night, desperately and alone, with a "man" who turns out to be God—that is, his demons, his past, his fears for the future, his estranged brother. Unable to prevail over Jacob, this shady character touches Jacob on *kaf-yerekh* (Gen 32:26, 33 [ET 32:25, 32]).[17] Now, this phrase is usually rendered as the "hollow of the thigh" or the "socket of the hip joint" or simply "hip socket" (so, for example, Gunkel 1997, 347; Brett 2000, 98–99; Skinner 1910, 408; Wenham 1994, 284, 195–96), with the rabbinic commentators going so far as to identify the sciatic nerve (Jennings 2005, 253). However, the more basic sense of *kaf* is hand, which is a common euphemism for penis, so I would suggest that *kaf-yerekh* simply designates Jacob's block and tackle.[18] Picture the scene for a moment: some thug accosts Jacob at the ford but cannot prevail over him, so in the tradition of street fighting he knees him in the nads. Despite the excruciating pain, in which Jacob's itchy and scratchy (*kaf-yerekh Ya'aqov*—Gen. 32:26 [ET 32:25] are turned inside out (*teqa*'), he hangs on for a blessing. Once granted, Jacob limps from the scene because of his excruciatingly painful *yarekh* (Gen. 32:26 [ET 32:25]).[19] At this point the Hebrew text is a little too hasty in seeking an etymological explanation for what happened, suggesting that this story explains why Israelites do not eat the schlong and stones (Gen. 32:33 [ET 32:32]) of an animal. But the true

etymology of the story shows up a little earlier, for in the blessing, Jacob has his name changed to Israel, meaning "God struggles" or "the one who struggles with God." For most men a solid knee in the nut cups makes one feel as though you have met your maker. Make that a blow to the plums by a divine thug and it certainly does feel like one has seen the face of God (*Peni'el*—Gen. 32:31 [32:30]).

The evidence for the bean bag bias of *yarekh* is certainly thickening. Let me be perfectly clear: I seek to give due attention to this sense of *yarekh* where appropriate but I do not wish to extend this meaning beyond what it can reasonably bear. For instance, in Ezekiel 24:3–4 we find the following:

> Set on the pot, set it on
> pour in water also;
> put in it pieces of flesh,
> all the good pieces,
> *yarekh* and shoulder;
> fill it with choice bones.

Now, the usual translation of *yarekh* here is "thigh" or perhaps "upper leg" (Zimmerli 1979b, 499), but given the polemical context and the semantic cluster of the term, I would suggest that "prairie oyster" is perfectly viable. So along with the flesh, shoulder, and bones, this text provides a basic recipe for a delicious stew.[20] Further, in the summary of Samson's slaughter (yet again) of the Philistines, "hip and thigh" (*shoq al-yarekh*) in Judges 15:8 may simply be rendered "he smote them hip and nut sack"—much like the expression "ass over tit." And then the description of the lamp stand—that is the menorah—in the tabernacle (Exod. 25:31) is more than suggestive. The text reads *yarekhah weqanah*, usually rendered "base and shaft," but given the obvious nature of the arrangement, I would suggest that "globes and pole" both is a fairer translation and reveals the ideological workings of a text like this.

Out in the Cluster

What, then, of the other uses of *yarekh*? Before we brush over these senses of the term, let me invoke the idea of semantic cluster. I agree that it would be silly to argue that every occurrence of *yarekh* means the boys down under, although I stress that in some cases (those I have surveyed previously) that sense has been suppressed far more than it should have been. However, even if the meaning of gooseberries is not explicit, I suggest that whenever the word is used it implicitly evokes its full semantic cluster. One sense may rise to the surface above the others, but it is structurally connected to those other senses; without them it would be orphaned. This argument has ramifications for the salami logic of Hebrew and those who used that language, for beneath a range of apparently innocent meanings we also find the charlies. So, for example, the primary meaning of *yarekh* is often "thigh": one strikes a *yarekh* with one's hand (Jer. 31:19; Ezek. 21:17) and one straps a sword to one's *yarekh* (Exod. 32:27; Judg. 3:16, 21; Ps. 45:4;

see also Neh. 4:18 [ET 4:12]). Or the word may, metaphorically, mean a "side," especially of the tabernacle (Exod. 40:22, 24; Num. 3:29, 35) and perhaps also of the altar (Lev. 1:11; 2 Kings 16:14). Yet if we keep in mind my comments concerning semantic clusters, then even in these cases the buttons are never too far from the surface. You may indeed strap your sword to your thigh, but as you do so the sense of *yarekh* incorporates the clock weights between your legs, of which the sword is but a prosthetic addition. Or when you refer to the tabernacle, you may also be invoking the tabernacle's orchestra stalls or indeed the altar's clappers.

Nevertheless, an astute reader of the Hebrew Bible will object that on two occasions—Numbers 5 and Song of Songs 7—*yarekh* actually refers to a woman's equipment. The appearance in Numbers 5—where we have the ludicrous and magical procedure for a man to verify or falsify his vague jealousies concerning his wife's possible infidelities (see further Boer 2006)—refers quite clearly to a woman's *yarekh*. The magic potion ("waters of bitterness") concocted by the priest-cum-witch-doctor is supposed to cause her *yarekh* to fall away, at least if she is guilty (Num. 5:21, 22, 27). Is *yarekh* a thigh in this case? Is it a womb and thereby parallel with *beten*? Or is it her cunt that must, if she is guilty, sag like that of an old woman? The last sense (without the sagging) is supported by the Song of Songs 7:2, where we read, "Your curved cunt (*yerekhayik*) is like ornaments, handwork of an artisan." But perhaps *yarekh* in both these cases refers only in a secondary manner to the vagina. Let me put it this way: if we keep in mind the title of that old AC/DC song, "She's Got Balls," then the use of *yarekh* in these situations may refer to the fact that she does in fact have cannon balls, as in she won't take no shit.[21] Or it may be a more earthy reference to what are variously known as meaty flaps or luscious lips.

Conclusion

I have been engaged primarily in an exploration of what may be called the gonad economy of biblical Hebrew, although I have on a couple of occasions noted the implicit fragility of these exposed and swinging bags of gristle. Throughout my argument has been the assumption that at this formal level of linguistic usage—in which *halatsayim* and *motnayim* become key terms for strength and weakness, bravery, and illness, even actors in their own right and in which the semantic cluster of *yarekh* exercises a subtle extension into oaths, tabernacles, lamp stands, culinary delights, and vital engagements with the divine—we can trace a pervasive albeit inconsistent ideology of testicular dominance that has worked its way into the sinews and fibers of the language itself.

That splattered supremacy shows up best in one usage I have kept until now—namely, the two phrases *yatsa' halatsayim* and *yots'e yerekh*. The first of these (found in Gen. 35:11; 1 Kings 8:19; and 2 Chron. 6:9) was once translated with a phrase that I still use in reference to my children, "fruit of one's loins," but the second (Gen. 46:26; Exod. 1:5; Judg. 8:30) usually makes do with "offspring."[22] We can do much better than that, for *yatsa' halatsayim* really means "the issue of his spunk holders," while *yots'e yerekh* should be "those going out of ye olde creamery." For

these terms evoke a very earthy, active image, much like the money shot in porn, the spermatic spurt in which a male can already see his descendants leaping forth from the end of his dick.[23] Actually, we can come even close to the Hebrew, keeping mind the alliteration of both *yatsa' halatsayim* and *yots'e yerekh*: ball burst, or perhaps baby blast, or rather, given the linguistic logic, father lava.

CHAPTER 5

Too Many Dicks at the Writing Desk, or How to Organize a Prophetic Sausage Fest

As we saw briefly in the previous chapter, in Ezekiel 9:2–3 and 11, we find an extraordinarily curious phrase: *weqeseth hasofer bemotnayw*. Commentators are not keen to make much of it, usually rendering as something like "a writing case," "writing materials at his side," or perhaps "a writing kit at his loins."[1] Let us take a few moments to see what it actually means in some detail, for it will become a key marker for my argument concerning the earthy masculinity of prophetic texts in the Hebrew Bible. In doing so, I continue the project of the previous chapter, although with two crucial differences: my concern here, in contrast to the synoptic view of the testicular logic of biblical Hebrew, is a more in-depth treatment of the troubled masculinities of prophetic literature; the following study does so by moving the great distance from testicles to penis, from "loins" to phallus.

As for Ezekiel 9, *qeseth* is one of those Ezekelian hapax legomena to which commentators a little too rapidly attribute the meaning of—perhaps—a writing case or inkpot or tablet, albeit with the flimsiest of evidence. It may be worth asking why commentators make nothing of this text, preferring a neutral sense for a hapax legomenon like *qeseth*, when in other cases—such as the explicit texts of Ezekiel 16 and 22–23—the overwhelmingly male coterie of biblical scholars is all too ready to espy in hapax legomena references to women's genitals. Is it because the sexualizing of the textual bodies of women is a way of objectifying and thereby disempowering them, while the textual bodies of men must not be so treated? If so, then my reading is an explicit attempt to sexualize, objectify, and thereby disempower textual male bodies.[2] So in light of what follows, I suggest that here we have a tool, or more specifically a stylus of the one who follows. And he is the *sofer*, simply a scribe, one who writes texts and does things with

numbers; the word is the *qal* present participle of the verb *sfr*, to write and number. *Qeseth sofer* is then the tool of the writer, the scribal stylus.[3]

But what about *bemotnayw*? The preposition *be* is obvious, but let us stay with its basic sense of "on" or even "in." *Motnayw* is the masculine singular possessive of *motnayim*, with which we have already made close acquaintance in the previous chapter: it is one of the three main terms in the Hebrew Bible for testicles, balls, gonads, with an intimate connection to the other dual term *halatsayim*. The implication is that *weqeseth hasofer bemotnayw* may well mean "the scribal pen(is) on his testicles."[4]

As if to firm up my reading, Isaiah 8:1 comes to my aid, for there we find the prophet instructed to write *beheret 'nosh*, "with the stylus of a man" or with "the manly stylus"[5]—hopefully it would be iron or even diamond hard, as is Jeremiah's "pen of iron" or indeed "iron tool" (*'et hargel* in Jer. 17:1; see also Job 19:24 [Lundblom 1999, 776; McKane 1986, 384; Holladay 1986, 486]). Hebrew, it seems, is also fully aware of the elision between pen and penis. Needless to say, this phrase from Ezekiel 9 (backed up by Isa. 8:1) has profound implications for understanding the ideological function of writing, of the scribe, of the writing prophet, of masculinity, and of the conglomerate text we now read, which is the product of those scribes. Above all, it shows how closely power, writing, and masculinity are tied together in the biblical material we are considering. The following argument considers, first, how the sausage fest of prophetic masculinity is constructed; that is, how prophetic masculinity and writing rub up against one another. The second section explores the way this carefully constructed group session begins to break down.

Spermatic Spluttering Pen(ise)s: Organizing the Sausage Fest

> *El besiss* (the impudent one).—It has received this name because from the moment that it gets stiff and long it does not care for anybody, lifts impudently the clothing of its master by raising its head fiercely, and makes him ashamed while itself feels no shame.
>
> —Richard Burton, *The Perfumed Garden of the Shaykh Nefzawi*

In order to tease out how masculinity, prophets, and power center on the act of writing and the one who writes, I engage in some textual analysis followed by a wad of theory. Our text remains Ezekiel 9; the theorists will be introduced soon enough. This chapter in Ezekiel follows the fetid and nightmarish vision of corrupt worship and fertility practices of chapter 8, offering an apocalyptic scenario of divinely sanctioned mass slaughter. The agents of that massacre are six men, each with a "weapon of annihilation" (*keli mashheto*; v. 1). They will be the ones who go out under a divine directive to fill Israel and Judah with the corpses of the slain; but there is a seventh character, "the man clothed in linen" (v. 2). It is he who has the spermatic spluttering penis, the scribal stylus nestled on his nuts.

However, two features of the man stand out, apart from his formidable scribe. The first is the curious phrase *ish-'ehad*. Now, this phrase may simply mean "a

man," as most translations would have it, but *'ehad* more often stresses the word with which it likes to associate: so he is a singular man, one who stands apart, a distinct individual. Yet there is another, related sense, which I would like to pick up: *'ehad* means "first and foremost." In other words, the full semantic cluster of the term designates a man who stands out from the crowd and is superior to it. I must admit, it is difficult for him not to be the center of attention. Picture the scene for a moment: would he not stand out, this man dressed in linen and favoring a scribal dong while surrounded by grim, muscled men?

Yet the text claims even more: *his* weapon or tool (*keli*) is far more potent than theirs. How so? He has the power of life and death, for he is to go out into the city of Jerusalem and write a *taw* on the foreheads of all those who groan and sigh about the way things have gone—that is, those who cannot abide by what is happening but feel helpless. Picture, if you will, a man going about with his scribal pen, daubing the foreheads of the men of the city who will be saved—not with the Hebrew letter with which we are familiar, but with an old *taw* that looks like a ragged cross, perhaps the mark of a treasure map:

Do they kneel so he can reach their foreheads with his spluttering penis? Or is it so formidable that it can simply reach their foreheads without assistance? And what, precisely, is the ink this uberman uses? Perhaps his own semen, for, as we saw in the previous chapter, he may already have known what Sir George Mansfield Cumming-Smith, the head of the British spy service (1909–26), was to discover much later: when he heard that semen is an excellent invisible ink, Cumming-Smith(!) observed that "every man his own stylo."

Our initial foray into the strange world of Ezekiel 9 has yielded a few secrets: this first or uberman is far more powerful than the others, for his tool is not a simple weapon of annihilation but a scribal pen(is) firmly based on his testicles. With that pen(is), he designates salvation and destruction—his dong is the key of heaven, if you will. In the hierarchy of the text, he is next to God. In other words, masculinity and power are determined by one's phallic ability to write. Even more, unlike Daniel Boyarin's effeminate rabbi (1997, 2009), the scribe is not merely the one who has such power due to his unique abilities; no, he is the one who constructs masculine power in the first place with his spermatic spluttering pen(is).

However, in order to see precisely how that works, let me dip into some theory for a few moments. I engage, in sequence, Claude Lévi-Strauss and then Christina Petterson. One of the essays in Lévi-Strauss's extraordinary *Tristes Tropiques* (part memoir, part theoretical development, it was written by an older man, bedecked with honors and recognition in metropolitan Paris, recalling with a good deal of longing the forays and discoveries of his youth in the jungles of Brazil) is called "The Writing Lesson" (1989, 385–99). It recounts an incident, during

an expedition into the central highlands of the Brazilian jungle that arose in the course of trying to determine precisely how many subgroups of the Nambikwara tribe remained. Lévi-Strauss persuaded the chief of the group to which he was attached to arrange a rendezvous of all the groups some distance away. And in order to entice everyone to turn up, Lévi-Strauss and his companions arranged for a number of oxen to carry the gifts for exchange. The situation was not without its tensions, since the chief had assumed the Frenchmen would supply all of them with food (largely through the use of their guns), since not all the groups saw eye to eye and since they were not necessarily pleased at having been called together for an apparently useless purpose. In this tense and fractious situation—think of the late night delay in an area where you know you should not be, the spark of chest-beating alpha male suddenly filling the air with the sulfur and ozone of human thunder—the chief seized on a novel way to assert his authority: he read some writing on a page. Since he had already determined that writing was a desirable attribute, providing Lévi-Strauss on earlier occasions with pages full of wavy lines in response to his questions, the chief now resorted to writing to assert his power. Out of the collection of gifts, he pulled out a piece of paper full of wavy lines, with hills and hollows, bumps and curves. As Lévi-Strauss writes, "As soon as he had got the company together, he took from a basket a piece of paper covered with wavy lines and made a show of reading it, pretending to hesitate as he checked on it the list of objects I was to give in exchange for the presents offered me: so-and-so was to have a chopper in exchange for a bow and arrows, someone else beads in exchange for his necklaces . . . This farce went on for two hours" (1989, 388).

According to the only account available of the incident—that of our intrepid anthropologist—writing won the chief some breathing space. The text written may have been nonsensical according to any linguistic code—a point Lévi-Strauss is keen to assert—but it was understood by the chief and those around as a code of power.

Lévi-Strauss's account suffers, as Jacques Derrida was to point out (in his own effort to leapfrog over one's mentor, a version, perhaps, of honoring the father by killing him) in *Of Grammatology* (1976, 118–40), of an excess dose of Western rationality, as well as voicing an ethnocentrism that disguises itself as antiethnocentrism. Reading observations like "this farce went on for two hours" or "this piece of humbug" (Lévi-Strauss 1989, 388, 389), we can see that Derrida has a point. But Lévi-Strauss has also stumbled across a crucial insight: writing, understood as a complex socioeconomic phenomenon, means power. This is especially true in social situations in which the scribe is not only the odd one out but especially one who makes the exception (of being able to read and write) central and thereby carves out structures of power. As Lévi-Strauss writes, "The only phenomenon with which writing has always been concomitant is the creation of cities and empires, that is, the integration of large numbers of individuals into a political system and their grading into castes or classes" (1989, 392).

My second theoretical resting place is a recent study by Petterson (in press), who explores the way the indigenous catechist in the Danish mission to Greenland

became instrumental in shaping the new class structures of the colony. Catechists were drawn from mixed parentage (a group called *blandinger*), with a Danish father and Greenlandic mother, since they were both part of the language, culture, and economy of Greenland, and yet separate from it. They were paid by the Danish government (less, of course, than the missionaries themselves) and underwent a lengthy process of training in the arts of writing, at times in Denmark. A central feature involved the daily keeping of diaries, which gradually changed within the life spans of most catechists from an obvious discomfort with the new medium of self-reflection to a greater ease and loquaciousness. The diaries were written in both Greenlandic and Danish (a mark of their in-between status), although the latter tended to be written by those who had been educated in Denmark. Initially, the catechists were the eyes, ears, and mouth of the Danish missionaries, but eventually they became, argues Petterson, the new Greenlandic ruling class. How so? As the first scribes, the catechists began the process of developing a literate culture in Greenland. Eventually, their heirs would be in charge of the first printing press, the newspaper(s), book production, and thereby the scribal production of Greenlandic society.

At the center of this production of a Greenlandic literate culture is the vital process of constructing new categories of masculinity and class—the two are inextricably tied together. While the hunter was constructed as the privileged one outside of the Danish colonial presence, as the ideal and idealized male Greenlander who lived through his ancient skills, the abject masculinities of the riff-raff were constructed in order to account for the menial tasks of the majority of Greenlanders under Danish rule (essentially the colonial working class). But what about the catechists? Their heirs became the new supermasculine intellectuals, the ones in control of the reins of power: they comprise the Greenlandic ruling class of today, who have positioned themselves in the ambivalent position of seeking, initially, equality with, and then later independence from Denmark—a convoluted process that also grants them superiority over other Greenlanders. In sum, the ability to use a pen(is) involves the production of masculinity itself, specifically a superior masculinity over against others that is simultaneously an assertion of class superiority. What we have is a self-referential construction of masculinity that makes one's own masculinity superior.

Thus from Lévi-Strauss we gain some theoretical depth to the assertion that writing means power and from Petterson the point that writing is a crucial means for constructing a masculine-class complex. It should come as no surprise, then, that the scribe of Ezekiel 9 seems to have dipped his pen(is) in steroids, for in the act of writing he asserts a masculine power that challenges that of chiefs, princes, and kings.

So far I have used but one text and some theory to make my argument. A telling text it is, but can the argument be sustained across other prophetic references to writing? In order to ensure the rugged firmness of my argument, I offer the necessary scholarly chatter of supplementary references in a brief survey. I have already noted the "manly stylus" of Isaiah 8:1, which becomes useful when Isaiah is to "write (*ktv*) upon a tablet" and "carve (*hhq*) upon a book (*sefer*)" (Isa. 30:8).

But now we can add Moses, the prophet before all prophets, who is instructed on Sinai by none less than Yahweh: "Write (*ktv*) these words; in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel" (Exod. 34:27). In being a writer, a "carver" or "chiseler" (*ktv*), Moses emulates the divine scribe himself who writes on the chunks of stone (Exod. 34:1). Writing seems to have a power in itself, creating history (Ezek. 24:2) and even a whole new world centered on a new temple (Ezek. 43:11), rendering a man childless (Jer. 22:30), causing oppression and destruction (Isa. 10:1; Jer. 25:13), marking the covenant on one's heart (Jer. 31:33), and giving life itself (Isa. 4:3; Jer. 17:13). And one cannot avoid Jeremiah 36, in which the prophet may have been instructed to write down all the words that Yahweh had spoken to him (Jer. 30:2), even with a stylus of iron (*'et bargel* in Jer. 17:1), but when it came to the crunch, he resorted to Baruch, the scribe. A close reading of the story—which I cannot undertake here (see the fine interpretation by Carroll 1986, 656–68)—would note that the phallic scroll (*megillah*, from the semantic cluster of *galal*, which includes the senses of rolling, flowing, and befouling, and is cognate with *galil* [rod] and *gilul* [idol]) itself becomes the main character, being written on, read from on a number of occasions (twice by Baruch and once to the king himself by Jehudi), carved up and burned, and then recreated in Baruch's hands at the dictation of Jeremiah. Except that now it has many words added to it, the rod-like scroll swelling in size in response to the king's effort to destroy it, so much so that its divinely sourced words make it equivalent in size to the Torah (Davies 1998, 120).

Is it possible that the phallic scribe has acquired the virile power once ascribed openly to Yahweh, power that certainly attached to El? As the Canaanite poem would have it,

> [El walks] the shore of the sea,
> And strides the shore of the deep . . .
> Now they are low, now they rise
> Now they cry "daddy, daddy,"
> And now they cry "mama, mama."
> El's "hand" grows long as the sea,
> El's "hand as the flood."
> Long is El's "hand" as the sea,
> El's "hand" as the flood . . .
> El, his rod sinks.
> El, his rod sinks.
> El, his love-staff droops.
> He raises, he shoots skyward.
> He shoots a bird in the sky;
> He plucks it and puts it on the coals.
>
> —Eilberg-Schwartz 1993, 107–8

Given the creative power of the scribe, he may well have quietly assumed such a role. So we have a situation where the scribe's cock is his very firm, iron-like pen, the implement that rests on his balls and constructs the world of the text.

That pen(is) is the implement of power, a power that is inescapably masculine due to the very identity of the pen(is) itself. Rigid, solid, and unchallengeable, is it not?

Too Many Dicks: Prophetic Autofellatio

> *El motela* (the ransacker).—So named because it penetrates into unusual places.
> —Richard Burton, *The Perfumed Garden of the Shaykh Nefzawi*

I have left one crucial feature until now, for it opens up the possibility that the scribal dong may wilt under pressure, the pen becoming uselessly soft in one's hand: the issue of autoreferentiality. In the accounts I have considered thus far—Ezekiel 9 and Jeremiah 36—we find accounts of scribes doing their thing: they write, challenge, dominate, and disseminate. But who tells such stories of spermatic scribes? The scribes themselves, of course. In other words, these accounts are autoreferential, which is really another way of saying they are masturbatory.

Before I tease out that last point, one more dip into theory, now—symptomatically—my earlier work on scribal self-referentiality, by which I write myself explicitly into my own text. In *Jameson and Jeroboam* (Boer 1996), I spent a reasonable amount of time analyzing the insomnia-curing regnal formulae of the books of Kings and Chronicles—for example, the formula at the close of the reign of Jeroboam: "As for the rest of the affairs of Jeroboam, how he warred and how he reigned, they are indeed written in the book of the daily affairs of the Kings of Israel. The time that Jeroboam reigned was twenty two years, and he slept with his ancestors, and Nadab his son reigned instead of him" (1 Kings 14:19–20).

The pattern continues throughout Kings and Chronicles, marking births, deaths, and transitions from one reign to another. These formulae became a mine of formal information regarding class and economics, but here I wish to stress two features of my reading. First, the formulae exhibit what may be described as a literary self-consciousness: the scribes responsible for the text write themselves into the text through reference to—largely fictitious (Stott 2008)—sources. That is, in referring to a book of the daily affairs of the Kings of Israel (or the book of the acts of Solomon and so on) the scribes provide their own covert signature. The reference to others writing is actually a reference to their own writing.

Second, when we get to Chronicles the prophets become prime sources to which the reader is referred. For instance, compare the texts of 1 Kings 11:41, "As for the rest of the affairs of Solomon, and all that he did and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the affairs of Solomon" and 2 Chronicles 9:29, "As for the remaining affairs of Solomon, the first and the last, are they not written in the records of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat."

Quite a shift, is it not—especially in the midst of passages that are otherwise almost identical between the two texts? The prophets have largely disappeared from the actual narrative (in Kings we have the cycles of Elijah and Elisha, for

instance) only to camp themselves in the formulae that frame the narrative. More important, the gaggle of prophets peering over the edge of the balcony that contains the regnal formulae is a greater assertion of their writing presence. Ahijah, Iddo, Nathan, and the range of other names—often dragged out of the narrative and relocated here—have all become writers, joining the well-known "writing prophets": Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

The last point is already a development in the direction of my argument here, so let me now push the relevance further. To begin with, the elision of scribe and prophet is a crucial move. In Kings we may get away with the impression that scribe and prophet are distinct characters, the former writing about the latter, even with the autoreferential function of the regnal formulae. In Ezekiel 9, the catatonic prophet (see further Boer 1998) witnesses the central and chilling role of the scribe, while in Jeremiah 36 the scribe becomes the crucial medium for the prophetic words. However, Chronicles marks the fully fledged outcome of a process already marked, as we saw earlier, in the texts of the "writing" prophets: scribe and prophet have merged into an even more potent figure. By now it should be obvious that this uberscribe is the most powerful figure in the text—a fact that he is keen to let us know. The scribe is, after all, the one who writes the text, allots roles to all its characters—even Yahweh—and thereby creates the universe of the text itself.

Now we can fold back to my earlier theoretical deliberations and pick up the point that these scribes also occupy a distinct class position. Writing, especially in a context where it is a unique craft, is not powerful in and of itself, for that would be to take an idealist position. Writing includes complex structures of economics, politics, and family, the creation of necessary time and tools to learn the craft. It also produces a paradox of marginalization, since the scribe is removed from direct political and military activity characteristic of other elements of the ruling class. Yet precisely through this marginalization, scribes are able not only to identify as a class fraction but also to put themselves in a position of immense power through being the ones who record, write, represent, and preserve a certain image of the world.

With this argument for autoreferentially of scribal production under our belts and zipped in place, it becomes possible to read all the references to scribal activity as precisely a reference to its own activity. Each moment in the brief survey I provided at the close of the previous section is now a moment of autoreferentiality, whether Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah or Ezekiel, and even Daniel 5, where the writer is also a reader, for he is the only one who can read and thereby interpret the writing on the wall, written by a detached human hand during one of King Belshazzar's opulent banquets.

Now I would like to push autoreferentiality to its logical and masturbatory extreme, for such an exercise of autocreation can ultimately only become self-serving and icky (to borrow a phrase from Alice Bach in reference to my own work some time ago [Bach 1998, 303]). Let me offer three telling moments in the jerky logic of prophetic production.

The first comes from an extraordinary and—unfortunately—neglected work by Allen Edwardes called *Erotica Judaica* (1967). I will have more to say about Edwardes later (see Chapter 10), so I restrict myself to his comments on Jeremiah. In a section with a title to die for—"Jeremiah the Bejerked" (Edwardes 1967, 99–101)—we learn that Jeremiah was called a *sahoq*, a masturbator or wanker. What? Is this actually in the Hebrew text? Jeremiah 20:7 reads, "I have become a laughingstock [*sahoq*] all day long; everyone mocks me." The key is that *shq*, "to laugh at or mock," is closely connected in its semantic field with *shhq*, or "to grind, rub, beat, or pound repeatedly" (i.e., to masturbate).[6] The term also appears in Judges 16:25, when Samson is brought out to "amuse" the Philistines during the feast at the temple of Dagon—that is, to masturbate before the idol. We also find the term in Job 12:4: "I am a wanker to my friends; I, who called upon God and he answered me, a just and blameless man, I am a wanker."[7] In his refreshingly entertaining fashion, Edwardes opines that "laughingstock" is equivalent to our modern usage of "jerk" or "jerkoff."

Is this pure, ribald fantasy on Edwardes's part? Not really, for the story of Jeremiah the bejerked appears in both Jewish and Arabic sources. As Louis Ginzberg relates, "this prophet surprised once, in a public bath, wicked men of the tribe of Ephraim, and found them committing onanism; he reproached them for their sin. Far from repenting, they forced the prophet to follow their example, threatening that if he refused, they would commit sodomy, using him as the object of their lust" (qtd. in Edwardes 1967, 99–100; Ginzberg 2008 [1909]).

The problem for this grumpy prophet is that he became hooked, guiltily enjoying the act of liquidating the inventory and thereby becoming a chronic "wanker-laughingstock" (*sahoq*). Apart from making some sense of Jeremiah's tortured and crude language, this creative rereading of the biblical text actually speaks a truth despite itself, for it enables deeper patterns to rise to the surface and pop out of their restricted zone.

A second moment comes with our very queer (Hornsby 2006) Ezekiel, yet again, who was also fascinated by the process of flogging his log. For instance, he accuses Oholibah (Jerusalem) in Ezekiel 23 of lusting not merely after "horsemen riding on horses" (Ezek. 23:12) but also after donkey-sized and horse-like cocks that shower cum on all in their path. As Ezekiel 23:20 reads, "She was horny [*ta'gevah*] for her toyboys [*pilgeshehem*], whose cocks [*besaram*] were the size of donkey schlongs [*besar-hamorim*] and whose ejaculations [*zirmatam*] were like horse cum [*zirmat-susim*]."[8] Jeremiah the bejerked was also fascinated by horse cocks and their loads of jism: in Jeremiah 5:8 he observes, as I noted in the previous chapter, that the Jerusalemites are "horny [*meyuzanim*] stallions with massive balls [*mashkim*]." Back to Ezekiel, the text I quoted actually provides a cum-splattered wordplay, for *zirmah* (ejaculation) derives from *zrm*, which means to pour or overwhelm (the noun *zerem* designates a downpour or rainstorm). So Ezekiel 23:20 may be read as an expression of the desire to be soaked by an equine cum-storm (*zirmah*).

All of which provides a very different angle on the famous eating of the scroll in Ezekiel 2–3. Here we go beyond the masturbatory logic of scribal self-production

to a moment of what can only be called autofellatio, replete with the cum shot and swallowing. Indeed, Ezekiel outdoes the conventional categories of porn, with its standard blow job and then cum shot, ending with either swallowing or the full facial on the male or female administering fellatio. No, Ezekiel presents an image where he sucks his own cock and swallows his own cum. The text reads, "And when I looked, behold, a hand was stretched (*yad sheluhah*) out to me, and, lo, a written scroll (*megillath-sefer*) was in it" (Ezek. 2:9). A few terms are crucial here: *yad sheluhah* means not merely a hand extended but also a cock at full muster (*yad* of course being a euphemism for a schlong and *shlh* exciting a range of meanings that include sending out, giving free reign, and unleashing); and *megillath-sefer* is not simply a "written scroll" but a "scroll of writing." *Megillah* is, as I noted earlier, part of the semantic cluster around *galal*, with the overlapping sense of rolling about, flowing, and befouling. The image one gains from this intriguing word is of rolling about or writhing in bed and befouling it with, for instance, the flow of one's own onanistic splatter. Needless to say, the closely related *galil* (rod) only enhances the phallic nature of the rolled up scroll. As for *sofer*, should it not set our radar singing? Here is the same term used for the spermatic pen(is) in Chapter 9. Thus we may read Ezekiel 2:9 in two ways: either we take the image of the hand literally—stretched out and filled with a massive scribal schlong—or we may take this text as an example of parallelism in which the stretched-out hand and the scroll-cum-phallus are one and the same. Rather than decide one way or another, I prefer it both ways. And in either case, Ezekiel is to take his uberdong into his own mouth.

In an anticipation of what is to come, this schlong is itself written up, for the scroll was inscribed with many words, full of mourning, lamentation, and woe (Ezek. 2:10). Not unlike the doppelganger pole or stick (*'ets*) in Ezekiel 37:16, on which Ezekiel must write, this is a tattooed scribal implement, a cock covered with its own inscriptions. The text (Ezek. 2:8–3:3) now follows a repetitive pattern: twice does Yahweh speak to him, thrice is his mouth mentioned, four times is the scroll mentioned, and six times is the word "eat" repeated. The regular, stroking rhythm of autofellatio, one that would have made Saint Onan proud, until the climax: "It was in my mouth like honey for sweetness" (Ezek. 3:3). What threatened to be bitter (Ezek. 2:10) turned out to be like honey. Ezekiel has come in his own mouth.

Now, it may be objected that the one handing the dong-like scroll to Ezekiel to eat is Yahweh, indeed that Ezekiel sucks Yahweh off, a reverse of the scene in Ezekiel 8:17 in which the apostate worshippers are putting "the branch to my nose" (emended from "their nose")—that is, offerings their cocks to God for fellatio (see Halperin 1993, 131–34).[9] No great threat to my reading, I would suggest, except that in the all-powerful world of scribal creation, Yahweh too is the product of the writer's pen(is).

Conclusion: Five-Finger Fantasies

The comprehensive world of prophetic masculine power, of scribal class superiority, has become a masturbatory fantasy in which the only outcome is that the all-powerful prophet sucks off his own spermatic spluttering pen(is) and comes in his own mouth. No matter how sweet it might be, the image is both an idealist fantasy and a drearily common one. The prophetic scribe may think that he has the power of heaven and hell, the ability to create the universe (including Yahweh), but it is pure fantasy, a grand idea that makes little difference to the material reality of the world. His soul mate would have to be the Egyptian god Atum-Ra, who creates the universe through an almighty tug-off: "The Ennead of Atum came into being by his semen and his fingers" (Pritchard 1955, 5). As Edwardes observes, "Egyptian *coffin texts* reveal how Atum-Ra, the *causa causans*, created the universe when he 'frigged with his fist and took the pleasure of emission.' Memphite theology, in referring to 'the seed and the hands of Atum,' ceremonialized the myth that the First Great Cause gave birth to the gods 'through the action of his hands in the pleasure of ejaculation' " (Edwardes 1967, 11).

This page intentionally left blank.

CHAPTER 6

Of Fine Wine, Incense, and Spices

The Unstable Masculine Hegemony of the Books of Chronicles

A hint of squashy vulnerability appeared in my consideration of the testicular logic of biblical Hebrew, and in my study of the apparent masculine vigor of the scribal prophets I happened upon the deep and self-serving impotence of that penile production. Now, as we turn to the books of Chronicles, I engage in a full-frontal assessment not merely of theories of masculinity but also of the chronic instability of masculine hegemony in that section of the Hebrew Bible.

The books of Chronicles are forbidding territory for all but the hardiest of readers. As a world full of men, priests, kings, battles, and a vengeful God, only a small band of biblical scholars dare to make Chronicles their home.[1] Rarely if ever does a feminist, gay, lesbian, postcolonial, poststructuralist or even a Marxist critic dare to enter this forbidding text that begins with nine grueling chapters of genealogies. Fortunately, that closed world has begun to open up in the last few years, with utopian studies by Steven Schweitzer (2007b), who creatively builds on my earlier work (1997, 1999b) and the feminist study by Julie Kelso (2007). These openings also enable the study and critique of masculinity in Chronicles, not despite but because it is a work devoted to the world of men.

In what follows, I begin with some theoretical concerns, drawn from Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, and Antonio Negri, which deal with the unstable nature of hegemonies, the internal conflicts of ideologies, and the constitutive power of resistance. From there, I introduce two features of Chronicles: its nature as a literary utopia (for whom?) and its central motif of the rigid phallic temple. Yet this phallic world is not as firm as it seems, for the stories in Chronicles continually soften one's initial impression: the overt machismo is a little too camp to be taken seriously; David and Solomon turn out to be expert interior designers;

and the crucial sign of one's faithfulness to God is through the correct observance of the temple cult[2]—which involves the crucial items of cutlery, cooking, spices, oils, incense, fine wine, and singing. What sort of masculinity is this? Let us see.

Masculinity, Hegemony, and Ideology

It has become a standard, if somewhat banal, point that masculinity is by no means an eternal, static, and singular quality inherent to men, but that it is constructed, performed, multiple, fluid, and subject to historical change (see, for example, Connell 2005; Hooper 2001, 17–76). Masculinities may be constructed discursively, socially, or economically; they may be constituted through performance; and they may be fluid and constantly shifting. The multiplicity of masculinities is a feature of any historical period. Masculinities change over time, are created, die, and are recreated again and again. Apart from the obligatory theoretical touchstones of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, and a host of lesser lights, another who makes a regular appearance in studies of gender and masculinity is Antonio Gramsci. Or rather, a bowdlerized version of Gramsci's theory of hegemony that owes much to Edward Said's misreading usually turns up. According to this perception of hegemony, it designates the dominant position, the one of the ruling class or race or gender (see Connell 2005, 77–78; Hooper 2001, 40). It is reinforced by force (police, both secret and not so secret, law courts, and army) and persuasion (propaganda in the media and education).

There is some limited truth in this perception. However, a careful reading of the many treatments of hegemony in Gramsci's notebooks (1971, 1992, 1996, 2007) reveals that such an interpretation is superficial (see especially Fontana 1993; Thomas 2009; Boer 2007a, 215–74). Instead, Gramsci's purpose in developing the theory of hegemony (a reworking of the Marxist theory of ideology) was to find a way to overthrow those in power, to explore how a new, liberating, hegemony might develop. A corollary to this purpose is the argument that the ruling hegemony is inherently uncertain and shaky. So also with the Bible: despite the effort in the Bible to present a series of overlapping ruling and dominating perspectives, all the way from social organization to sexuality, not to mention religion, they are very shaky indeed. Or to put it even more forcefully, the very act of asserting dominance is inherently unstable. Subversion lurks in every murky doorway and under every bed. Hegemony is continually undermined from within and without. A major reason the dominant hegemony is unstable is that it must constantly deal with insurrection—in politics, social movements, ideas, personal beliefs, and so on. After all, the reason Gramsci, the communist, developed the notion of hegemony was to find a way to overcome the dominance of the fascist state under Mussolini and capitalism more generally.

To this account of Gramsci's theory, I would like to add two brief points that are relevant for the analysis of Chronicles that follows. The first comes from Louis Althusser's argument concerning what he calls "ideological state apparatuses," a term that adds some economic and social depth to what are usually called

institutions (1971, 121–73; 1995, 269–314). For Althusser, ideological state apparatuses include education, religion, family, politics, the legal system, and culture. But the important point for my analysis is that while these apparatuses are zones where the ruling ideas seek to be inculcated, they are also *sites of ideological struggle*.[3] And these struggles take place *within* the apparatuses. Although the ruling class attempts to dominate and control the ideological state apparatuses, their hold is unstable and contested—a point Althusser owes to Gramsci's notion of hegemony. Ideological struggles take place in precisely these institutions. In our own day we witness the continued debates over media representation (biased vs. balanced), education (public vs. private), religious institutions (orthodoxy vs. social justice), culture (funding for the arts), the continued attacks on trade unions as part of a neoliberal agenda, and so on.

The second point comes from Antonio Negri, whose work is simply absent from studies of masculinity. One of Negri's major arguments, coming out of the workerism (*operaismo*) of Italy in the 1960s and 1970s, is that a dominant power is not a given against which one resists.[4] Rather, resistance itself is constitutive and power must constantly adapt and reshape itself in response to such resistance. For Negri, this creative resistance is embodied in the trade union movements, in the global anticapitalist protests, in anticolonialism, and in the green and feminist movements. I would suggest it also applies very well to studies of masculinity, for what are assumed to be dominant masculinities do not occupy center stage, givens against which resistance must struggle. No, those dominant forms must constantly change and respond to what resists them.

Obviously, Negri's position is a step beyond those of Gramsci and Althusser, but let us see how all of them apply to my reading of masculinity in the biblical book of Chronicles. In this text we find a wholesale construction of an exclusively male world of priests, but it is an unstable hegemony, one that must perpetually be reasserted in the face of a constant resistance. In this ideal world religion, politics, and gender are the dominant ideological state apparatuses, woven together through the temple in a way that suggests their separation is artificial. However, the instability of that artificial world is due to its own inconsistencies and conflicts, to internal ideological struggle, rather than any external threat. In fact, that resistance will turn out to be the constitutive feature of Chronicles, a resistance to which the dominant masculine ideology must try to assert itself. So let us see how all this works in my reading of Chronicles.[5]

Utopia and Phallic Temples

I begin my reading of Chronicles with two positions, one concerning utopia and the other dealing with the centrality of the temple. To begin with, Chronicles may be read as a utopia, an effort to represent an ideal world that resists the world as it is (see Boer 1999b; 1997, 136–68; Schweitzer 2007b). I should point out that such a reading is a radical break in itself with the bulk of Chronicles scholarship, which obsesses over matters of historical reliability, textual production and transmission, manuscript variations, and theology.[6] It is a text that creates a different

memory of the past in order to construct the picture of a different present and hoped for future. It challenges, erases, and rewrites the established patterns, providing an appeal to alternative collective memories—embodied particularly in the genealogies—for the hope of the future. More correctly, Chronicles may be read as uchronian fiction. It tells a different story of the past in order to open up the possibility of a different and better present and future—the basic definition of uchronian literature. Chronicles presents a picture of an ideal or utopian Israel in opposition to the strongly dystopian lines of the story in the Deuteronomistic History, especially Samuel and Kings. In contrast with that "history," which presents an increasingly apostate people and leadership, or as Schweitzer puts it (2007b), a fatalistic determinism, Chronicles has a much more positive picture of both people and kingship.[7] In presenting an ideal past, with the (dis)obedience of king and people acting as a trigger for immediate divine favor or disfavor, with the priests as the actual rulers, Chronicles also generates a hope for a future in which such an ideal state will be realized.

But now we need to ask a further question: for whom is this utopia? Chronicles is a document that expresses the ideas and hope of a distinct class, or rather subclass. And that subclass is none other than the Levites. Particularly in the sections that describe an ideal organization of the temple and its worship, the Levites, who are usually relegated (in other biblical literature) to a second-class status, are granted a much greater role than in other works from the Hebrew Bible. Not only do they have a role in the cult, but they are also entrusted with matters of defense as well. How is this a utopia? We have already seen that under normal circumstances (a code for the dominant perspective of other biblical material), the Levites occupied a secondary status, being a subclass within the ruling class. So they were partially disenfranchised. But now they are disenfranchised on a second level as well, for at time of the composition of Chronicles (late in the second temple period) the ruling class itself was a class without much power, since Judah (or Yehud) was a province of the Persian Empire. Without a king and with only a Persian-appointed governor, the clerics and scribes had to find another avenue to express their wishes. So they redirected their efforts toward the only other area they knew best: religious observance.

Yet this Levitical utopia is clearly one for men. Women are few and far between in this text, especially when its central concern is the temple and its worship—an exclusively male zone.[8] It may be utopia for them, but it is a dystopia for women, and indeed anyone who is not a Levite—especially the different lineages of regular priests and Zadokite priests as well as high priest.[9] In short, this utopia is one that belongs to the interwoven ideological apparatuses of religion, politics, and gender in which the religious dominates.

Further, at the center of the masculine utopia of Chronicles is the temple, a distinctly phallic temple. The narrative itself leads us majestically to the building and organization of the temple. David passes on the task to Solomon without a hitch (in contrast to Samuel and Kings where David is not permitted to build the temple) and then we come across no less than six chapters (2 Chronicles 2–7) devoted to the construction and organization of the temple. Even in the lead-up

to these chapters, David plays a massive role in preparing for the temple. But this is a literary and ideological temple that was never built. I would suggest that the temple is a figure for the books of Chronicles as a whole, an image that represents the phallic economy of this ideal world.

I do not make this assertion without textual ground, for in 2 Chronicles 3:3–4 the following measurements appear: "These are Solomon's foundations for building the house of God: the length, in cubits of the old standard, was sixty cubits and the width twenty cubits. The vestibule (*ha'ulam*) that was in front of the length, across the breadth of the house, was twenty cubits, and *the height one hundred and twenty*" (emphasis added).

Compare this text with the other description in 1 Kings 6:2–3: "The house that King Solomon built for Yahweh was sixty cubits long, twenty wide and thirty cubits high. The vestibule in front of the temple of the house was twenty cubits long, across the width of the house. Ten cubits was its width in front of the house."

Note the difference: in the Kings text no height is given for the vestibule at all; it is 10 by 20 cubits on the ground plan. By contrast, in Chronicles height is included: the vestibule is 20 cubits across and *120 high*. Given that the main section of the temple is only 60 cubits long, that makes the vestibule twice as high as the length of the whole temple! It is a massive phallic tower, a high-rise temple for Solomon, like some angular cock raised to the heavens with its balls on the ground. Commentators on Chronicles are keen to cut down this phallus: the unanimous agreement is that 2 Chronicles 3.4a is—of course!—corrupt. It could not possibly mean a massive tower of 120 cubits. However, I suggest that this text is a telltale sign of the text's masculine economy, for it is the image par excellence of the overwhelming if desperate effort to assert a male-only world.[10] The text of both books of Chronicles leads to this climax, this high point, this massive effort to assert a distinct hegemony.

With this image of the priapic temple at the center of Chronicles, a number of other texts begin to make sense. Let me deal with one example, which necessitates a dip into Hebrew terminology—namely, the genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1–9 and their formulae.[11] The dominant formula for the genealogies makes use of *holidh*, translated variously as "was the father of" or, in a still classic translation, "begat." So we get "A *holidh* B, C, D." As in "Abraham begat Isaac" (1 Chron. 1:34). Semantically there is nothing exceptional about the formula, partly because we are so used to the statement that such-and-such "begat" a child, or became the father of a child? The problem with all this is that at a basic level the *holidh* formula leaves the mother entirely out of the process. Where the mother's name does appear, we find *yaledhah*, "she bore," the form of the verb (*qal*) in which the mother is the direct subject, the son the object and the father the indirect object. And so we get "X bore Y for A" (see 1 Chron. 2:19, 21ff.) or just "X bore Y" (see 1 Chron. 2:17; 7:14). However, with *holidh* we have a different form of the verb (*hiphil*), which means strictly, "A caused to bear B"—for instance, "Abraham caused to bear Isaac." The question then becomes, whom did he cause to bear? The mother is the obvious answer, but the formula itself

effaces her presence, attributing the verb for giving birth to the man. Thus what we have in the genealogies is an endless list of men producing men with the occasional exceptions such as Abraham's "concubine," Keturah, in 1 Chronicles 1:32, Tamar in 1 Chronicles 2:4, or Ephrathah in 1 Chronicles 2:24; and Caleb's concubines in 2 Chronicles 2:46–49.[12]

Let us estrange[13] the genealogies a little further, asking what it means for men to "beget" men without women. The image that keeps coming back to me is of the whole human tradition from Adam onward, with men giving birth to men. How did Abraham manage his pregnancy? Did he worry about how he was going to give birth? How did he deal with the hormonal changes? Did he produce the child all on his own, coming in his own mouth perhaps (like Ezekiel)? The genealogies become a huge story from the beginning of time of pregnant men: waddling about, belly buttons popped out, waiting for the birth of yet another son from their own bodies. In the very effort of Chronicles to restrict the ideal world to men, those men have to become pregnant, carry a child, and give birth if the line was going to continue. The masculine hegemony of Chronicles has already started to come unstuck, if indeed there was any uniformity in the first place.

Machismo

This phallic world is not as rigid as it might be, the temple less than solid and somewhat flaccid, the apparent masculinity showing signs that it is not quite what it at first seemed to be. A series of texts indicates that this masculinity is queerer than we might expect. Indeed, a distinct campiness pervades the books of Chronicles.[14] On top of the autogeneration of the genealogies, three other items of this increasingly strange masculinity emerge from Chronicles: excessive if somewhat comical machismo; an extraordinary concern with interior design; and an intense emphasis on those crucial cultic items such as utensils, incense, spices, and freshly baked bread.

Testosterone seems to be overabundant in the "mighty men" (*hagibborim*) of David, who flex their muscles all the way through Chronicles, wielding swords and massive spears as though they were prosthetic penises (see 1 Chron. 11:10–47). They slaughter hundreds of enemies at a blow (Jashobeam and Abishai), dispense with gigantic enemies bare-handed (Benaiah and the Egyptian), and leap into snow-filled pits to wrestle lions (Benaiah again), enough to shame even those mad-dog Viking berserkers. Yet the mightiest act of all is not some feat that would outdo even these astounding achievements; instead it is nothing less than King David's glass of water. Out in the field of battle, David looks wistfully out over the troops, licks his lips, and croaks, "O that some one would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate" (1 Chron. 11:17). A heartrending wish, is it not, a small thing to ask these great men? But there is one small problem: that well with its sweet, fresh water, lies a good distance away, behind Philistine lines. Dumbly obedient to their king and his wish for a drink, Jashobeam, Eleazer, and the third unnamed man crash through enemy lines, draw out the water from the well as masses of Philistines run toward them (faces

contorted in anger and swords at the ready), and carefully carry the mug of water back to David—presumably without spilling a drop.

Given that these men are David's bodyguard, one would expect them to be well organized, just like the temple and its furnishings (see the following). Sadly, it is not so, for they can hardly count at all, let alone get themselves into any sense of order. Do these three brave souls who fetch David a drink belong to the two, the three, or the thirty? An extraordinary and bewildering passage from 1 Chronicles 11 leaves everyone confused. Is Jashobeam at the head of the thirty (1 Chron. 11:11) or of the three (2 Sam. 23:8)? For his part, Eleazer believes he is just behind Jashobeam among the "three mighty men" (1 Chron. 11:12). But then another mighty man, Abishai, feels that he is chief of the three, except that he "had no name among the three" (1 Chron. 11:20). What is going on here? Perhaps the next verse will help us: "Among the two was he more renowned than the three, and he became their leader, but unto the three he did not come" (1 Chron. 11:21). If we are confused, then spare a thought for poor Abishai. To add to the confusion, Benaiah turns out to "have a name among the three mighty men" (1 Chron. 11:24). Then again, perhaps he didn't; he certainly was better known than the thirty, but he wasn't actually part of the three (1 Chron. 11:25). One can only assume that David feared for his own life at the hands of these dolts who mill about in numerical confusion, especially when Benaiah was appointed over David's bodyguard (1 Chron. 11:25). Reading this passage, one is eerily reminded of the oxymoron "military intelligence."

However, the real answer to organization for battle lies elsewhere—in the temple choir. Later, toward the end of the second book of Chronicles we meet King Jehoshaphat, face to face with the marauding army of the Ammonites, Moabites, and men of Mount Seir. Unfazed, Jehoshaphat asks God what he should do (2 Chron. 20:1–17). The answer: sing! Forget complex maneuvers like ambushes, pincers, or disciplined advances under cover of the archers. No, faced with the enemy, Jehoshaphat "appointed those who were to sing to Yahweh and praise him in holy array" (2 Chron. 20:21). They were to beat back the enemy with the refrain, "Give thanks to Yahweh, for his steadfast love endures forever" (2 Chron. 20:21). The result: God takes control of the battle and enemy ends up slaughtering itself through "friendly fire." Battle as a musical: all that is left for the victors is gather the spoil and head for home, still singing (2 Chron. 20:24–28).

Masculine hegemony? If so, it is not what we would expect. In fact, I would suggest that here a resistant masculinity is emerging that makes mockery of the phallic rigidity of the temple. What appears in this battle account is perhaps the central theme of Chronicles—namely, correct observance of the cult. Follow the minute rules for organizing the temple and for worship and God's blessings will smile on you. If not, then a curse soon follows.[15] Incense mixed incorrectly, a golden basin out of place, a false note sung—these unforgivable sins among many others would bring God's immediate wrath, usually in terms of marauding foreigners, strange diseases, loss of those valuable sons the men labored so valiantly to produce, and gruesome early deaths.

Cult Matters: The Finer Things of Life

All this campy machismo is in the end a sideshow for Chronicles (which is a shame in many respects). After all, the temple is the main concern of these two books of the Bible, which brings us to the matters of interior design, organization, crockery, and other masculine matters of cultic correctness. Here, at least, the men can organize themselves.

And what an organization it is! It begins with David, who is no hack when it comes to interior design, and then that organizational skill passes (genetically?) on to Solomon. David leaves Solomon a detailed shopping list for an exclusive home furnishings store (1 Chron. 28:15–18, 29:3): gold and silver lampstands, tables and bowls, forks and basins and cups of pure gold, a golden altar of incense, precious stones throughout the temple, and even the *pièce de résistance*—a golden chariot for those cherubim on the ark of the covenant. Anything David can do, Solomon can do better: he ensures that every corner of the temple is adorned with gold, decorates the tops of each pillar with necklaces of pomegranate and gold, and above all pays special attention to the curtain concealing the most sacred place, the Holy of Holies. That, stipulates Solomon, must be woven "of blue and purple and crimson fabrics and fine linen" (2 Chron. 3:14), and it must be embroidered with cherubim. The list is endless, as is Solomon's delight with these vital matters of state: forks, tongs, snuffers, fire-pans, lampstands, pots, shovels, finely wrought and carved wash basins, not to forget the all-important flowers (see 2 Chron. 4:1–22). Solomon, it seems, has a soft spot for the finer things in life.

How did one care for such an elaborate interior? The forward-thinking David has it in hand, for he appoints no fewer than 38,000 Levites in the thirty-plus age group (1 Chron. 23:3). Even they were not enough, so David drops the age barrier to twenty (1 Chron. 23:24). What were they to do? Lead the odd worship service? Pray? Meditate? No, they were to clean; cook the breads, wafers, and baked offerings; mix the various oils; and . . . sing at every opportunity (1 Chron. 23:28–31). To accompany them others were to strum lyres and harps and ring cymbals. So involved were these tasks that they were rostered monthly; even the mighty men we met above came in on the act (see 1 Chron. 25–27).

Perhaps the best summary of these vital tasks appears toward the beginning of the first book of Chronicles:

> Some of them had charge of the utensils of service, for they were required to count them when they were brought in and taken out. Others of them were appointed over the furniture, and over all the holy utensils, also over the fine flour, the wine, the oil, the incense, and the spices. Others, of the sons of the priests, prepared the mixing of the spices, and Mattithiah, one of the Levites, the first-born of Shallum the Korahite, was in charge of making the flat cakes. Also some of their kinsmen of the Kohathites had charge of the showbread, to prepare it every sabbath. (1 Chron. 9:20–32)

What do real men do in Chronicles? They concern themselves with crockery and cutlery, furniture, fine flour, wine, oil, incense, spices, flat cakes, and showbread.

Everywhere we find the singers; released from any other service, they were rostered on to sing day and night (1 Chron. 9:33). Picture the scene: the men in the temple, finely dressed and perfumed, mix the spices, cook the flat cakes, arrange the furniture, ensure that the holy crockery and cutlery are correctly ordered; as they go about their tasks, they are surrounded by groups of singers and choristers who launch into song 24/7. A musical? An early version of piped music? Masculine?

In case we might think that these foppish dandies were engaged in peripheral matters, like some high-church Anglicans, then we need to think again. Cultic correctness is, for Chronicles at least, a matter of life or death—in short, God's favor or disfavor. Perhaps the best example of its importance appears in some words uttered by King Abijah soon after the breakup of the united kingdom after Solomon's reign. After the breakup the two kingdoms—faithful Judah and rebel Israel—face each other. Abijah begins by pointing out the cultic errors of the wayward Israelites, and then he says,

> But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken him. We have priests ministering to the Lord who are sons of Aaron, and Levites for their service. They offer to the Lord every morning and every evening burnt offerings and incense of sweet spices, set out the showbread on the table of pure gold, and care for the golden lamp-stand that its lamps may burn every evening; for we keep the charge of the Lord our God, but you have forsaken him. Behold, God is with us at our head, and his priests with their battle trumpets to sound the call to battle against you. (2 Chron. 13:10–12a)

Are the signs of faithfulness an upright heart, a prayerful and moral life, justice for the poor, a humble walking with your God? Or does it require the offering of sweet spices at the right times, setting out the showbread on the gold table, and making sure that the golden lampstand keeps burning? No and yes would be Abijah's answer to these questions, berating the Israelites as he did so for their failure to live up to these standards. Yet even here there is ambivalence, for Abijah's confidence may well be covering a deeper uncertainty. Standing there in his carefully washed linen robe with its jiggling tassels and tinkling bells, his beard trimmed and carefully oiled and perfumed, Abijah has yet to realize that even his preferred approach does not live up to what Yahweh wants, for in 2 Chronicles 30 his successor, Hezekiah, would lead all the people to become aware of how inadequate their cultic observance had been. Yahweh was obviously a difficult god to please.

Conclusion

Chronicles consistently undermines the masculine hegemony it so desperately seeks to establish; it is a very unstable hegemony, an ideological state apparatus that is deeply conflicted within itself. The text is full of queers doing their thing, whether in the genealogies of men begetting men, in the comic machismo of the

"mighty men," in the interior design of the temple, or in the attention to the finest detail of temple organization and decoration. Or, given that it is a utopian representation that was never realized, is it a very different masculinity, an alternative hegemony from what we might have expected, a resistant masculinity that must be thwarted by more conventional phallic models?

CHAPTER 7

Skin Gods

Circumcising the Built Male Body

A personal story, if I may. Writing and pumping, even preparing to write by pumping, I was sweating it out in the tiny corner in which I write. In my amateurish way, I work through a regular routine with my collection of dumbbells and barbells, having heeded Arnold Schwarzenegger's advice that all he ever worked with were free weights. As I labored away at the various pull-ups, rows, presses, and curls, a recurrent pain in my left elbow asserted itself. The pain persisted, so I went to the doctor. An X-ray ensued and a small protrusion on my radius that rubbed the tendon near my elbow showed up, causing an inflammation. The prescription: rest or a steroid injection.

As the last installment in our exploration of the chronic instabilities of biblical masculinities, in this chapter my particular, somewhat self-indulgent reflection is on the male body in bodybuilding (within which the Bible has a distinct place, as Stephen Moore has shown so well [1996]). I am going to play around with that body through the five sets of my argument, each time adding another few kilograms to either end of my barbell. I begin, then, with those big, round, and all-too-feminine-built male bodies, only to move on to the next set of repetitions where I focus on what sticks out, or rather doesn't, the penis. After considering the penis of the male builder I find that those who have thought about such things fall short, and so I turn, in my third set, to Lacan's notion of *objet petit a* in order to make sense of that little thing that sticks out from the bodybuilder—his penis. But Lacan can only get me so far. For the next set I ask Freud to add a few more weights, and as he does so he mentions the idea of circumcision. It is not so much the penis that is the key, it seems to me, but the foreskin that is cut away. Yet Freud also points out that circumcision signals the absent body of God, and this takes me to the final set where I return to the built body. That ideal

body turns out to be a circumcised body, as unreal and as unattainable as God's own body.

As should be obvious by now, at times I like to read with the help of Jacques Lacan and Sigmund Freud, although I must admit I like to play with both rather than follow one or another orthodoxy (and there are plenty of those in scholarship on Freud and Lacan). Freud certainly loved his jokes, and collected them with zeal, telling them whenever he could. Lacan too was often given to playfulness, punning, teasing, and laughing. Far from Lacanian or Freudian hagiography, or seeking to guard orthodoxy against the heretics, I prefer to engage their own playful heterodoxies.

Posing

> Let me just say one thing, guys, it was as good as an erection. There I was, on stage in my posing oils and black trunks, and the crowd really loved me. I mean I *moved* 'em with my posing exhibition. It was just my fuckin' time.
>
> —"Vinnie," qtd. in Sam Fussell, *Muscle: Confessions of an Unlikely Bodybuilder*

Nothing is more masculine than the built male body, all muscle and power and heterosexual aggression. Or is it? Is not that built body more like the female pinup or the beauty pageant? Are not male bodybuilders there to be looked at, gazed on, and admired, especially by men? These bodies demand the gaze, for is not the whole purpose of bodybuilding, with its posing routines and competitions, to have other men look at and assess the bodies on display? The skin—rippled, stripped, and cling-wrap tight—is nothing but a screen on which the bodybuilder is projected and looked at. This skin/screen is therefore an object of passivity: the beefcake has everything done to him. All he does is flex and pose. Yet in order to be looked at and assessed, a jock sweats it out for two, four, six hours a day: an intense program of eating, vomiting, pumping, and imbibing "the juice" so that, in the end, he may be gazed on by other men. And then, in the posing routine itself, it is not so much the best body that wins, but the one who succeeds in best producing the emotive fantasy of muscle, power, grace, and poise, especially in the final "pose down."

Yet if his being looked on (his passivity) codes him as conventionally female, so also does the body shape, for bodybuilders seek immensely rounded body shapes. The curving shoulders, rippling backs, bulking upper- and forearms, shapely thighs, and watermelon calves—all these give off a series of contradictory messages in relation to dominant conventions regarding body shape, for the rounded and curved shapes of male bodybuilders evoke the now older Western expectations of the curved female, with large breasts, rounded belly, fuller arms and thighs, and a small waist.[1] Indeed, the desire for silicone implants in male pectorals mirrors the use of such implants in female breasts. To complicate matters a little further, not only in female bodybuilding but also in male gay bodybuilding, the desire is not so much for rounded bulk, but for definition, for the "cut" body, in which the angles are sharper and the lines more angular—older

conventions for heterosexual males are now appropriated for women and gay men.

What then of the aggressive masculinity of these bodies, of the action figures dressed in combat fatigues, of Stallone as Rambo, of Schwarzenegger as Terminator, Commando, or Conan? Anyone who has been to a muscle show will attest to the overt heterosexuality that is obsessively foregrounded. Yet I suggest that what lies beneath this chest beating is a practice that is coded as feminine in Western culture—the presentation of curvaceous bodies to absorb a penetrating male gaze, the enjoyment of watching and desiring male bodies, and of being watched.[2] Bodybuilders may then be said to protest too much: the overkill, in more than one sense, of aggressive masculinity nervously attempts to efface the underlying queerness of bodybuilding. It is as though these men think that if they shout their heterosexuality loud enough, then the other codes will be effaced, forgetting that such efforts merely foreground the deviance of male bodybuilding. They are heroes and sissies all at once.

Penis

> You looked like a human fucking penis! Veins were poppin' every which way!
> —"Vinnie," qtd. in Sam Fussell, *Muscle: Confessions of an Unlikely Bodybuilder*

> A good pump is better than coming . . . the best feeling you can have.
> —Arnold Schwarzenegger, qtd. in Charles Gaines, *Pumping Iron*

What, then, of the penis? Is that not supposed to be the anomaly, that which sticks out and abruptly halts the feminine slide of male bodybuilders? Concern with the builder's penis comes rippling through Kenneth Dutton's *The Perfectible Body* (1995), in which much space is given over to inquiring why classical Greek statues and paintings have such small appendages, or why early beefcake photographs always have the genitals strategically covered, or indeed why bodybuilder's briefs are so small. The irony for the male builder is that it is precisely the penis that cannot be strengthened, enlarged, or built up by lifting weights or working out on a machine. What happens, argues Dutton, is that the body replaces the penis: in being able to build its strength and potency and thereby exhibit overt masculinity, the body becomes a massive cock, as it were, the location of sexual power and exhibition. What the built body represents, then, is the builder's penis, or at least the ideal penis the builder would like to have but cannot have.

For Rosalind Miles, the body, especially those of actors like Arnold Schwarzenegger, "becomes a public phallus, huge, rock-hard, gleaming and veined with blood. And as the phallus first stirred and came to life in the primeval swamps of the male imagination, so males above all are uniquely alert to its siren call and baleful power. Becoming an athlete, bodybuilder or 'jock' is therefore a clear and overt statement of manhood and male potency, and the clearest possible message to other men" (Miles 1991, 111).

The usual sequence for such an argument for the displaced potency of the penis begins with the suggestion that the penis is a symbol of male power. However, the inability to enlarge it through bodybuilding creates a problem that is solved by displacing the penis with the whole body, which then becomes the site of displaced prowess and power. The particular penis makes way for a universally suggestive phallic body, which is a much more appropriate signifier of universal power and potency. And here bodybuilding comes into its own: the larger the body, the greater the power. Through its displaced representation of the penis, a male body is able to accrue power directly in proportion to body size. So in the end, all that a bulking body represents is its own penis.

The Little Object

> Those who have seen professional bodybuilders naked will attest, not only to the unfoundedness of this assumption [the apparent tininess of the male organ hidden beneath the posing trunks], but also to the remarkable adaptability of the male sexual organs and compressive powers of Lycra.
>
> —Kenneth Dutton, *The Perfectible Body*

> One of the striking characteristics about symbols is the discrepancy between the symbols and what penises are actually like. Male genitals are fragile, squashy, delicate things; even when erect, the penis is spongy, seldom straight, and rounded at the tip, while testicles are imperfect spheres, always vulnerable, never still.
>
> —Richard Dyer, *The Matter of Images*

It is not as simple as it appears, not so directly correlative. The built male body does not represent the penis so purely and simply, and this is where arguments like those put forward by Dutton and Miles lack stamina. Rather, the penis is but a little thing that holds the whole regime of bodybuilding together. In order to make that argument, I turn to Lacan, for it seems to me that bodybuilding for males is a very Lacanian activity. In my local gym, dog-eared copies of Lacan lie on the small table near the door, there for the occasional jocks to peruse in between sets.

The key term is one that Lacan himself insisted should not be translated—namely, *objet petit a*. Even more, he notoriously refused to define it, letting the sense emerge from his continual references to it. But that is precisely what *objet petit a* is, a "lost object" (Lacan 1994, 180) that one can never quite locate. In order to gain a sense of that *objet*, let us return to the example Lacan borrows from Freud, the famous fort-da game of Freud's grandson (Lacan 1994, 239).[3] As I mentioned earlier, Freud noticed that whenever the child's mother was away, he would throw objects away and cry a drawn-out "o-o-o-o," which Freud interpreted as *fort* or "away." One day he did this with a cotton reel out of his curtained cot, except that this time he pulled it back and said with great satisfaction *da* or "here" (Freud 2001, 18:14–18). Freud interprets the game as a compensation and revenge for the absence of his grandson's mother and the child's desire to be an adult—all of which are out of the child's reach. For Lacan, this little

cotton reel is an excellent instance of *objet petit a*, that item that is expelled and excluded, and yet precisely because it is excluded, *objet petit a* is crucial for the system as a whole.

Objet petit a, then, is that which "sticks out," the item (thought, detail of a picture, word in a text) that cannot be incorporated within the whole picture and cannot be explained in the usual way, which thereby becomes the focus of anxiety and repression. Yet this thing that "sticks out," the inconsequential and unnecessary item, is in fact crucial for the structure of the whole (text, picture, pattern of thought, etc.).

Let me give two examples of *objet petit a*. First, picture a well-heeled lawyer, for whom 14-hour days are traded off for some of the best accommodation in town, an expensive car, well-cut clothes from designer boutiques, and a sharp mind that enables her to rise quickly through the ranks of legal professionals. At the same time, she is a heroin addict, easily able to afford the cost yet unable to break the habit. In fact, her addiction threatens her whole career and the few who know about it tell her so. If only she could break the habit, then that threat would disappear. However, another perspective—the one I follow here—suggests that it is precisely this heroin habit that holds her life together. It is the linchpin: without it everything would collapse—that is, high life, sustained concentration, long work days, and so on. Next, take the case of a mundane, suburban middle-class man with a spouse, three children, home mortgage, two cars, and a middle-management job with the local branch of a multinational company. Each weekday he works regular hours, while on the weekends he watches his children play sport, mows the lawns, washes the cars, and reads the newspapers. An ordinary, thoroughly boring and unexciting middle-class life, except that he has a liking for sexual fetishism, especially bondage and discipline (B&D), both as a personal experience and as an item of pornography. So he searches the Internet late at night, slips away for the occasional Sunday afternoon or weekend "conference." Is it a foible that threatens to undo his calm life? Not so. Rather, the very unexceptionality of his life is based on his B&D: the bondage and discipline he so much enjoys ensure that he can maintain his boring, normal life. These examples flip over the usual perception, suggesting that what is excluded is actually central and crucial; after that it is possible to notice the influence of what is excluded on everything else—lawyer's habit, middle-class man's foible, and what have you.

So it is with bodybuilding, which turns out to be a classic example of Lacan's arguments concerning *objet petit a*. It is an inverse relationship: the more the body is built in order to compensate for the inability to build up the penis, the more the penis stays outside the bodybuilding regime. The more the voluntary muscles of the rest of the body can be pumped with blood, the tighter the skin and more clearly defined the striated muscles and veins, the less the penis itself becomes.[4] (Eugene Sandow, who seems to have set the agenda in so many ways for contemporary bodybuilding, including the use of classical postures like those of Michelangelo's *David*, used to pose for photographs with a fig leaf strategically placed over his genitals.) The phallic body is that which is hard, erect, and firm,

while the penis is squashed into ever smaller posing trunks, drawing ever nearer to that dreaded medical condition: micropenis (see Gas et al. 1997).

Yet as it shrinks before the bulk of the built body, as it is compressed into the tightest Lycra, the more crucial the penis becomes. Without it the bodybuilder would not undergo all the pain, discipline, and devotion to build his body in the first place. Like Freud's grandson who desperately wanted to recover that little reel, the bodybuilder also desperately wants to recover a potent penis. Indeed, most, if not all, men imagine that their penises are inadequate in some sense—too short, too narrow, too bent, and so on. So they imagine some ideal penis that they would like to have—long, thick, straight, and with an immense stamina, able to come all the time and satisfy the imaginary man or woman or . . . What happens here is that their real penises, soft, impotent, short, thin, and struggling to come, are wished away in favor of an ideal other.

So all the attitude, the anger required to lift and press massive weights, the posturing and modeling on other builders, the shouting and screaming at the weights, "the Walk,"[5] the aggression and " 'roid rages"—the desire, in short, to be gods—turn out to be futile efforts to recover that little object, the penis, even in the gym to which builders escape to run through their sets.

Foreskin

> I feared that complete exposure might reveal a lagging body part to the judges.
> —Sam Fussell, *Muscle: Confessions of an Unlikely Bodybuilder*

Yet I have a lingering doubt about all this. Is the penis really *objet petit a*? Or rather, is it the only version of this little object that forever eludes the bodybuilder? I suspect not. Thus far I have slid down from the rounded, bulging, rock-hard body of the builder to that small, squashed object that cannot be built up, no matter what spam emails might promise. There is, however, one further slip to make, and that is to what is at the end of the penis, or rather, what *was* at the end of the penis: the foreskin.

The foreskin is that little flap that can be, and often is, sliced away. Is this not the proper *objet petit a*? I begin by picking up a small hint from Lacan (in an untranslated seminar from 1963 called "L'angoisse") before turning to Freud. Lacan suggests that circumcision is an excellent rendering of the work of *objet petit a*. Let me playfully propose that what Lacan means is that the foreskin is really that little object. Yet, for a deeper sense of what this means, I need to let Freud come forward, especially his astonishing discussion of circumcision in *Moses and Monotheism*.

Moses intrigues Freud: circumcision is, he suggests, the clear mark of Moses's monotheism, and yet it also indicates the nature of that belief. Circumcision is the sign of a religion that forbids representing God in any way. No image, statue, or any other representation of God may be made. In other words, circumcision marks the absent body, especially the absent body of God. Or, as I will rephrase

it, the foreskin cut away in circumcision represents the absent body of God. That is why Moses's God commands that it be cut away and discarded.

Let us take a moment to see how Freud gets to this point. For Freud circumcision is the direct link to the monotheism that the Egyptian Moses brought to the Israelites. It is, as he points out in *Moses and Monotheism*, the "key-fossil" (Freud 2001, 23:39) that allows him to unlock his own hypothesis about Moses (that he was an Egyptian, that the Israelites killed him and elevated him to divine status, that he gave the Israelites a variation on the monotheism of Akhenaten although this did not emerge properly until later).[6] Circumcision was a distinctly Egyptian practice that Moses bequeathed to the Israelites in their journey from Egypt into the wilderness. It is circumcision that links Moses to Egypt: practiced by the Levites, the core group from Egypt who first adopted the practice at Moses's instigation, it was passed on to other groups, which later joined their ranks.[7]

The religion of Moses brought a "far grander conception of God, or, as we might put it more modestly, the conception of a grander God" (Freud 2001, 23:112). Moses did this by banning any images of God. The ban on seeing, hearing or touching this God is crucial for Freud, for "it meant that a sensory perception was given to second place to what may be called an abstract idea—a triumph of intellectuality over sensuality or, strictly speaking, an instinctual renunciation, with all its necessary psychological consequences" (Freud 2001, 23:113). Abstract and intellectual, such a notion of God led to a far higher feeling of self-worth, but it also checked "the brutality and tendency to violence which are apt to appear where the development of *muscular strength is the popular ideal*" (emphasis mine, Freud 2001, 23:115).

Who is this God of whom no images are allowed? It is none other than Moses himself. Freud's own myth is that in a rage of rebellious jealousy the Israelites killed Moses, and then, in order to assuage their guilt, elevated him to divine status. The sons kill the father and then make him a god. This father-god is then the one who may not be represented in any way; he is the one whose body is absent in order to overcome brutality, violence, and orgiastic celebrations of the body. And the sign of the absent body of that father-god is none other than circumcision—a rite ordered by the father-god as a sign of holiness. God has no body, in fact cannot have one, and circumcision marks its removal. Cut away the flap of skin, discard it, and you throw away the possibility of representing God's/Moses's body.

Body

> Thanks to my diet, my skin was thinner than airmail paper. And with my varnish, I was browner than a buried pharaoh.
>
> —Sam Fussell, *Muscle: Confessions of an Unlikely Bodybuilder*

> What is the useless piece of skin at the end of a penis? A man.
>
> —Anonymous

I have slipped all the way from built body down into the posing trunks to search for the penis and then out to the tip in a vain search for the foreskin that Freud's Moses has already sliced off and discarded. And I have gone searching for that little object, *objet petit a*, the one that is excluded in some fashion only to be crucial. Thus, as the one muscle that cannot be built up, the penis looked for all the world like that little thing. Lagging behind, it refused to join the crown. But then, with a little help from Freud, it seems as though the foreskin might just be that *objet petit a*, for it really is outside the system. (Perhaps the ultimate foreskin outside the system is that of Christ, for it would not have been resurrected with him. That Christological anomaly has sent more than one person searching for his holy foreskin, albeit to no avail [see Shell 1997]). Yet Freud has delivered me an unexpected twist: he has taken me all the way back to the body, to God's body. Or is that Moses's body? Or . . .

So, as a final step, we need to return to the strapping body of the builder. One might be forgiven for thinking that the ultimate aim of bodybuilding is indeed to circumcise the body itself. For bodybuilders do all they can to minimize the skin. To begin with, the male bodies of builders are completely hairless, although it is a topic not openly discussed in the magazines. Depilation is, after all, still largely a female affair, but what it does is remove a distinctive feature of the skin—its hair. Even more, before a posing session, bodybuilders seek to produce a "shrink-wrap" effect, reducing as far as possible subcutaneous fat and water so that the skin will cling as closely as possible to the muscles and veins that stand out on the muscle surface. This involves starvation dieting, avoiding sodium and calories in the weeks leading up to an event, and then, a little over a week before, loading up with protein before switching to a high carbohydrate load in the last few days. It also requires the reduction, if not complete stoppage, of steroid intake to avoid water retention. The desired result of such a carefully balanced program is "elasticized, parchment paper for skin" (Fussell 1991, 186). Further, in order to highlight under the harsh lights of competition the curves, dips, crevices, and mounds of muscle beneath the skin, the tan is crucial, gained in tanning beds and with a host of specialty tanning products, clogging up the skin and staining everything the builder touches. The posing oil finishes off the effect, sealing the tan in place, and making every bump and gully glisten.

Even more, there is the unending attention to the alteration of the shape and the size of the muscles "beneath" the skin. (Only the voluntary and striated muscles, not the smooth and involuntary muscles, seem to be of interest.) The talk is always of muscle size and definition; and in bodybuilding circles, muscle

anatomy is a constant focus—that is, the lats, pecs, traps, and so on. Whatever can be done by the bodybuilder will be done to make the muscles look how they should—steroids and endless chemicals, food cramming, muscle tearing, rectal bleeding, vomiting, ammonia fumes, inflammatories, extraordinary diets, tanning agents, oil, and so on. Indeed, I would argue that the skin is pared down to the point where it marks its own absence. Tanned and paper thin, the bodybuilder desperately tries to circumcise himself.

One final question: For all the efforts to circumcise the built body, is this not a present body in contrast to God's absent body that circumcision signals? The answer is disarmingly simple: the *ideal built body is ultimately unattainable*. No matter how hard they train, how much they torture themselves, and no matter how much pain they endure, there is no gaining that ideal. In the same way that circumcision of the penis signals the absent body of God, so also the circumcision of the built body shows that it is always beyond reach, that it too is a version of *objet petit a*. And what is that ideal body? If you happen to peruse muscle manuals in your vain search for the ideal body, then you will find, usually in the last pages in an appendix, a series of pictures of the muscles without skin, or rather whole human bodies with the skin cut away (e.g., Laura and Dutton 1991, 222–38). Of course, they are meant to show the muscles underneath, the ones that you should build up, the ones to which you should devote specific routines. But what we have is a grotesque, unattainable body, for it is a circumcised body, a "cut" body. This would mean that the perfect, divine, and unattainable body is skinless. And the perfect posing routine would have a group of men on stage, with only bare, bulging, and bleeding striated muscle for us to gaze on.

This page intentionally left blank.

PART III

Paraphilias

A paraphilia is simply an abnormal sexual practice, a love that is to the side if we think of the Greek root for a moment. Immediately that raises the question as to what constitutes normal and abnormal and, more important, who decides what is such. The answer: overlapping legal, cultural, and religious codes, which seem to spend an inordinate amount of time policing and censoring—desperately and futilely—what counts as acceptable and "normal" and what does not. For the sake of argument, I am willing to accept such codes, if only for the purpose of gathering the remaining chapters under a single heading.

Each of the topics in this section either occupy a space far over the boundary, no matter how vague and shifting it might be, or are in the midst of the contested zones of that boundary. Found among the latter are prostitution and pornography, the topics of Chapters 9 and 10, "Hooker Hermeneutics" and "King Solomon Meets Annie Sprinkle," respectively. Yet even these terms include a host of items that slip one way or the other: anointing, decriminalization, whore stigma, footing, pissing, and anal sex with a dildo, to name but a few. The last two chapters move further afield, linking up with and thereby pursuing some of the hints in earlier chapters, especially those on the Song of Songs where I became enamored of the sexuality of nature. In Chapter 10 I pick up Allen Edwardes's provocative suggestions regarding the names of God, the way the Israelites might have worshipped the Golden Calf, and a range of other ribald proposals. By Chapter 11 we are well beyond that boundary (or perhaps not if we happen to be Hittites . . .), for now we broach the vast realm of bestiality and necrophilia, particularly as a point of contact between Hittites and Hebrews. These are topics of biblical interpretation where few critics dare to tread—precisely the reason to explore them patiently and thoroughly.

This page intentionally left blank.

CHAPTER 8

Hooker Hermeneutics

A Reading of Avaren Ipsen's *Sex Working and the Bible*

This chapter is the first of a final collection that takes up the promise made on a few occasions earlier in the book—namely, to slip into the delectable realm of paraphilias. Here I respond to open up, lubricate, massage, critique, and assess Avaren Ipsen's *Sex Working and the Bible* (2009), one of the few books that offers a genuinely new way of reading biblical texts because it does so from outside the academy with its discourses of politeness and decorum. Or rather, it does so with one foot among prostitutes and sex worker activism and one foot—somewhat uncomfortably—within the academy. That this places Ipsen on the fringes of that strange, nerdy, world goes without saying.

So I seek to respond to her work, the fruits of her labors, the arguments she puts forth, and the interpretations of texts that come out of her collective project, by slipping into a personal, albeit critical, voice that many in the academy still find uncomfortable because of its challenge to the myth of objectivity, critical distance, and the desperate claims to be "scientific." In doing so, I distinguish between texts, method, and politics, braiding my account with moments of personal interaction between Avaren and me.

Contact

Let me track back to November in 2004, when I was teaching some spoilt rich kids at "Dook" about Marx and the Bible. On Armistice Day an email appeared out of the ether:

Dear Roland Boer,

My name is Avaren Ipsen. I am a PhD Candidate in biblical studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. We have some very similar research interests so I had wanted to invite you for coffee at SBL in a few weeks. I am a student of Mary Ann Tolbert and Luise Schottroff. Early on in my doctoral education I took a course with Norman Gottwald and subsequently have focused on marxist critical social theory as my secondary area, which I now teach as an adjunct at UC Berkeley. My dissertation is on a liberation approach to biblical prostitution. My field research has been to have sex worker rights activists read 4 biblical passages on prostitution with me while we worked on a justice campaign for prostitutes, our failed bid for decriminalization of prostitution in Berkeley, California, "Measure Q." I'd love to hear your view of the prostitution legislation in Victoria. The campaign here was grueling but very illuminating.

I have wanted to meet you ever since your *Semeia* article on King Solomon and Annie Sprinkle. My issue of *Semeia* arrived about a week before I went to see her show at the Rhinoceros in SF called "Herstory of Porn." I got the *Semeia* autographed by Annie and will bring you a copy. I paid close attention to your article because I had done an article on the same passage of 1 Kings 3:16–28 and it is part of my dissertation now. This was the genesis of my dissertation. Anyhow, I don't know many scholars out there other than you who are doing *sex-positive Gottwald inspired marxist ideological critiques of biblical literature* and thought it would be quite nice to meet you. Let me know if you have time to meet up for coffee.

My Best,
Avaren Ipsen (emphasis in original).

I was, to say the least, somewhat intrigued. Who was this person writing very formally, mentioning in that stiff style prostitute readings, liberation theology, Marxism, campaigns for decriminalizing prostitution, Annie Sprinkle's "Herstory of Porn," and then that extraordinary epithet, "s*ex-positive Gottwald inspired marxist ideological critiques of biblical literature*"? It was an invitation too good to refuse, so I met Avaren for the first time at that Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) meeting (in San Antonio—where Texas really begins, I was told by a local): nose ring, blond hair, exuberant manner, great hug, endless talk about our mutual interests, and, of course, a copy of that infamous *Semeia* piece on Annie Sprinkle (the Queen of Sheba) and Solomon, which was autographed by Goddess Annie herself.

Since then we have linked up each time we were both at the meetings of that vast conglomerate of 10,000 or so biblical scholars who meet each year in North America. Since then Avaren finished her PhD, published her book, went for and missed a string of jobs, and at the Society's meeting in 2009 organized an extraordinary panel at which some of her prostitute activist comrades spoke. More of that later, for a question is left begging: why did she approach me, of all people? The reason is that against the advice of concerned, bemused, tut-tutting, and (in some cases) outraged friends and colleagues (among whom were a number of feminists, lesbians, and gays), I had written and somehow managed to get published not only the piece to which Avaren refers—"King Solomon Meets Annie

Sprinkle" (Chapter 9, but see Boer 2000a), with its fictional and porn-inspired conclusion—but also "The Second Coming: Repetition and Insatiable Desire in the Song of Songs" (Chapter 1, but see Boer 2000b) and "Yahweh as Top: A Lost Targum" (Boer 2001), a ficto-critical reading of Moses and Yahweh on Mount Sinai in Exodus 25–31. All were preceded by a work that is the forerunner of this book and has become something of a cult classic, *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* (Boer 1999a). I must admit that this flurry of sex-positive readings had a somewhat varied reception,[1] but it does explain a little why Avaren was keen to make my acquaintance.

Our discussion continues in its own way until today (and this is yet another stage in that process), but in order to keep it moving I wish to draw one further feature out of this initial letter: it contains the bedrock of the book, which is itself one product of an ongoing political project. I am less interested in the intellectual context—Berkeley, the Graduate Theological Union, the *doktormütter* Mary Anne Tolbert (and also Luise Schottroff)—as in the statement that Avaren worked with sex worker rights activists in reading four biblical passages on prostitution. And they did not do in the comfort of a quiet and pleasant Sunday afternoon but in the heat of battle, during the campaign to decriminalize prostitution in Berkeley, California.

So I prefer to focus on three areas in relation to *Sex Working and the Bible*: texts, methods, and politics. The texts are those on Rahab (Josh. 2 and 6:22–25), Solomon and the two prostitutes (1 Kings 3:16–28),[2] the anointing of Jesus (John 12:1–8; Luke 7:36–50; Mark 14:3–9 and Matt. 26:6–13), and the whore Babylon (Rev. 17:1–19:10). The core of Avaren's method is to read these texts with her comrades among the Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP), a method she has then layered over with the historical materialist concerns of Marxism, the theological ideals of liberation theology and (although it is touched on very lightly in the letter) feminism. Finally, it is difficult to miss the politics: "Grueling but very illuminating," she writes of the campaign for "Measure Q" in Berkeley, an effort to decriminalize prostitution through a uniquely Californian Practice—a voter initiative, in which sufficient signatures ensure an item appears on the regular ballot (in this case 2004). So let me explore each item in turn—texts, methods, and politics.

Texts

I must admit that the texts chosen for *Sex Working and the Bible* do not equally appeal to me—Rahab, Solomon and the two prostitutes, the anointing of Jesus, and the whore Babylon. They are, of course, obvious ones to choose, since they talk explicitly about prostitutes (even if scholars and readers have done their best to banish the prostitutes to the back alleys of the Bible through all manner of deft arguments). Others might have been chosen, such as those about the sacred prostitutes (although Avaren is divided on this one since scholarship has cast much cold water on their very existence), Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38), Samson's habit of visiting prostitutes (Judg. 16:1 and 4), the polemic against Israel

and Judah in Ezekiel 16 and 23 (and in fact the constant theme of playing the prostitute in the prophetic literature), Hosea and Gomer (Hos. 1–2), and the gospel accounts of Jesus and the prostitutes. In other words, there is plenty of work to do!

The structure of each of the core chapters on the biblical texts is similar: a translation of the text is provided (drawn from the New Revised Standard Version), a detailed engagement with scholarly readings follows, only to be counterpoised with the hooker hermeneutics of the SWOP activists, after which a brief comparison between the SWOP and scholarly readings leads into a most extraordinary conclusion to each chapter: the weaving together of a commentary from various statements by the SWOP readers (and Avaren). Retelling, targum, exegesis, commentary . . . they are none of these and all of them together; a creative engagement with the text, often in the refreshing colloquialism of the SWOP readers themselves.

I will return to those creative retellings in a moment, but first let me narrate a reading experience. When I first waded into the assessment of scholarly analysis of the Rahab story in Joshua 2, I became quite enamored of the recounting of Phyllis Bird's interpretation with its focus on the sexual innuendo throughout the story—the spies go out to "view the land," entering the "house of a prostitute" to "sleep" there, and then the men of the city call on Rahab to bring out the men who entered her "house," whom she admits did indeed "come" to her (Ipsen 2009, 66–67; Bird 1997, 210–12). But just in case one might get comfortable with one or another of the scholarly positions or at least find them intriguing, the SWOP interpretations simply blast them out of the water. The first is that any negative reading of Rahab's identity as a prostitute is dismissed, whether she needs to be excused, is a metaphor for erring Israel, blemished church or repentant sinner, or indeed functions in some feminist readings as a ventriloquist dummy for Deuteronomistic theology (see, for example, Dube 2000, 76–83; McKinlay 2004, 44). In other words, they reject the Rahab who needs to put aside her sinful life when she encounters God. Instead, Rahab becomes an agent of her own future, a sex-positive figure who enables a definition of prostitution as "sacrifice for one's own survival and the survival of one's family" (Ipsen 2009, 74, 108). In the discussions this positive identification of Rahab takes two paths, one a majority opinion in which Rahab acted in her own best interests and thereby opted for the "invaders," and the other a minority one (of Scarlot Harlot) in which Rahab becomes a counterdeity, a goddess, in opposition to an oppressive Yahweh. But both readings resist any wish to send the prostitute packing, to push her off the "respectable" streets of biblical interpretation, theology, and the church, and send her to the seedier parts of town.

This was but one text and one engagement. In fact, the four texts chosen for analysis vary quite considerably; or rather, they do so in the hands of the prostitute interpreters, through whose touches the texts are released to speak of the negative and positive experiences of sex workers: Rahab (as we have seen) is a sex-positive character and full of agency; Solomon is a purveyor of violence against prostitutes, one who runs a corrupt judicial system prejudiced against

sex workers; anointing is a vital and sensuous part of the total sex worker package (for whom penetrative sex is but a small part of the whole repertoire); and the whore stigma of Revelation presents an extremely dangerous divine sanction to kill the whore. In short, lined up are prostitute agency and a total emotional experience on the sex-positive side and corrupt legal system, violence, and the whore stigma on the sex-negative side.

But what is noticeable about these readings is that in each case the SWOP readers identify with the prostitutes in the story—Rahab, the two prostitutes who front up to Solomon, the woman who anoints Jesus's feet, and even Babylon the sex worker in Revelation. Once you take this position—reading the prostitute as a positive character—the narrative experiences of the literary prostitutes are judged accordingly: the Israelite spies in Joshua 2, as well as the men of the city, are found wanting and are all too well known for their deviousness; Solomon's wisdom disappears and he becomes a cynical, prejudiced, and above all corrupt wielder of judicial power, given to violence at a mere whim; the condemnations of (depending on the gospel narrative) the Pharisee, Judas or the disciples become typical examples of dismissals of the value of sex workers, while Jesus's own response becomes crucial as someone who cavorts with prostitutes and a willing participant in the anointing; and all the opprobrium and violence sanctioned in Revelation becomes both a massive problem and that with which sex workers must deal on a day-to-day basis. For what happens with these readings, which in many cases challenge scholarly readings, is that the life experiences of these activist sex workers (many of whom have since stopped sex working due to the dangers of arrest and prison once they have taken a public and political stand) intersect with and illumine the texts in question.

I do not need to comment in detail on each reading, for I am interested in the deeper pattern of those interpretations. Yet one interpretation did grab me more than the others—to my surprise. It is the goddess reading of the anointing of Jesus. Now I am always skeptical concerning spiritual interpretations, exercising a healthy theological suspicion of any biblical reading (see especially Boer [In press]), so I approached this chapter on the gospels with a sense of duty rather than enticement. But before I knew it, I too was being oiled up and massaged. Anointing, it seems, is a vital part of sex work (let alone that the woman in the gospel narratives does it in public and at a banquet). As Gayle, one of the SWOP readers put it,

> It is not unusual in my practice, with my clients, to pamper them. In fact, it is part of what I do, it is, sorry, that is MAINLY what I do. I pamper them and I stroke them from head to toe, and I also give them a really good massage which includes the feet and the head. So it just depends on what kind of service you provide. I don't differentiate that much between the sensual and the sexual. It is for the receiver to determine what belongs in what category. It is a total experience and in addition to any of the more overt sexual practice, there is the touching and the holding and the caressing and the cuddling and sometimes bathing together, which could be interpreted as a form of anointing. (Ipsen 2009, 143)

Add to that the points that the foot is an extremely erogenous zone, that foot work is sex work, that anointing before burial may be seen as a lubrication before reentering the vaginal tomb, and the story of the anointing of Jesus becomes a sensuous moment on the verge of his passion (I write these words on Maundy Thursday). With this moisture-laden hermeneutical key (but see also Chapter 1 in this book), Avaren moves into the Greco-Roman world and the Bible to identify myriad occasions where anointing is explicitly or implicitly sex work: Ruth, Judith, Esther, one of the women in the Song of Songs, the woman of Ezekiel 16, and the strange woman of Proverbs 7:17—they all anoint themselves or others as a preparation for sex. These few taut pages (Ipsen 2009, 142–47) could do with a quiet massage, some oils of their own and the playing out of a full, lubricated interpretation of a string of biblical texts.

But I wish to make another connection—namely, to the SBL session Avaren organized in November 2009 (New Orleans). I actually went to this section before I read the book, so it was my first introduction to anointing as sex work. The session was absolutely riveting. Why? It was not your usual snoozy panel where academics droned on about this and that. Hardly, since Avaren had invited two of her friends and comrades to be on the panel, "Damienne Sin" (Lilith Silverkrow) and Shelly Resnick from SWOP.[3] After Avaren's opening, Damienne got up, introduced herself as a sex worker, dominatrix, Wiccan priestess . . . and then introduced her wife, Shelly, a transgender sex worker. From then on we—a crowd of about forty women and men in equal distribution—were hanging on every word of the presentations and the discussions.

We heard about the whore stigma, police stings, campaigns for decriminalization, the psychological effects, and social networks; witnessed the caring closeness of the networks; and heard of the manipulation of statistics concerning the traffic in women (it's blown way out of proportion as part of a xenophobic agenda), that many sex workers are occupationally bisexual, and also the tough experiences about life on the edge and outside of the law. But we also heard what it was like to read the Bible in this way, through the experiences and eyes of sex workers themselves. And this is where the extended treatment of anointing came in, for Lilith spoke of her practices in sex work, how she anoints and massages with scented oils, how she invokes goddess figures and is herself a Wiccan priestess, and how anointing is central to the way she engages in sex work. The connection was then made with the anointing of Jesus's feet, sensuously, openly, and expensively, as a preparation for burial. OMFG, I thought, that means "messiah" and therefore "christos" are intimately connected with sex work. Not only is the anointing of the priests in the Hebrew Bible or of kings like David by Samuel inseparable from the connection with sex work, but also the very name of Jesus—Christos—has through this multiple story in the gospels its origins in a narrative moment provided by a sex worker.

So after the session I had a chance to talk with Avaren, Damienne, and Shelly over a few drinks. Apparently, Avaren hadn't told them that what they had been invited to was a biblical studies conference. So they found out only when they

looked up the SBL a few days before going to New Orleans—"Avaren, what the fuck have you invited us to?"

Methods

Back to the book: this study gives the impression of having begun with a core idea—to read texts with sex workers—which was then filled out or layered with other, more sophisticated methodological concerns. The impression gains strength in light of the comment that the whole exercise was first tried out in a fledgling form with just two readers, "Sweet" and another woman, before the days of meeting, organizing, and action with SWOP (indeed "Sweet" was the one who encouraged Avaren to connect with SWOP and USPROS, or US PROStitutes). I must admit to finding the sheer practice of sitting down with a group like SWOP, passing around a smoke and maybe a drink, and reading a biblical text the most significant methodological feature of the whole exercise.

But the book also contains a long chapter situating this practice within a wider theoretical frame: it appears within the landscape of feminist analysis, sharpens it with liberation theology, especially through the preferential option for the poor (prostitutes), and the feminist reworking of Marxist approaches through standpoint theory. I am most taken with the last item in the theoretical collection—namely, standpoint theory, which Avaren defines as (following Sandra Harding): "1) utilizing women's experiences as new empirical and theoretical sources, 2) committed to doing research for the explicit benefit of women, and 3) locating the researcher on the same critical plane as the overt subject matter of research rather than keeping her hidden from view" (Ipsen 2007, 2; 2009, 30; see also Harding 1991). It is an adaptation of historical materialist analysis in order to focus on the experiences of women, especially those who are multiply marginalized and whose own voices are never heard in scholarly analysis. In fact, one of the great strengths of Avaren's analysis is the way she constantly locates prostitutes within the realities of exploitative economic systems. So we come across the military prostitute complex in relation to Hagar (Ipsen 2009, 68–69), the location of prostitution within economies of gross misdistribution and crisis, in which there is a higher incidence of prostitution by poor women in order to survive, as with the story of Solomon and the prostitutes (Ipsen 2009, 94–97), and a similar analysis of the exploitative extraction economy in relation to Revelation (Ipsen 2009, 173–74; see also Ipsen 2004). If anything, this analysis would have been strengthened at a theoretical level by picking up one of Antonio Negri's great ideas: *operaismo* or constitutive resistance. As mentioned earlier, after taking seven years in the 1970s away from research, writing, and teaching to organize with factory workers in Italy, Negri and his comrades developed a series of new ideas for analyzing capitalism. One of these was the finding that resistance does not react to a dominant and stable organization of power, but that the state and class power are constantly scrambling to adapt, counter, and crush the resistances of oppositional groups and their practices. It is a bold claim for the political motor of history by those groups who always feel themselves at the margins. It

is not for nothing that Negri's works (at times coauthored with Michael Hardt) have become central documents for the global web of anticapitalist movements (Negri 1991b, 2004, 2008a, 2008; Hardt and Negri 2000, 2004, 2009). But it would also provide some theoretical depth to the experiences and readings of these prostitutes, especially in terms of the police, law courts, religious and political processes that constantly seek to counter prostitutes and their activism.

This Marxist angle to Avaren's research was something she mentioned in that initial and polite email message she sent to me (knowing perhaps that it is one of my abiding interests). But another element of this approach troubles me to some extent: the heavy use of liberation theology as a framework and especially the central doctrine of the preferential option for the poor. I have critiqued elsewhere (Boer 2011a) some of the major elements of liberation theology, not least the holding of Marxism at arm's length, the ontological reserve (in which all the important parts are kept for God) and the claim that liberation theology draws primarily from the tradition of Roman Catholic social teaching, which formally dates from 1891 and the encyclical by Pope Leo XIII called *Rerum Novarum*.[4] It is in this last feature of liberation theology that the preferential option for the poor may be found.

Usually, the preferential option evokes poor peasants, laborers, the landless, homeless and stateless, refugees, especially women and children, and, in Avaren's argument, prostitutes. However, within Roman Catholic social teaching the preferential option for the poor is more wide ranging: it is the formalized and tidied-up version of an intermittent thread that focused on the ideal of poverty, charity, and an often revolutionary rejection of human political structures. It is "formalized" in the sense of sanctioning some elements; "tidied-up" in terms of banishing those revolutionary and "heretical" dimensions—that is, those that uncomfortably challenged the church's own dirty little relation with power.[5] What is left? The concern for and solidarity with the poor means not merely victims of injustice and oppression but also unborn children, the disabled, the elderly, and the terminally ill. Quite a mix, is it not? The catch is that both the conservatives and progressives within the Roman Catholic Church can claim this social teaching as their basis. Thus liberation theologians argue that what they do is nothing new, for the church has for a good while been proclaiming a preferential option for the poor and justice for the exploited. But so also can the conservatives who have systematically been placed in senior positions in the Roman Catholic Church where liberation theology held sway. They too can argue that their focus on eliminating abortion, preventing euthanasia (care for the terminally ill), and divorce comes straight out of the tradition of Roman Catholic social teaching—which, of course, it does. And where do prostitutes appear in this conservative form of the preferential option? They number among the unborn, terminally ill, and divorcees; that is, they should be eliminated or prevented.

Not quite the preferential option for the poor to which we have become accustomed. It is, I would suggest, a slippery program, for it may slide one way or the other: prostitutes versus unborn children, exploited homeless versus the elderly, victims of warfare versus the terminally ill, prostitutes as poor to be defended or

banned. At times I feel Karl Marx's and Frederick Engels's comment in the *Manifesto* regarding Christian socialism applies here too: it is "but the *holy water with which* the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat." And Avaren's analysis would have been just as strong without it.

Conclusion or Politics

It goes without saying that this is a very political book, indeed that Avaren's project is a political project. At one level it shares the political passion with other academic movements such as feminism, postcolonialism, and Marxism. But it is more than that, for every page, every sentence breathes the political passion. I mention but three features, as a way of winding up this phase of our conversation. First, it is a book that strongly sides with the sex-positive side of the debate over prostitution and pornography, or the "porn wars" as they were called in the 1980s (see the full survey and literature in Boer 1999a). As Avaren narrates, she initially sided with the abolitionist stand in prostitute politics, which is perhaps the most pervasive stand among many feminists, conservative politicians, and the religious right. But through her experience with the "Measure Q" campaign in Berkeley with SWOP she came around to a position of decriminalization, largely because this is the line that prostitute activists themselves take. One finds that the strongest words in the book are often directed against the abolitionists, who organized and eventually hijacked the possibility of decriminalizing prostitution in Berkeley.

I too am strongly in favor of decriminalization, but this opposition between abolition and decriminalization may also be mapped onto the way Avaren presents the interpretations of the prostitute texts of the Bible. Again and again she notes the way prostitutes have been erased, banished, and driven from the texts, in much the same way that "upright" citizens and the police try to "rid the streets" of hookers. For instance, even as sympathetic an interpreter as Margaret Guider (1995, 27) found that only the story of Rahab was retrievable for prostitutes. This program has been so successful that with the story of Solomon, the vast majority of readers simply do not realize that the text actually says the two women are prostitutes. The anointing stories of Jesus have been systematically cleaned up by a host of feminists keen to clear Mary Magdalene of the "false" association not only with the woman anointing Jesus but also with prostitution. The SWOP readers get around this concerted (and theologically motivated) campaign by simply pointing out that anointing is sex work, whether or not it is done by Mary Magdalene. And with Revelation a range of interpreters have argued the following: the whore Babylon is purely a metaphor; the metaphor has nothing to do with real, living prostitutes. I must admit to not having come across a more dreadful effort to detoxify a biblical text (see especially Ipsen 2009, 169–77). In response, the sex-positive readings of these texts restore the literary prostitutes, at times opening up new angles one has never seen before.

Third, I would like to pick up the question of the mediator—Avaren Ipsen. Too often one finds the intellectual mediator quietly effaced, especially in

postcolonial readings (Boer 2001b), but in the standpoint theory Avaren advocates the researcher herself must be on the "same critical plane as the overt subject matter of research rather than keeping her hidden from view" (Ipsen 2007, 2; 2009, 30). Politically a great move, but it leads Avaren into some tight spots. For example, the quandary over whether to include readings dealing with the sacred prostitute runs squarely against the wish of the SWOP readers to find those sacred prostitutes (Ipsen 2009, 42–43). Avaren is caught between the dictates of scholarship and the prostitute readings. At other times she sides with the latter and critiques the former, but the problem of straddling both continually presents problems.

But that is the nature of such a struggle, the difficulty of the organic intellectual, as Gramsci calls her. It shows up at a microlevel as well, in the sentence structures. The more obvious location for a clash of sentence structures is in the myriad quotations from the sex workers who read the Bible with Avaren. Full of "horseshit" and "fuck" and "cuz" and "motherfucking" and "ya know," it is the language of everyday working people for whom polite language is a marker of class, corruption, and double standards. My favorite is the revolutionary statement regarding the whore of Babylon: "I am not going to find any of this liberating until she says 'fuck you motherfuckers' and starts fighting" (Ipsen 2009, 204). This last quotation comes from one of those extraordinary collages at the end of each chapter, where Avaren weaves observations, comments, and reactions to the text in a stunning series of commentaries (Ipsen 2009, 86–88, 116–19, 161–65, 196–204). However, what strikes me about those collections is that they are confined. They may round out each chapter by way of conclusion, thereby having the final word, but they have been restricted to their own zone. And that stands in stark contrast to the formally more complex and impossibly "correct" formulations of the scholars who open each chapter. Avaren herself is overtly in between, mediating, critiquing, bringing together, and at times agonizing over the tension. Of course, she too sides with the prostitutes, but not without a struggle to keep their responses in contact with biblical scholarship.

All of which shows up in her sentences. Quite some time ago, Avaren confided in me that she is not always comfortable with the language of scholarship, for she was brought up as a welfare kid in a poor ghetto with left leanings. Thankfully, she hasn't entirely effaced those linguistic traces, for they show up time and again in her sentences. Turns of phrase such as "years back" (99), "all at the same time" (36) or "cause my paranoid mind" (37) offer the slightest tweaks and expressions that do not come from a scholarly environment. At times in reading this book it felt as though I was speaking with her, for as she speaks she is full of life, enthusiasm, body language, the offer of a smoke, and the feeling that she is not really quite at home among scholars. Fucking brilliant, as far as I am concerned.

CHAPTER 9

King Solomon Meets Annie Sprinkle

> The Holy Bible is so erotic. I sure hope they don't ban it.
>
> —Annie Sprinkle, *Post-Porn Modernist*

Given that we now have a method of sorts—hooker hermeneutics—I would now like to apply it, retrospectively, to another text concerning Solomon; not the one concerning the two prostitutes (1 Kings 3:16–28) but the one about the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1–13), albeit set within those fascinating first 11 chapters of 1 Kings.[1] However, I propose to give these hooker hermeneutics my own twist, first by means of three psychoanalytic concepts (the censor, libidinal investment, and the return of the repressed), then by uncovering the repressed sexual codes of 1 Kings 1–11, and finally through a ficto-critical encounter between Sheba-cum-Annie-Sprinkle and Solomon.

Before teasing out these three moments of my argument, I have one comment: earlier I used the word "retrospectively." How can a method be applied in this fashion, retrospectively? The catch is that this chapter originally appeared in article form (Boer 2000a) well before Avaren Ipsen's *Sex Working and the Bible* (2009). Indeed, as we saw in the previous chapter, it was precisely this essay that prompted Avaren Ipsen to make contact with me in the first place. So one could feasibly argue that the relation of cause and effect works in the other—temporally sequential and thereby "normal"—direction, from my essay to Ipsen's study. Not at all: for *Sex Working and the Bible* is logically and methodologically the prior text, the groundwork that enables this chapter to get under way. It is as though this chapter—when it was first a fumbling essay—was waiting for Ipsen's study in order to find itself.

Lacan Goes Down on Freud

> Nothing turns me on so much as watching sex with animals.
>
> —Annie Sprinkle

> As far as sex is concerned, there are three things I have never tried: I never fucked a horse, never did it with a dead person, and I never ate shit.
>
> —Annie Sprinkle, qtd. in Montano, "Summer Saint Camp 1987, with Annie Sprinkle and Veronica Vera"

The specific role of hooker hermeneutics in this chapter is to engage dialectically with the censor of the Solomon text (1 Kings 1–11). I take it as a given that pornography, which now comes under the umbrella of hooker hermeneutics, does not so much seek to avoid the censor—in whatever form—but relies on the censor for its very existence.[2] From the celebrated first moment of pornography—Pietro Aretino's *Pozitioni* (1524), a collection of sonnets to accompany some engravings of sex positions by Giulio Romano—the censor has been present. In Aretino's case, the publication was banned by the church, the engraver imprisoned, and Aretino escaped by the skin of a condom.

To give some theoretical thickness to the censor, let us now turn (again) to psychoanalysis, where it is customary to invoke the figure of the censor as that which plays a crucial role in the psychological construction of the individual, in dream interpretation, and in texts (Freud 2001, 15: 83–241; Lacan 1991a, 123–33). The censor is the barrier one must negotiate in the production of dreams, social organization, and the occasional literary text. This mythical "figure" seems to stand between the unconscious and conscious realms, mediating between the two so that the conscious will not give voice to the destructive, self-centered, and anarchistic forces of the unconscious (what would become in Lacan one element of the Real). But not only is the censor that which lies between conscious and unconscious, it is also the conscious itself, which functions as the barrier, the public face, the acceptable dimension of the unconscious. An alternative image is that of surface and depth: the censor is, in this image, the surface, the outer shell, the skin that simultaneously presents the final product for consumption and contains and represses the murky depths below. In order to get past the censor (that sentinel of the unconscious), the mind devises various techniques of repressing the desires and drives of the unconscious (Lacan 1991b: 187–99), particularly those that are socially and personally destructive (Freud used, among others, the examples of incest or the desire to kill). Such repression has its own costs, to which I will return later.

Interpretation, then, becomes a process of negotiating the censor, of releasing that which has been repressed (at least in terms of acknowledgment), of somehow finding a means to get past the surface to the "real" meaning in the depths below, in the space beyond the surface. This involves various ruses for getting past the censor, devices that fool it into giving up its secrets or that trick it without its knowing. The purpose of course is to come to grips with the unconscious, since this is where the real issues are to be found. The way this works is to search for signals of the unconscious in the conscious, for peripheral but

telltale markers and signs that another reality is in operation behind this one. These are the inversions, the slips, and parapraxes, the apparently unimportant items or characteristic of a text or a dream that seem to contribute nothing to its sense. In dream interpretation Sigmund Freud would focus on the extraneous item(s) and use those to overturn the apparent meaning of the dream in order to locate another meaning (Freud 2001, vols. 4–5). Similarly with texts, it is the symptomatic minor detail, the discardable item that provides the chink in the armor, the glimpse of another subterranean world that becomes the focus of interpretive attention. For in the end the censor does not do its job properly; it is never able to complete the task. Or, more precisely, the censor leaves traces of its own activity in the final product, whether that product is a dream, text, or social reality. It is the very marks of its censorship that provide the leverage point for interpretation.

Fascinating though it is, as devious as the censor's strategies may be, as problematic as the surface/depth model may be, what has become more interesting is the seething realm of the unconscious itself, the seductive, destructive, self-gratifying force that lies concealed within each one of us. Central to the unconscious—and one of my major concerns here—is the role of the libido, the sex drive (Freud 2001, 16:303–38; 18:225–60; Lacan 1994, 187–200; 1991a, 221–25). In the late Freud, it is one of the two basic human drives: alongside eros is thanatos, the death drive. As a basic drive, the libido manifests itself in a variety of different forms: in obsessions, in books that entice, thinkers who seduce, in a high level of productivity in other areas, in the passions and hates that one develops from time to time, in the political causes one pursues, and so on. And so we get "libidinal investment"—the process of attaching or investing one's libido in this or that cause, in one or another passion that is *not* explicitly sexual. Indeed, one way in identifying the marks or traces of the unconscious is through a reading practice that is attentive to the processes of libidinal investment, to the symptoms of significant passion and energy in the dream or in the text. Libidinal investment provides a good example of how the censor operates, for the censor represses the raw presence of the libido in the text; that presence is then mitigated, appearing in a range of alternative ways in the text that simultaneously mask and reveal the presence of the libido through the mode of masking itself.

A third item must now be brought into the discussion in order to complete the picture (for now at least) that I have been painting of the repressive role of the censor and the alternative ways the libido appears. This is the idea of the return of the repressed, a notion important for Freud from his early psychoanalytical work. Basically, the return of the repressed is a process by which what is repressed in a text, dream, or social formation appears elsewhere, later, and in another guise. Freud uses the example of a girl who tries to be as different as her mother as possible, developing all those characteristics that are diametrically opposed. However, as she gets older and bears children she gradually becomes more and more like her mother, until she achieves the identity she first sought in childhood. Similarly, the young man who develops a capable, honorable, and trustworthy character in opposition to his worthless and unbending father will

find with old age that he becomes the image of his father, as he wished to be as a child (Freud 2001, 13:132). So also the repression of sexuality, or rather the libido, will ensure that it appears in another guise, through symptoms or perhaps as a sexual perversity.[3] This is precisely what happens with libidinal investment, since it is a repressed form of the libido, forced to appear in other guises due to repression, awaiting the moment of its own return. And who is responsible for the repression in the first place? The censor.[4]

While all this is highly promising for the sort of reading of 1 Kings 1–11 I want to undertake, one significant modification of such a Freudian apparatus needs to be made. It concerns what I have designated as a depth model of interpretation: for Freud, what must be uncovered is that which lies below the surface, the unconscious. And this assumes that the surface, the realm of the censor (i.e., the conscious), is thereby concealing the truth, the real. What I want to suggest is that such a truth, concealed below the surface, is but one more surface that must, to use a spatial metaphor, stand alongside rather than behind the first. Of course, this is a postmodern move (depthlessness, the loss of affect) with a modernist method, but it makes a Freudian reading amenable to a situation quite different from when it was first developed. It means that both realms, the conscious and the unconscious, are as false or as true as each other.

Censoring Solomon

> In erotica, it just takes a feather; in porn, you use the whole chicken.
>
> —Annie Sprinkle, *Post-Porn Modernist*

> Sometimes the kinkiest people are the most spiritual.
>
> —Annie Sprinkle qtd. in Bell, *Whore Carnival*

As we turn to Solomon, let me engage for a moment in some vanilla biblical exegesis. 1 Kings 1–11 is commonly separated out as the material relevant to the story of King Solomon, although of course he is preceded by his birth notice (2 Sam. 12:24–25). This slice of text also slides into the next sequence—the split of the kingdom into Israel in the north and Judah in the south—in 1 Kings 11, which sets up the showdown between Rehoboam and Jeroboam in 1 Kings 12.

Within these 11 chapters a number of items play their part in the story: the succession narrative; Solomon's dream; the story of the two prostitutes; the list of officials; provisions and achievements; the building of the temple and his house; another vision; the payment of Hiram's debt; forced labor; the fleet; the Queen of Sheba; and Solomon's wealth, libido, and decline. However, the window into the seductive questions of libido, repression, and its return is through literary structure.[5] These chapters follow a noticeable and finely wrought pattern in which Solomon is first the ideal and wise king (chaps. 3–8), culminating in the account of the temple's construction (6:1–9:9), and then decline as an apostate (chaps. 9–11 or 12), as one who breaches the law—forced labor, foreign wives, and foreign gods—and is finally punished (Parker 1988, 1991, 1992; Frisch 1991a, 1991b; Brettler 1991). The point is that Solomon's decline, when its reasons are explicitly

discussed in 1 Kings 11:1–10 (over against implicit signs of legal transgression), is attributed to a libido out of control: sexual indiscretion (many, foreign wives) leads to religious indiscretion (worship of foreign gods). This negative coding of libido and its connection with religion is one dimension of the role of the censor in this text.[6] Another is its late biographical and textual return.

However, the connection of religion and sex in 1 Kings 11:1–13 suggests some form of repression and displacement in the Solomon narrative as a whole. Here David Jobling's work on 1 Kings 3–10 is pertinent (1992). He argues that these chapters, which appear as a "golden age" in the midst of negative material before and after 1 Kings 11:3–10, work around the three themes or semantic fields of economics, sexuality, and wisdom. The golden age is achieved by means of the twin themes of economics and wisdom, but sexuality is excluded or repressed. It appears only in Solomon's decline, as a return of the repressed, as that which invades the whole narrative and brings the kingdom tumbling down. Elsewhere, I have suggested that a fourth theme is religion itself, which appears in the golden age and also in the account of Solomon's decline, thereby linking the other themes with each other (Boer 1996, 150).

Yet the symptoms of the repressed libido appear in the other chapters, notably with the repeated references—repetition functioning as a sign of unresolved trauma—to Pharaoh's daughter in 1 Kings 3:1; 7:8; 9:16, 24. There is also the visit by the Queen of Sheba in 10:1–13 and the involvement of Bathsheba in his succession to the throne in chapters 1 and 2. All the same, the blessings given to Solomon in his vision at Gilgal mention wisdom or understanding, riches, and honor (the long life seems to come and go) but not the usual sign of divine favor in regard to sex—that is, myriad offspring (1 Kings 3:10–14). There is no mention of the offspring from Pharaoh's daughter nor is the account of the Queen of Sheba explicitly sexual. In fact, in 1 Kings 1–10, the idea of virility and fertility is conspicuously missing, at least until chapter 11. The only offspring that appears is that of the two prostitutes in 1 Kings 3:16–28, which Solomon suggests should be carved in two! Of course, the relation between Bathsheba and Solomon is distinctly Oedipal, with both of them striving to see off the old king and eliminate rivals.

However, there are signals of the investment of this libido in other areas. Thus the explosion of wealth and the calm political situation may be read as one level of such investment, but its most prominent form comes in the building of the temple and the palace. The energy devolved on such construction, the wealth devoted to it—much of the wealth production seems to be directed to this purpose—and the account of its dedication speak of a passion and apportioning of energy that is libidinal in force. With the completion and dedication of the temple—whose very erection may be seen as a sexual act (given its potential phallic dimensions, as we saw with Chronicles in chap. 6)—at the center of the narrative, Solomon is chronically impotent and celibate in the rest of the narrative.

Solomon's libido would seem to be everywhere and nowhere in 1 Kings 1–10, repressed but symptomatic—that is, until we arrive, somewhat breathless, at

chapter 11. In his priapic old age, his youth having been given over to the erection of the temple, Solomon succumbs to the wiles of foreign women (the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites; see 11:1). Whereas previously everything was intellectual, economic, and religious, now it is sexual and religious. The wives are responsible, we are told, for turning Solomon's heart away from Yahweh, since he allowed the worship of foreign gods in the high places (11:5, 7–8). This is in direct contrast to the temple and his fidelity to Yahweh earlier. Of course, it soon becomes clear, particularly with the mention of the raiders and bandits of 11:14–25, that these issues extend back throughout Solomon's reign, yet what counts is that the text locates them at the end.

Here, then, is the return of the repressed, although now allocated (by the censor) a negative valence. An uncontrollable libido, even in old age, leads not to murmurs of approval for such vigor but to disapproval for unfaithful religious observance. The repressed returns at other points as well, overflowing this particular narrative, especially with Solomon's appearance in the Song of Songs and the attribution of the Song to him, written (supposedly) for his Egyptian bride mentioned in the sexual exclusion zone of 1 Kings 1–10. It is interesting that later tradition in fact reverses the pattern of these chapters from 1 Kings where Solomon's libido escalates in old age: Solomon wrote, according to this tradition, the Song of Songs in his youth, Proverbs in his maturity, and Ecclesiastes in his old age. 1 Kings 1–11 therefore inverts this order, giving the libido reign at the wrong end of his life span.

But what interests me the most here—which will soon introduce us to Annie Sprinkle—is the close relation between religion and sexuality that I have described as the religion-sex axis. To begin with, the relation with Yahweh is cast in the sexual terms of fidelity and infidelity (although for Solomon this is then a queer relationship). Further, while Solomon is erecting the temple, the pivotal religious-sexual presence of chapters 1–10, his libido is at rest, limp, and repressed. However, when decline sets in, it is the explosion of his libido that causes all sorts of religious problems, which then leads to divine disapproval and political strife. 1 Kings 1–11 thus seethes with a repressed libido, symptoms of this repression, libidinal investment, and then the return of the repressed.

It is a situation ripe for none other than Annie Sprinkle.

Sprinkling (on) Solomon

> What is there to like about pissing on each other? . . . It is like saying, "all of you turns me on—your spit, your cum, your sweat, and I don't arbitrarily draw the line at your piss" . . . it can be an ecstatic experience to swallow pee. The diluted variety warms you like a nice cup of herb tea.
>
> —"The Sprinkle Report," qtd. in Annie Sprinkle, *Post-Porn Modernist*

> I imagined a new community of men with cunts, who could become a new political force of women taking over the world.
>
> —Annie Sprinkle et al., *Linda/Les & Annie: The First Female-to-Male Transsexual Love Story*

1 Kings 1–11, it would seem, is a very sex-negative text. So how might we assist textually impotent Solomon? What would the text look like if the censor were removed (assuming for a moment that that is possible)? What if the Queen of Sheba were to remove her headdress after descending from her camel in the streets of Jerusalem only to reveal that it was Annie Sprinkle? As a sex-positive feminist (and so identifying herself politically in the feminist debates over pornography and sex work), Sprinkle seems to be the perfect counterpoint to the sex-negative text of 1 Kings 1–11.

So let me (re)introduce Annie Sprinkle to biblical scholarship. Anyone who encounters her now, when porn has become somewhat mainstream with its surgically enhanced and hairless bodies, will be struck by the hairy crotches, floppy breasts and bellies, and big hairstyles (and that is only the men). So it is refreshing to go back to the seventies and eighties, with its lack of clear subgenres, amateurish production, and clear experimentation. As for Sprinkle—variously prostitute, pornographer, Jew, witch, artist, bisexual, polyamorous, celibate, avowed masturbator, and sexual therapist—in her performances, texts, workshops, and video/film productions since moving into performance art, she has followed an autobiographical pattern.[7] Over and over again, in many different combinations, the story of her life is told: in the books *Post-Porn Modernist* (three editions: 1991, 1993, 1998), *Hardcore from the Heart* (2001), and *Dr. Sprinkle's Spectacular Sex* (2005); in the stage shows *Post-Porn Modernist*, *Post Post-Porn Modernist*, *Metamorphosex*, *Hardcore from the Heart*, *Annie Sprinkle's Herstory of Porn*, and *Exposed: Experiments in Love, Sex, Death and Art*; in videos such as *Annie Sprinkle's Amazing World of Orgasm* (2007), *How to Be a Sex Goddess in 101 Easy Steps* (Sprinkle and Beatty 1992; Sprinkle 2008), and in a series of workshops and interviews (Juno 1991; Montano 1989).[8] Sprinkle speaks of her shy childhood as Ellen Steinberg, her time as a hippie at the age of 16, her experiments with sex, her early days as a masseuse and hooker, the transition to Annie Sprinkle, her work in pornographic film and video in her late teens and early twenties, the move into production and directing, and the exploration of more fringe sexual acts involving all bodily orifices and projections (she was arrested once for sodomy) and a range of body fluids, including urine, menstrual fluid, saliva, and female ejaculate. Eventually, with political activism and the growth of her role as a performance artist—along with the elder stateswomen

of prostitutes and porn stars such as Scarlot Harlot, Veronica Vera, Candida Royalle, Janet Feindel, and Gwendolyn (Bell 1994, 154–84)—she took on the role of Anya, the sacred prostitute, before moving (as I write) into semiretirement in Canada with her partner. In these narratives, she also moves sexually from shyness, to enthusiastic heterosexuality, to bisexuality, and then the eroticization of nature.[9] Her intensely autobiographical approach—although writing and performance is of necessity autobiographical in some way—overturns binaries such as Madonna/whore, viewer/performer, and reader/text, although she is not theoretically "pure" in the way this is done to the chagrin or ambivalence of some (Czekay 1993; Douglas 1993) and the delight of others.

X-egesis

> A sexy mind is a terrible thing to waste.
>
> —Annie Sprinkle, *Post-Porn Modernist*

What I propose to do, then, is reread the text of 1 Kings 1–11 over against various texts by Annie Sprinkle, particularly *Post-Porn Modernist* (1998). It is a simple exercise in illuminating the biblical text with insights from Sprinkle's work, a way of highlighting certain elements we might otherwise miss. I shall concentrate on those symptoms of repression in the text, eventually focusing on one of the most promising stories—namely, the visit of the Queen of Sheba, for here the myriad traditions that grew out of this passage present us with a veritable cornucopia of sexual deviance.

The first episode in 1 Kings 1:1–5 deals with Abishag the Shunammite, her beauty being the qualification for becoming the king's "fluffer." Even here sexual repression appears in the form of age: try as she might—wait on, attend, lie in his bosom, even serve him (1:2, 4)—the king "knew her not" (1:4). Of course, it does not say whether she "knew" him: although the text is silent on whether she is successful in giving him heat, the ominous final phrase of 1:4 suggests not. In fact, the word for warmth or heat (*hamma*) may also have sexual connotations (see Isa 57:5): David can no longer get it up, and Abishag seems to be of no help. I would suggest that Abishag's valiant efforts with David are like Annie Sprinkle's "mercy fucks," where she offers free sex to those for whom it is hard to come by: the homeless, handicapped, or old. Further, Abishag is like the fluffer on a pornography film set who is responsible for sustaining the erection of the male stars in the stop-start conditions of the studio. The contrast with Solomon is significant, for in his old age, "his wives turned away his heart after other gods" (1 Kings 11:4). Impotent during his prime, he excels as he ages; David, virile throughout, is impotent in his old age.

Had David, the "cock-collector" of 1 Samuel 18–20,[10] been able to get it up, it would have made for some intergenerational sex, and it may also have forestalled the maneuverings for the succession by Adonijah (1 Kings 1:5–10). Yet, in the succession struggle, the second symptom of repression appears—namely, an Oedipal relation between Solomon and Bathsheba. One time opponents,

Nathan and Bathsheba, now team up (1:11–31). Whether they are engaged in any fucking and sucking is beside the point, for the question is whether Solomon is a motherfucker? David is close to being usurped by the son, except that Solomon appears here in the pre-Oedipal stage, lacking definition and identity, still focused on his mother, who, with Nathan, takes the initiative. Perhaps she is the sonfucker. What is required is an intervention from Annie Sprinkle in order to get Solomon past his pre-Oedipal stage. After all, for Freud the overcoming of motherfucking is important for social "stability," as Solomon's order to kill Adonijah in response to his request for Abishag through Bathsheba suggests (2:19–25). All the same, the early shyness of Solomon is comparable to the quiet and retiring Ellen Steinberg, the teenager of the sixties who became Annie Sprinkle. Both of them share an initial reticence in political and sexual matters.

A third symptom, after the inaugural dream at Gibeon (although he does say to Yahweh that he is inexperienced, that he doesn't "know how to go out or come in" [3:7]),[11] is that of the two prostitutes (3:16–28) for whom he suggests cutting the child in two to find the "real" mother. While this may be read as a political allegory, with the shifting identities of Israel and Judah, Solomon and Adonijah, prostitute mothers and children, it is also a symptom of repression. The involvement of two figures with the same profession as Annie Sprinkle in Solomon's first text of wisdom is more than chance. For here the connection between wisdom and sex is made (as with Proverbs 1–9), and the very sign of their reproductive ability is the object of Solomon's incisive mind. Indeed, the proposed splitting of the child may be read as a metaphor not so much of Solomon's desire to penetrate and divide the child—with the phallic sword (2:24)—but of the sexual presence that the two prostitutes, who sleep together, bring. Solomon himself must discern and distinguish between the two, penetrated as he is by the wisdom of God (3:28).

The two prostitutes also resonate with a popular video of Sprinkle's: *The Sluts and Goddesses Video Workshop: Or How to Be a Sex Goddess in 101 Easy Steps* (Sprinkle and Beatty 1992; see the revised edition, Sprinkle 2008).[12] A documentary of an actual workshop, the purpose is to locate the slut and goddess within each woman. A series of activities, including religious rituals, dressing as sluts, and performing before one another and stimulating one another to orgasm (Sprinkle's signature minutes-long orgasm appears here) all serve to undermine the Madonna/whore binary. The prostitutes in the Hebrew text are both mothers and hookers, Madonnas and whores; and they come, significantly, as a pair before Solomon: one embodying the callous whore and the other as the tender mother.

While the libidinal investment in the construction of the temple is of interest for the sheer textual energy that is directed toward the temple details (6:1–38; 7:15–51), and then that of the palace (7:1–12), it is the recurring mention of the daughter of Pharaoh that constitutes the fourth symptom (3:1; 7:8; 9:16, 24; 11:1). All she seems interested in is houses and movement; there is no mention of sex or offspring. Yet she appears first in the list of wives in 11:1 that led Solomon's heart astray. So Pharaoh's daughter is the most direct connection between the repression of sex in 1 Kings 1–10 and its return in chapter 11.

The Tale of the Queen's Very Hairy "Legs"

> Feel free to masturbate; I'm sure you're getting really turned on.
> —Annie Sprinkle, qtd. in Virginia Vitzthum, "Annie Sprinkle Swims On"

However, it is the visit of the Queen of Sheba in 10:1–13 that has provided stimulus to the greatest sexual imagination and elaboration of subsequent traditions. For here it seems that the return of the repressed is most excited, flooding over everything when the boundaries of the text are breached. It is as though the desperate need of the text for sexual expression realizes itself in the traditions of the queen. So she comes riding astride a camel; her body rocking along. Solomon greets her graciously. Barely concealed by the veil is the characteristic smile, the gap in the teeth on the left side of her face, one breast partly exposed, and a nipple pinched by a clothes pin—Sprinkle has arrived. And she is needed as a hermeneutical key for both texts and traditions about the Queen of Sheba, for it is precisely pornography that is able to open up this material, as it were.

The text of 1 Kings 10:1–13 is both sparse in detail but leaves itself wide open for development. The queen comes to "test him with hard questions" (10:1), and Solomon "answered all her questions" (10:3), but there is no mention of the questions themselves. Her independence and subsequent submission are reflected in her questions, retinue, and final notice that "there was no more spirit in her" (10:5). She gives of her "gold," "spices," and "precious stones" (10:10), although it is the quantity of the spices that deserves notice. If it seems that the queen is the main giver and Solomon the passive receptor, then 10:13 balances the equation: "King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba every desire that she expressed." Here is the second trigger to further speculation, alongside that of the unnamed questions. Full of the promise that the tradition explores, the text represses any explicit sexual reference: even the Hebrew of 10:8 reads the words of admiration from the queen as "happy are your men," whereas the Septuagint and Syriac have, in a nervous mood about Solomon's absent libido, "happy are your wives."

What a contrast the traditions about the queen's visit present us: over against the dry text of 1 Kings 10 they present us with one dripping story after another. In fact, it seems as though the traditions about the queen had in mind Annie Sprinkle as their main protagonist, as the Queen of Piss, rather than the Queen of Sheba. For the first thing on which the tradition expands is the question of the riddles—three of them, in classic folklorish fashion—she presents to Solomon. They deal with menstruation, childbirth, breasts, gender indifference, and symbolic castration. Thus Midrash Mishle (on Proverbs) records the first riddle from the queen: "What are they? Seven depart and nine enter, two give drink but only one partakes." Ever wise, even in respect to the female body, Solomon responds, "No doubt, seven are the days of the menstrual cycle, nine are the months of pregnancy, two [refers] to the breasts that succor and one to the child born" (Lassner 1993, 162).[13] This sounds less like the Queen of Sheba and more like Sprinkle, who has a reputation for wearing the string of her tampon out when stripping (Sprinkle 1998, 82) and showing her cervix to the public during menstruation. Her breasts were in her heyday among the best known in pornography

(in itself, something of a feat), ensuring her plenty of early work in porn feature films and loops (Sprinkle 1998, 28). But perhaps it is the later tit-art—ranging from balancing champagne glasses on them, sporting Christmas decorations, painting them in yin and yang combinations, printing postcards with nipples dipped in paint, or posing for tits-on-the-head Polaroid photographs (Sprinkle 1998, 99–101)—that has supported her breasts as a signature feature. Yet Solomon would have been most impressed by the bosom ballet, in which Sprinkle stretches, pinches, squeezes, twists, rocks, rolls, and jiggles her breasts to various types of music, including the tap dance, polka, samba, and the "Blue Danube Waltz" under pink lights (Sprinkle 1991, 102–3). But Solomon, the astute reader will have noticed, is also interested in fluids; we will return to this in a moment.

The second problem for the king was, "A woman says to her son, 'Your father is my father. Your grandfather is my husband. You are my son and I am your sister.' His answer: 'the daughter of Lot' " (Lassner 1993, 162, 163, 174). However, it is the next question that raises the issue of body piercing, incision, and symbolic castration. Having brought in a group of males, she tells Solomon, "Distinguish the circumcised from the unclean" (Lassner 1993, 162, 163, 174). Solomon has the Ark of the Covenant brought in: the circumcised kneel, faces aglow, while the uncircumcised fall prostrate. Solomon may have answered the challenge, but the piety of the young men is a little misdirected, particularly in the light of bodily incision. Not only is it a symbolic castration, visited by the father on the son, but incision also produces sexual ecstasy. Sprinkle's friend and one-time lover, Fakir Musafar, is a case in point. Along with a multiply pierced foreskin, his nipples (stretched out so far it is possible to put a finger in the holes), chest, and face are also pierced. Indeed, Sprinkle's first act of piercing was done to Musafar's foreskin. Musafar went on to explore "body play," a masochistic combination of bondage, tattooing, piercing, pain rituals, body painting, wearing rubber, electric shock, masks, beds of nails, and walking on broken glass (Sprinkle 1998, 74–78). Perhaps the faces of the circumcised—all Musafars in their own way—were not so much "lit with God's radiance" as with the ecstatic anticipation of further masochism in which Solomon is about to take part.

In the later elaborations of the queen's story, her independence becomes a problem that must be overcome in the narrative. She rules on her own (and the way in which this comes about is an issue in some of the traditions) and comes with questions to Solomon (he answers them and subdues her). However, two episodes in the various traditions recur time and again, their very repetition indicating their importance, the inability to resolve a problem or a question that tugs at the story of the Queen of Sheba in the biblical text. The first is the uncertainty over gender that appears even in the modern tales, while the second deals with the queen's hairy legs or foot, viewed by Solomon through a ruse. However, with the hermeneutical assistance of Annie Sprinkle, these two episodes turn out to be closely related.

In the first episode, the queen quizzes Solomon on the issue of gender identity. Significantly, the episode itself varies in detail in the different tales, although gender bending and drag queens/kings are constant throughout. The episode has

some common features: the queen takes some males and females and attempts to fool Solomon either through gender neutrality or through gender inversion. Solomon is asked to discern their gender, and he does so by different means, although the use of nuts and grains is the most common motif. Thus according to Midrash Mishle, the queen takes extremely young children and neutralizes any external signs of gender by dressing them alike. Solomon spreads nuts and roasted grains before them, and the boys "gathered them and placed them in their garments," while the "more modest" girls "placed them in their headdresses" (Lassner 1993, 162). In the Yemenite tale of Saadiah ben Joseph, they are still young, but the boys grasp the same food by the handful and run off, whereas the girls "placed them in their laps and acted well behaved" (Lassner 1993, 174). By contrast, the age of the subject is not specified by the Midrash ha-Hefez. In a sexually charged version, the boys distinguish themselves by taking the roasted grains and nuts "open-handed," whereas the girls received them with a "gloved hand from inside their garments" (Lassner 1993, 163). Apparently drawing attention to the girls' modesty, this account gloriously confuses gender through the open and gloved hands, the boys showing all the characteristics of open vaginas and the girls of penises peeking out from their hiding places. In a recent Jewish folktale, the queen inverts clothing, jewelry, and mounts (horses for the boys and camels for the girls, who are now young adults), covers their faces and orders the girls to lower their voices and the boys to raise theirs (Lassner 1993, 178–80). On this occasion the "girls" receive the nuts open-handed, whereas the "boys" lift the hem of their dresses. This folktale is similar to that of the Muslim Tha'labi, where the clothing, jewelry, and voices are inverted, although in this case their modes of washing distinguish them, the girls transferring water from vessel to vessel by hand, splashing it on their faces, the insides of their forearms, and pouring it rather than letting it run (Lassner 1993, 194–96).[14]

More delectably still, another recent Jewish tale relates gender bending to the queen's hairy legs. In this tale the boys and girls are born on the same day and are identical in appearance. This time they are all dressed as girls, the boys taking the nuts and dates in the hems of their skirts, whereas the girls put them in kerchiefs. But now Solomon is far more interested in the queen's hairy legs, responding to her question "what am I like?" with "those legs of yours are like a young man's but your face is that of a girl" (Lassner 1993, 181). Given that those of us from Northern Africa and Middle East are among the hairier creatures of God, they would have been a bushy pair of legs indeed. The gender construction here is exacerbated by the other versions of this incident in which the king, hearing of her shaggy reputation, devises various ruses in order to catch a glimpse under her skirts (Lassner 1993, 167, 175, 179). They revolve around gaining reflected vision beneath the hem: thus, in Targum Sheni on the book of Esther, a court of glass in which the king sits looks like water to the queen, who then raises her skirts as if to wade through. Alternatively, water is splashed on marble in order to look like a pool (Saadiah ben Joseph), or the floor has mirrors, or slabs of glass (Qur'an, surah 17:44). And sometimes her ankles rather than her legs are

exposed to view. The solution is to enable the depilation of the queen's legs before she and Solomon have sex.

I desperately want to gaze on those hairy "legs," but in order to increase the pleasure, let us delay for a few moments and consider the whole issue of viewing with Annie Sprinkle's "Public Cervix Announcement," during which she inserts a speculum in her vagina and then invites audience members to look inside with a flashlight, engaging in conversation with them as they do so. Originally performed in her burlesque shows, it was used before the intermission of the *Post Post-Porn Modernist* show and then the shows of the years following. What is interesting here is that it is not merely a way of viewing pussy, but it foregrounds and then undermines the eroticism of the act both through dialogue with the viewer and with the suggestion that it is the logical extreme of voyeurism: "You want to see pussy," she says, "I'll show you pussy" (Kapsalis 1997, 173; Juno 1991, 34). One might also see it as the logical outcome of the view of the queen's ankles and legs: "There was a time that women couldn't wear skirts above their ankles, then they wore miniskirts. This is the next step" (Kapsalis 1997, 115). But might it not be that Solomon also sees in the shiny floor an image of himself? Perhaps, especially if we take up Luce Irigaray's use of the term "speculum" as not only an instrument but also a mirror that reflects the viewer's image (1985, 255). In the queen's hairy nether regions Solomon finds himself.

Yet what demands most attention is the instability of gender. In light of the indistinguishable gender of the children or the young women and men, as well as the hairy legs or ankles of the queen, I would suggest that the tales of Annie Sprinkle may be read as a continuation of precisely this tradition. Or rather, Sprinkle fills in, via the tales, the gaps of the text of 1 Kings 10 itself. Although she ostentatiously sports all the physical parts of the female body, the way that body is socially and ideologically constructed has always been challenged. The childhood photographs are carefully constructed as "preporn," yet they are also sexualized in terms of anticipations of adult skills, passions, and fetishes. Taking on the binaries of female construction, she is prostitute and artist, slut and goddess, heterosexual and lesbian.

But the queen does not merely problematize the construction of the female—through being a ruler, traveling to seek answers to her questions, challenging Solomon, growing the hair on her legs—she also challenges the construction of males. For what she does with her body (legs) and behavior (publicly assertive) raises the question of gender itself. It is as though the "Drag King for a Day" workshops by Dianne Torr at the Sprinkle Salon also took place at the court of Solomon, this time with the queen and the young women presented to Solomon as the participants. In the text of 1 Kings 10, Torr seems to have taught them to "walk, talk, act and look like men" (Sprinkle 1998, 131). Of course, the picture is complete with the attendees—the young boys dressed by the queen—of the male-to-female (MTF) students from the Academy of Boys Who Want to Be Girls run by Sprinkle's close friend, Veronica Vera. The queen herself appears before Solomon as Dick, the army guy in camouflage jumpsuit, or as Mr. Andie Sprinkle, the needy businessman, or as Deadhead, the hippie male persona.

While this gets close to gender fuck, the ultimate in reconstructing gender is the film, or rather "docuporn," directed by Sprinkle and called *Linda/Les & Annie: The First Female-to-Male Transsexual Love Story* (Sprinkle, Jaccoma, and Armstrong 1990). The film is a love story turning on Linda/Les's sex change. Sprinkle fell in love with a woman called Linda, who then undergoes a sex change to become Les, a macho, beer-swilling, iron-pumping, tattooed man with a constructed penis, made erect with a plastic insert. The difference with Les was that he kept his/her female genitalia, just below the new penis constructed with skin grafts from legs and abdomen. Apart from masochistic practices such as being walked on in high heels, sleeping under the bed or being locked in the closet, Les abused his hormones (wanting sex all the time) and enjoyed dressing as a woman and reverting to his femme personality: a female-to-male transsexual male-to-female transvestite (Sprinkle 1998, 126–29; Bell 1995, 39–40; Juno 1991, 35–37). Watching the video with one eye and reading 1 Kings 10 with the other, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between the two: is Sprinkle the queen? Or is it Les? What of Solomon? Is he Les or Sprinkle? In fact, it seems that both the queen and Solomon appear in both Les and Sprinkle. I imagine a situation in which, like Josiah's "finding" of the book of the law in the temple, another film was found by the priests in the temple, during a rare cleanup: *Solomon/Sophie & Bilqis: The First Male-to-Female Transsexual Love Story*.[15] Solomon has a vagina constructed where his testicles used to be, using the skin of his testes to construct the vulva. Having recovered from the operation, the queen/Sprinkle encourages him to take more hormones than he should so that his/her breasts will grow quickly. Having both a vagina and a penis suits a bisexual like Sprinkle: she can have it and give it both ways.

However, it seems to me that Linda/Les is more the queen herself. The giveaways here are the hairy legs, ankles, or feet. For not only do the hairy legs "like a young man's" generate confusion for Solomon (the voyeur) or merely suggest foot fetishism (see Montano 1989, 99), but they also signify the queen's genitals. In some stories, Solomon sees the hairy ankles beneath a lifted skirt, but this is precisely the act that enables Solomon to distinguish the "boys" in the gender test: they are the ones in some cases who are not afraid to lift their skirts in order to hold the nuts and grains—in other words, the queen behaves in precisely those ways that lead to an identification of "boy" by Solomon. In other stories, Solomon does not cause him/her to lift his/her skirts; he merely peers up the skirts with the assistance of the wet/glass/mirrored floor. He has, in other words, seen all the way up, and what he has seen has shocked him: both the luxurious full bush of her vagina *and* the hairiest legs or feet—which of course signify a penis.[16] The queen is really a "queen," a hermaphrodite with both genitals. The problem in some of the stories is how to remove the thick hair *without a knife* in order to avoid her cutting her ankle. Is this not the fear of castration itself? Solomon wants to castrate her without castrating her. What is this but the signal of a hermaphrodite, of Linda/Les in the court of Solomon?

All the same, there are other uses for feet, ankles, and legs. Not merely content with conventional fisting—preferring the hand in either of the nether

orifices—Solomon also desires the queen's foot and ankle in his own rosebud, whereas the queen may well want the king's foot in her own apertures. While pushing the boundaries of physical impossibility, especially for the anus, Annie Sprinkle has provided a convenient mode for doing so—with amputees. Thus in a famous sequence Sprinkle's friend, Long Jean Silver, inserts the stump of her lower leg in Sprinkle's vagina; this was the basis for a charge of "sodomy" (i.e., "an abominable, detestable act against nature") in New York state (Sprinkle 1998, 47–49). The pictures were originally intended for an issue of *Love* magazine but were confiscated by the police in a raid. I suspect that the queen's hairy ankle was used for the same purpose, given Solomon's hair fetish.

Eventually the queen must return home to Sheba, but it is notable that the episode is followed, after a notice regarding the king's wealth (1 Kings 10:14–29), by the attribution of Solomon's decline to the "foreign" women (1 Kings 11:1–13). The queen's visit leads into 11:1: "King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women." However, after a visit from Annie Sprinkle, the queen of piss, the possibilities of the harem become more enticing, replete with the inversion of penetrator and penetrated, the use of dildo, penis, tongue, hand, and foot, of all bodily orifices, the celebration of hair and skin, of bodily fluids, such as male and female ejaculate, piss, sweat, saliva, mucus, vomit, and tears, and perhaps even the occasional animal.[17]

Conclusion

> King Solomon gave to the Queen of Sheba every desire that she expressed.
>
> —1 Kings 10:13

> If one of us had a cock, we'd get married.
>
> —Veronica Vera, speaking about Annie Sprinkle in Linda Montano, "Summer Saint Camp 1987"

> I make this shit up, but then I find out later that it is real.
>
> —Annie Sprinkle, qtd. in Shannon Bell, *Whore Carnival*

What, then, is the function of pornography? Its role is, as I argued earlier, to produce real fantasies. What might be the fantasy of 1 Kings 1–11, especially 10:1–13? Is there room for another piece of the tradition?

When the Queen of Sheba, variously Sprinkle and Bilqis by name, heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to test him with hard questions (10:1), for she had heard that he was sexually repressed and was given to passive penetration fantasies. She herself was the daughter of a jinn, ruler of her kingdom, fiercely independent, and an earlier incarnation of Annie Sprinkle. She was also fabulously rich herself, having inherited part of her fortune from her jinn father and mortal mother and having amassed the remainder working as a prostitute, porn star, and performance artist. So she brought with her heaps of spices, gold, and precious stones (10:2) in order to impress the king-with-the-limp-dick. The journey from Sheba was long, hot, and dusty. Yet even though the camels were not the most

comfortable means of transport, they had lovely prickly fur that made her tingle every time she rubbed up against them. And they had the most amazing tongues.

Solomon heard that she was on her way, so he nervously set out to impress and subdue her. He had the temple and palace cleaned and refurbished, he depleted the countryside of its best animals, crops, and fruits; called in all his officials; increased the number of his servants, and dressed the whole lot in new clothes. Vast tables were set up in the meeting halls for banquets. The temple slaughteryards were filled with bleating and lowing animals, ready for a splatter fest on her arrival (10:3). Deep down, he knew that all this energy was merely a substitute for his own inability to get it up. Was he not the laughing stock of the kingdom? Was he not known as Solomon the Soft?

Finally, the queen arrived in Jerusalem, atop her camel, smirking beneath her veil. Solomon's officials greeted her and bowed low, trying to peer under her skirts, for they had heard rumors. Frustrated, they led her into the palace, along corridors of cool stone and into the audience chamber. She stopped, for it looked as though it was covered with water. Solomon fidgeted on his throne at the other end. The queen paused for a moment, drew up her skirts without thinking, and crossed the floor. "Fuck," she realized, too late, and let her skirts drop. She caught sight of Solomon, now still on his throne, a look of anticipation on his face as she drew near.

Solomon stood and bowed. "Greetings, Annie, Queen of Sheba. Yahweh has indeed smiled upon the wisest of kings with your visit."

Sprinkle genuflected in return. "Hail, Solomon. Yahweh grants wisdom indiscriminately to whom he pleases. I have some puzzles for you, given your reputation in this area."

"Speak on," he said, unnecessarily.

"What are they? Seven depart and nine enter, two give drink but only one partakes."

"No doubt, seven are the days of the menstrual cycle, nine are the months of pregnancy, two refers to the breasts that succor and one to the child born."

"OK," said the queen. "Try this one? A woman says to her son, 'Your father is my father. Your grandfather is my husband. You are my son and I am your sister.' "

"The daughter of Lot," said Solomon. Things have taken a kinky turn, he thinks.

"Distinguish the circumcised from the unclean," said the queen, presenting Solomon with four circumcised and four uncircumcised males. Solomon brings out the Ark of the Covenant, evoking Yahweh, the ultimate "top." The uncircumcised four were unimpressed, but the faces of the other four glowed in anticipation of some cutting edge S-M. They were led away to the chamber.

"So far you win," said the queen, noticing the king's enjoyment of the direction things were going. "Bring in the others," she commanded. Six identically dressed and bejeweled teenagers were brought in, with identical makeup and hair. "Tell me, who are the boys and who the girls?"

"Bring me some nuts and roasted grain," said the king. He placed the bowls before the youths. One stretched out bare hands, took some and ran off; another

put out a gloved hand and sat down calmly; yet another gathered up the grain and nuts and placed them in the garment; a fourth put them in the headdress; a fifth placed them in the lap; another accepted the nuts openhanded and ate them; while the sixth lifted a skirt and put the nuts and grain in its hem. "Those are girls, and those boys," said Solomon, without indicating anyone in particular. This lack of gender specific behavior was a cause of some concern.

"Neither," said the queen, with some glee, "they are all eunuchs." To an official she said: "Tell them to wait here." And to Solomon she said, "Now, what do you know about me?"

"You have the face of a beautiful girl but the hairy legs of a muscled young man," said Solomon, with some anticipation.

"How do you know?" said the queen, testing the king.

"You lifted your skirts when you crossed the room and I saw your hairy ankles. Besides, the floor is made of mirrors and I was able to see beneath your skirts as you walked across. Very impressive! I like hair and muscles and the rest of what you have under there."

The queen lifted her skirts to reveal to Solomon, as well as the officials and youths in the room, the hairiest crotch they had ever seen. Above her cunt was a huge penis, although it was unclear in the gloom whether this hairy member was a strap-on or made of flesh and blood. Not that it mattered too much.

"I heard you were special," drooled Solomon, as he descended from the throne and ran his hands up the queen's hairy legs, relishing the feel of human hair on his nerve endings, the muscled thighs and calves. With a nod, the officials had relieved Solomon of his robes and tossed them aside. They stood by, awaiting further orders. Solomon's own dick was a sorry sight, limp and minuscule, hardly appropriate for such a great ruler. Yet he was past embarrassment and it was not as though it was such a secret.

He spat on the queen's cock before going down on her: it was either the real thing or very good rubber, he decided. The young people also were getting excited, touching and playing with the officials, using their tongues and fingers in very ingenious ways. Solomon the Soft moved from the queen's cunt to her anus, rimming it and coming back to her cunt, moving back and forth, getting quite dizzy in the process, until she came and came and "there was no more spirit in her" (1 Kings 10:5). Solomon was drenched in ejaculate and piss, sucking up what he could.

And then it was the queen's turn to penetrate Solomon. A couple of officials spread the king's hairy cheeks, lubricated them with their spit while the plumbing was connected. The huge cock was gripped tightly by the king's anus.[18] She stroked away it and seemed to hit the spot for the king, for he came as never before: "Never again did 'spices' come in such quantity as that which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon" (10:10). She withdrew and let forth a jet of hot piss on Solomon's ass.[19] It spattered and dripped on the floor. As the undecipherable eunuchs lined up for their share, the straps unfortunately broke, and the dildo remained stuck.

This page intentionally left blank.

CHAPTER 10

Orientalist Camp

The Case of Allen Edwardes

Orientalist camp: an orientalism that has gone over the top, suffused with a sense of too-muchness that ends up being a parody of itself. It is perhaps the best way to describe a number of books written in the 1960s by the enigmatic and now largely forgotten Allen Edwardes: the extraordinary *Erotica Judaica* (Edwardes 1967), as well as the once popular *The Jewel in the Lotus* (Edwardes 1965), *The Cradle of Erotica* (Edwardes and Masters 1962) and *Death Rides a Camel* (Edwardes 1963).[1] Breathing the prurient air of a sexual liberator, these works uncover an "East" and—especially for my purposes—a Bible and its interpreters teeming with all manner of sexual lusts and peccadilloes. Indeed, the impression one gains from reading these works is that an atemporal "East" scarcely has time for vanilla sex, for with engorged vulvae and clitorises, castrated men (testicular or whole block and tackle), randy priests, prostitutes, gays, pederasts, necrophiliacs, and zoophiliacs, the East simply spends its time rubbing, stroking, exciting, teasing, nibbling, wriggling, sucking, slurping, moaning, leg-lifting, penetrating, or being penetrated by anything with a pulse.

Erotica Judaica, my main concern in what follows, offers an occasionally insightful, at times outrageous, but always fascinating survey of the Bible and its rabbinic interpreters, all of which show up the kinky earthiness of the biblical texts and the rabbis at their very best. However, in order to situate this study, let me ask two questions: Why Edwardes? And why orientalist camp?

I am most interested in Edwardes for two reasons. First, he provides a very different peephole into the cubicle of the sixties, one in which the Bible and its interpretation plays the lead role. Others may have the occasional chapter, such as the superficial first chapter ("Sex and Seduction in the Scriptures") of Oscar Meredith's *The Lure of Lust* (1969), but none give a singular and faithful devotion

to the Bible and its queer interpreters. Second, Edwardes is an intriguing and disappearing character. Unlike Albert Ellis, who wrote the preface for *Jewel in the Lotus* and who went on to establish his own institute in New York and become one of the most influential and cited psychologists of the latter half of the twentieth century, or R. E. L. Masters, who also established an institute—the Foundation for Mind Research—but used it to promote the way of the five bodies of the goddess Sekhmet as the key to our psychic and spiritual well-being (Masters had perhaps smoked one too many joints—see www.robertmasters.org), Edwardes simply disappears without a trace after his books appeared. Some have suggested that Edwardes was a nom de plume for the aforementioned Robert Eduard L. Masters. Yet his oblivion now is in a directly inverse relation to his popularity in the sixties. So I am intrigued, my curiosity has been piqued, and I wish to explore what was appealing—for Edwardes and his readers—about the Bible in the sexual revolution of the sixties.

Orientalism and Camp

> For the East was like a feverish woman with whom the unwary Occidental was having sexual congress. She gripped him in blind ecstasy and delirium that built to an intolerable pitch and then, just before the fiery second of release, plunged a knife into his heart.
>
> —Allen Edwardes, *The Jewel in the Lotus*

The answer to my second question takes me into the adjoining rooms of orientalism and camp. Keen to get onto Edwardes, we will not tarry long here. Glossing Edward Said (1992), orientalism may be understood as a complex and largely false ideological construction of "the Orient" based on economic dependency and social exclusion. For Said, orientalism is clearly an instance of what Marxist analysts would call false consciousness: a mistaken and contradictory perception of reality that is generated out of and seeks to conceal alienated social and economic conditions. Marx's great example is religion, which is the sign that things are not as they should be here on earth, with the upshot that we should not direct our critiques against religion—or indeed any ideological mystification—but against the conditions that produce it (Marx 1845a, 1845b; see further Boer 2012). Said is more interested in the mystification than the economic reality, in the way orientalism has been produced out of a distinct academic discourse (his debts to Foucault come in at this point), and his analysis has had the profound and field-changing effect that few of us are able to achieve, as well as its share of logical problems. But my interest is in a somewhat different area—namely, the way Said also draws on psychoanalysis to argue that the East becomes the repository of all that is other, alien, and exotic, that indeed Europe and the West define itself by being everything that the East is not.

The East becomes a locus of sensuality and (often perverse) sex. Although Said laments that this is not "the province of my analysis here, alas" (Said 1992, 188), others have felt the rising urge to take up the analysis. The East was one

of the first destinations not merely for well-heeled, nineteenth-century tourists but also for sex tourists. Climate, food, culture, laziness, religious traditions—that is, a steamy versus a temperate climate, spicy versus plain food, open versus repressive culture in regard to sex, lax versus vigorous workdays, lascivious versus austere religions—these were seen to provide the conditions for a sexual overload, an exoticism that was both abhorrent to reserved Europeans and incredibly seductive.[2] Richard Burton may have sought to localize these tendencies with his infamous "Sotadic Zone," a varying band of the globe, comparable to an equatorial zone but now characterized by gay sex, which included lower France, the Iberian Peninsula, Italy, Greece, the coastal regions of North Africa, through the Middle East to China and Japan (see Edwardes 1965, 201–2). Gustave Flaubert wrote about his visits to famous Egyptian brothels and fortuitously acquired syphilis in Beirut in 1849–50 (Behdad 1994, 53–72), the naturalist Gerald Durrell sought to fill his supposedly gargantuan sexual appetites in Egypt during the Second World War, André Gide lost his virginity on the dunes of Algeria in 1893 (Boone 2001, 43–44), and my former professor of classics confessed in a lecture that he had had the best gay sex of his life in a street in Istanbul in the 1970s. Novelists, journalists, poets, artists, travel writers, sociologists, and ethnographers have all traveled to the East from the West in search of whatever could not be found in Europe. At times the sex tourism itself became the story, as we find with the journey of Lorenzo to India, Malaya, China, and Japan in *Oriental Love in Action* (Comisso 1966).[3] Edwardes's works clearly fit into this construct of an East falling over to have sex in more ways than one could possibly imagine and then some.

But why camp? It seems to me that Edwardes overshoots his mark, offering a picture of the sensual and pumping East that goes way over the top. In order to understand this excess, I draw on the category of camp, which should be defined as both a strategy of interpretation and a form of cultural production. As interpretation, camp appropriates older "straight" cultural products and reads them in a queer way, picking up moments when the text's normality spills over to indicate its own instability. As production, camp becomes a strategy of artistic work, one that plays its hand openly in seeking to subvert cultural norms. A little history: Susan Sontag first identified camp as a distinct strategy, although she offered a curiously desexualized, depoliticized, and privatized definition with the connotations of homosexuality minimized (Sontag 1994, 275–92).[4] While Sontag argued that camp is an unintentional "sensibility" rather than an intentional "idea," the study of camp has itself sought to overturn conventional readings of camp: initially the gay, lesbian, and bisexual dimensions of camp were seen as one, small aspect, but subsequent critics have argued that camp is primarily a queer activity that has been co-opted by straight society (see Robertson 1996, 4). Two points are worth making in relation to my analysis. First, although there has been some debate over the territory and ownership of camp—gay male (Meyer 1994), feminist (Robertson 1996), or straight (Creekmur and Doty 1995)—all agree that it is ultimately a queer strategy: "Camp has the ability to 'queer' straight culture by asserting that there is queerness at the core of mainstream culture even though

that culture tirelessly insists that its images, ideologies, and readings were always only about heterosexuality" (Creekmur and Doty 1995, 3). Second, and most importantly, camp generates, according to Al LaValley, a "*sense of too-muchness, the excess, or inappropriateness*, produces a sudden self-consciousness in the viewer, but one that needn't dissolve the basic meaning of the gesture" (1995, 65; emphasis added). Camp takes hold, in either cultural production or interpretation, when there is an overload; an unaccountable excess; a moment that snaps the unspoken contract between author and reader, viewer, or listener that estranges everything and makes it suddenly seem queer. So it is with Edwardes, especially in an orientalist direction.

Edwardes and Company

When pondering this time in the sixties, for which no apology should be made (Sayres et al. 1984) and whose impact is still being felt, I imagine Edwardes, Robert E. L. Masters, Albert Ellis, and sundry others sitting about of an afternoon, passing around a joint and a flagon of cheap wine, and spinning ever more elaborate and erotic yarns. "As for the origin of syphilis," says Edwardes, "it found its origin not in female prostitution but in the sodomy and fellatio of ancient Syria (*Esh-Shaum*)." After some mutterings about the lascivious and perverse Syrians, he goes on, "thence it was transmitted to Greece and Rome, infecting the entire Mediterranean region, and gradually ate its way around the globe" (Edwardes 1965, 124).

"How about this," says Masters, after sucking deeply from a joint and quoting from Sheik Nefzawi's *The Perfumed Garden*: "A man who would wish to acquire vigor for coition may likewise melt down fat from the hump of a camel, and rub his member with it just before the act; it will perform wonders, and the woman will praise it for its work" (Burton 1963, 129).

"Ah, but nothing beats the cure for impotence in the East," says Edwardes. "The Persians were notorious for their use of the *m'yaujung* (anointed battle-root, or artificial phallus). This, generally made of wood, was first dipped in olive oil, then sprinkled with fine pepper and ground nettles. Worked into the anus, it produced instantaneous results" (Edwardes 1965, 80).

On they go, telling stories of brothels, massive cocks, engorged vulva, and protuberant clitorises, of anal sex, group sex, lesbianism ("tribadism" or "sophism"), gay sex, bestiality, pederasty, and so on. As they do so, an amanuensis takes notes in shorthand—much like what Gretel Adorno did during the discussions of her husband and Max Horkheimer, giving us the masterpiece, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002). When sober, the rough manuscripts come back to them written out in full, ready to edit, add notes, references (should they wish to appear scholarly) and then go off once again for a second typing up.

The circle of already aging hippies (Ellis was in his fifties and Masters in his forties), with the soft smoke of joints curling upwards only to be whisked off in the breeze, may be an imaginary construction, but the spate of books produced in this period is certainly not. Published by the Julian Press in New York[5] and

Luxor in London (with its telltale yellow covers for the paperbacks), they dealt with all manner of topics relating to sex. Many were devoted to contemporary issues such as the unborn child and sex (Limmer 1969), the homosexual revolution (Masters 1962), "forbidden" sexual practices and morality (Masters 1966), sexual offences (Karpman 1954), and, above all, Ellis's classic *Sex without Guilt* (1958), which became a textbook for the sexual revolution. A significant niche was found for both new books on Eastern erotica and the republication of older works that had been banned or repressed under the Obscene Publications Act of 1857, such as those by the brilliant, irascible, and pugnacious nineteenth-century scholar–soldier–con man, Sir Richard Burton (1821–90), especially his translations of *The Book of* a *Thousand Nights and a Night* (1959 [1885]), the *Kama Sutra* (Burton and Arbuthnot 1964 [1883]), and, from the French translation, *The Perfumed Garden of the Shaykh Nefzawi* (Burton 1963). Burton himself—when not roughing up locals on his travels, annoying his Victorian imperial bosses, concocting tall tales, and alienating nearly everyone with whom he came into contact—had formed the "Kama Shastra Society," which had the explicit purpose of circulating precisely those works that had been banned. Victorian pornography may be the best description for these early works, which were designed for the discerning gentleman who sensed that he might be doing something a little risqué, but they were republished in the 1960s as a sign that the old restrictions were being rolled away, although not without a sense of rebellion and liberation (some were still issued with a notice "for adults only").

Riding their boards at the front of the sexual liberation wave, Ellis, Masters, and Edwardes produced a spate of new works. Ellis may have been the more sober of the three, always conscious of being academically reputable and often described now—after dying at 93 in 2006—as one of the three most influential psychologists in the history of the discipline. Masters may have gone into the goddess and other esoteric spiritual-sexual pursuits, but Edwardes achieved two things the others did not: he tackled what they all thought was the source of sexual repression head-on, and he managed to tip over the edge to orientalist camp. As for the first point, Edwardes focuses directly on the Bible to argue that even in matters of sex the Bible really is the church's "bad conscience" (as Ernst Bloch would have it). The second achievement is the burden of what languorously stretches out before us.

You Gotta Say Yes to another Excess

> A humid kiss is better than a hurried coitus.
>
> —Richard Burton, *The Perfumed Garden of the Shaykh Nefzawi*

Erotica Judaica is an extraordinary read. Most profitably read on a train or bus, with the bold and large letters of the title spread along its spine in order to attract attention, not a few fellow travelers will give you quizzical, sneering, bemused, and slightly disgusted you-dirty-old-man looks. From a close reading of this work, it is clear that Edwardes is not stupid, for his etymologies are often rather

astute, picking up stray senses within the semantic clusters of words. His linguistic skills are not meager, for he cites Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Persian, Greek, and Latin sources. And his smooth skill with written English even provides a series of arresting neologisms. I have now added to my arsenal terms such as bejerked (Edwardes 1967, 99), circumcisiophobic (1967, 134, 186), deprepucization, and deprepucized (1967, 138), antideprepucization (1967, 143—analogous to antidisestablishmentarianism), prepuciophobes (1967, 159), and deforeskin'd (1967, 138). And at times he makes proposals that would only appear in biblical scholarship decades later, such as the argument that Ezekiel's texts are at times pornographic (Edwardes 1967, 91–92; Brenner 1995, 1996; Carroll 1995), or that a major feature of the close circle of David, Saul, Jonathan, Bathsheba, and Uriah is deeply bisexual (Edwardes 1967, 79–83; Jennings 2005), or the scholarly interest in the relics of the holy foreskin and the Virgin Mary's vital yet private parts (Edwardes 1967, 186–87; Shell 1997).

But let us pay close attention to the text, for it reveals a tension that first manifests itself in the response of one's body. I mean not the rush of blood to the crotch, a rising towel rack or a wet seat, but the transition between quiet attention and belly laugh, the poise of interested reader and ribald hoot of disbelief.

Bodily Response, or Round-Robin . . .

An example is in dealing with the Golden Calf narrative of Exodus 32 (Edwardes 1967, 7–10). The analysis begins soberly enough. It argues that the cleanliness code, especially that pertaining to sex, was designed by Moses to encourage procreation. Physical and numerical strength would ward off the threats of stronger tribes, and so Moses forbade nonprocreative activities among the ʿApiru (which Edwardes accepts as the basis for the Hebrews). Hence the various bans on onanism, bestiality, incest, adultery, prostitution, transvestitism, and abortion. Within the bounds of sober scholarship, is it not? It contains nothing that might not have been written in one of the deadpan journals in "mainstream" biblical criticism. But now the text gives its first hint of excess, a flicker in the eyes to suggest the author is about to slip beyond such confines.

We read the following: "The superstitiously barren and the wantonly curious sought penetration and impregnation from the great prophet and his high-priest, awe-inspiring symbols of supervirility" (Edwardes 1967, 9). What? Picking up a comment from Rabbi Samuel b. Isaac (albeit not cited in full, but more of that in a moment) on Psalm 106:16—"men in the camp were jealous of Moses and Aaron"—that "everyone suspected his wife of sexual intercourse with Moses,"[6] Edwardes goes on to paint a picture of the leader and his priest with massive sexual appetites, lusted after by Israelite women. Divine sanction was, it seems, like dipping one's dick in steroids.

But Aaron is the real culprit, for he tires of Moses's consultations with the Yahwic oracle on the mountain and leads the people to worship a newly constructed statue of Apis, the Egyptian bull god of fertility.[7] At the feast's climax, "a sacred autoerotic-homosexual ritual erupted when a vast number of males . . .

'cocked up to pound repeatedly' (*yiqqumû li-tzahiq*). Linked like huge chains of flesh about the idol, these zealots performed the circular dance (*hagg*) sanctified to arouse the procreative power of Apis with the seminal libations of repeated masturbation and round-robin sodomy" (Edwardes 1967, 9–10).

What an extraordinary image![8] I want to ask, is this physically possible? Would every male be able to keep his cock in the ass of the one in front, and what of those whose dimensions do not quite help—the proverbial case of a five-centimeter pipe in a two-centimeter hole? It would be a fine balancing act, between surreptitiously shuffling about to ensure that everyone is connected and not destroying the mood. Needless to say, we have slipped out of the realm of quiet scholarship, where one struggles to find anything that comes close, and into something else. For my part, a text like this brings me up short, laughing out loud, and trying to find anyone who would like me to read this gem of scholarship to them.

My bodily response is the first in a series of tensions, one piling on the other. On top of my own visceral response comes a generic tension, an affront to careful training in the genres and practices of scholarship. And this generic tension is itself a marker of the tension between scholarship and pornographic fantasy, between the boring, formal, flat-footed, and mind-numbing texts of nerdy scholars and the outrageously ribald. This pattern works in two ways.

Clash of the Genres: From "I Am the Erect One" to "Asquat upon His Loins"

The first is episodic: Edwardes offers us a narrative of sorts that sets the scene, fills in a gap, or provides a quiet lull before his next stunning insight into biblical terms, ancient sexual practices, or prurient rabbinic commentary. (I have already provided one example with the episode of the Golden Calf, but the rhythm repeats itself with sufficient regularity throughout the book a read of his other works provides a similar episodic structure). For example, the treatment of theories concerning Moses's origins climaxes with a pumping interpretation of Exodus 3:14; or the prelude to the mass circumcision in Joshua 5 sets the narrative scene of the passage into Canaan before the raising of a massive mound of foreskins; or the story of Jael's murder of Sisera in Judges 4 has its own necessary preamble before a dip into a stunning piece of rabbinic commentary; or the string of bravura readings of Canaanite encounters—Samson, Goliath, the Ark of the Covenant's capture, and so on—must have its own preface in which the situation for such conflicts is established; or, to extend my list of examples to other works, in a relatively sober discussion of marriage customs among Arabs and Indians, he notes that the preference within polyandrous societies for a woman to have three husbands is determined by the fact that with three she fills all her orifices.[9]

So we roll from scholarly discussion to perverse sex, from the consideration of hypotheses concerning Israelite history to breathtakingly kinky readings of the text and back again.[10] For example, the opening moment of *Erotica Judaica* is not with the narrative origins in Genesis, but with what was regarded in mainstream scholarship at the time (Bright 1980, 93–96, 134–43)[11] as one of the plausible theories for the emergence of Israel: the Habiru, or better 'Apiru, mentioned in

the Amarna Letters (Pritchard 1955, 483–90). In all their clannish diversity, they were trapped in Egypt, a threat to Pharaonic absolutism. In the midst of their distress appears Moses, most likely an Egyptian, but possibly ʿApiru (Levite)—the presence of various considered opinions enhances the scholarly feel of the text. But now the text turns, teetering on the edge of a plunge into a very different type of analysis. Forewarned by the suggestion that the pillar of cloud by day was a "nebulous phallus" and the one of fire an "igneous phallus," we suddenly come across a rollicking interpretation of Exodus 3:14. It is, of course, the famous "I am that I am [*'ehyeh asher 'ehyeh*]," transliterated in a curious but internally consistent pattern as *ʿahyih Âshir ahyih*.

Now we get scholarly sleight of hand, moving rapidly from a translation as "I am Ashir, I am" (taking the relative *asher* as a divine appellation) to the simple "I am the Erect One" (Edwardes 1967, 6–7). I must confess to not being able to find any meaning with this sense, even if I explore the various meanings of the two verbs with the same spelling ("to lead" and "to be happy") or the name of the tribe Asher.[12] Of course, I am hardly one to criticize some creative etymology, for it is simply a shame to allow the facts to get in the way of a sentence like this: "Ashir was the 'Ever-Erect-One', the Lord Lingam of the Canaanites, the omnipotent archetype of every *penis erectus* in the Land of Merchants" (Edwardes 1967, 6). Yet Edwardes seems to have hit on something, in a curiously roundabout if not lateral fashion. The confirmation appears in Ilona Rashkow's (2004, 260–62) detailed consideration of the names of God in the Hebrew Bible: although she does not find the specific meaning Edwardes identifies in Exodus 3:14, she *does* conclude in a way that confirms Edwardes's insight: "Ultimately, only God can possess the Phallus" (2004, 263; see also Rashkow 2000a).

Equally swift is the suggestion that *Yahweh zikru* in Hosea 12:6 means "Yahweh is the universal phallus," although in this case there is a reasonable possibility. Usually taken as the equivalent to "name"—giving us "Yahweh is his name"—*zeker*'s verbal root means "to remember." But if we take the consonantal text, it is no different from *zakar*, male, or as some have argued, phallus. Ezekiel 16:17 pushes in this direction, with its accusation that Jerusalem had made "images of phalluses" (*tsalme-zakar*)—that is, dildos—with gold and silver and then "played the harlot" with them (see also Kamionkowski 2001, 177; Halperin 1993, 147). Given the phallic hegemony of the ancient world, it would come as no surprise at all that the basic sense of the male was simply "cock." Or rather, to use terms I have deployed in Chapter 4, the key to the semantic cluster of maleness inevitably focused on a man's dong. In Yahweh's case, that would make him "omnipotent phallus."

In line with the episodic structure of Edwardes's argument, the text falls back into providing the scholarly context for the next phase, now concerning Moses and the law code. But let us leap ahead and consider one other example, this time in the treatments of Jael's hospitality toward Sisera (Edwardes 1967, 49–51). After the obligatory scholarly chatter about Hebrew conquest, harassment by Jabin of Hazor and his Hittite general, Sisera, the defeat of these forces by Deborah and Barak (Judges 4 and 5), we come across this reading—although now with

the assistance of Rabbi Johanan in the Talmud—of the killing by Jael of Sisera as he fled. Other early commentators may have suggested that Jael was extremely seductive, that she was beautiful in appearance and dress, that she scattered roses on her bed and thereby won Sisera's heart, or that her voice inspired lust (Gunn 2005, 56–57), but none are as explicit as our friend Johanan. In the tradition of Arabian hospitality, the fleeing Sisera is given the hospitality of Heber and his wife Jael: "Jael, Heber's comely wife, gave Sisera to drink of the milk of refuge, she invited him to share her carpet bed in physical rest and restorative emotional release. Talmudic Rabbi Johanan deduced, from the text of Judges 5:27, that Sisera had seven sexual connections with Jael: 'Between her legs he squat, he lay, he spurted; / between her legs he squat, he lay; / where he squat, there he lay stiff' " (Edwardes 1967, 50).

There follows a long footnote in Edwardes's text, explaining each of the terms:

> R. Johanan deduced seven bouts from the threefold occurrence of *kara'* and *nafal* plus *shakab* . . . This highly erotic passage was better understood by Talmudists than by subsequent scholars . . . The verb *kara'* (to squat) expresses a coital posture common to Easterners . . . The pregnant verb *nafal* (to fall, to lie prostrate) is used in the sense of a man allowing a woman to mount and ride him, which in the patriarchal East is indicative of feminine domination . . . *Shakab* (to lie with a woman) is literally the Arabic *sakab*: to pour out, to ejaculate (semen) . . . *Bayn ragliyeh*, consistently mistranslated "*at* her feet," is too clear for comment . . . *Shadûd* . . . derives from the root *shadad* (to be hard, stiff), hence strikes a pun: "erect-dead." (Edwardes 1967, 50–51)

Not such a bad way to go it seems, for Sisera was given the full hospitality treatment, at least until he, "with Jael sexually asquat upon his loins,"[13] finds a tent-peg hammered into his temple.

Clash of the Footnotes: Baal-Peor, Unsatisfied Clitorises, and Jeremiah the Bejerked

Indeed, this extended footnote to the story of Jael and Sisera leads me to the second manifestation of this vigorous rubbing together of two different genres, for we find in the footnotes a tension comparable to that between the genres of the main texts. On the one hand, Edwardes provides in his footnotes regular lists of sources, works he has consulted in order to develop his argument. The notes include scholars like Hermann Gunkel, Roland de Vaux, Max Weber, Julius Wellhausen, and Victor Tcherikover (Edwardes 1967, 13, 41, 43, 108, 133–34, 140, 142, 144, 182, 188, 192, 198, 204, 207, 209), as well as extensive references to ancient sources in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin—a feature of the main text as well, for Edwardes constantly supplies terms in the original language, albeit transliterated in his idiosyncratic manner.

On the other hand, he offers a series of riveting, highly suggestive and not unknowledgeable etymological proposals. For instance, in the treatment of the

episode of Baal-Peor in Numbers 25, a footnote speculates that the god in question (albeit now listed as Baal-Fa'ûr) was a Syrian deity "on whose phallus every Midianite maiden was obliged to rupture her hymen" (Edwardes 1967, 16). *Fa'ûr* itself, opines Edwardes, derives from *fa'ar* (as indeed it does—I have checked this closely) and may either mean "gape greedily" and thereby signify a ravenous vagina, or it may designate "opener," giving us "Lord of the Cunnus-Openers." All of which means that when the Israelites, most notable among them being Zimri, took Midianite wives, they were worshipping this intriguing deity.[14]

One more example out of a tempting range, this one a bravura piece of interpretation.[15] At the end of his brief dalliance with Solomon, Edwardes notes the traditional interpretive move in which the Song of Songs may be a product of Solomon's lusty youth, but that Proverbs speaks of his age and experience: "Who can find an honest female? Her value is greater than gems . . . Four things never say 'Enough!': the grave, the clitoris, the desert, and the fire" (Edwardes 1967, 84).[16]

Clitoris? Is it not barren womb, as *'otser raham* suggests? On first appearances, it is indeed a closure (from *'tsr*, "to hold back" or "lock up") and womb (*rhm*), leading most interpreters to see here "barren womb," especially since the first word appears regularly as a marker of barrenness (e.g., Gen 16:2; 20:18; Isa 66:9). But Edwardes has much more in mind: the term *'otser raham* is "the Hebraic equivalent of the Greek *kleitoris*, from *kleíein* (to shut), meaning 'that which is enclosed by the labia.' The Latin Vulgate reads '*os vulva*' or 'mouth of the skinbag' (vulva). Aristotle defined the clitoris as 'the foundation and fountain of sexual love' " (Edwardes 1967, 84).

He need not have raced off to Greek and Latin terms, for the Hebrew itself has its own folds of meaning. Within the semantic cluster of *rhm* we find not only "womb" but also "love and compassion" (especially in the verbal and dual forms), as well as "the vulture that devours," "two millstones that grind together" (in a hand-mill), and of course "cunt." The telltale signal of vagina comes in Joshua 5:30, where *raham rahamatayim* may well be soldier-talk for either a threesome (one or two cunts [Gray 1967, 293]) or for the two lips of the vagina itself (one or two flaps). In this light the previous senses, especially the dual forms as well as the senses of millstones, vulture, and "love" gain a whole new meaning (see further examples in Edwardes 1967, 16, 23, 40, 42, 53, 55–56, 58, 61, 63, 67, 70, 72–73, 76, 84–87, 89–90, 95–96, 98, 102, 104, 130, 132, 146, 188).

The temptation is too great, for I cannot resist one further instance of these stunning and, I must admit, insightful readings. It comes in what is perhaps the best title for a subsection one could wish for—"Jeremiah the Bejerked" (Edwardes 1967, 99–101). As I noted in Chapter 5, the key term is *sahûq*, which Edwardes takes as a masturbator or wanker. To reiterate, Jeremiah laments the fact that he has been made a compulsive masturbator. How? In Jeremiah 20:7 we read, "I have become a laughingstock [*shq*] all day long; everyone mocks me." For Edwardes, "laughingstock" is "equivalent to our modern 'jerk,' 'jerkoff,' or 'jackoff,' equally abusive" (Edwardes 1967, 67). The key here is that *shq* (to laugh at or mock) is linked with *shhq*, with the sense of rubbing or beating, to pound

repeatedly, and thereby to practice masturbation. The term also appears in Judges 16:25, when Samson is brought out to "amuse" the Philistines during the feat at the temple of Dagon—that is, to masturbate before the idol. And we find the term in Job 12:4: "I am a wanker to my friends; I, who called upon God and he answered me, a just and blameless man, I am a wanker."[17]

However, the story of Jeremiah gains an extra load with the elaborations in both Jewish and Arabic sources: Jeremiah came across some Ephraimites jerking off in the public baths. His thunder at such a practice, telling them that their gross immorality has led to the fall of Jerusalem, only entices them to suggest he join them; if not, they would all enjoy buggering him. Cornered, Jeremiah jerks off, to his own shame and the amusement of the onlookers—hence his status as a "laughingstock" (*sahoq*), or rather, jerkoff, wanker. From then on, he was hooked, becoming a chronic masturbator with its mix of guilty pleasure, and personal disgust. This story certainly makes sense of Jeremiah's foul temper, if not his occasional crude language.

Conclusion

What are we to make of these overlapping tensions in Edwardes's work? I have traced them through from a bodily response when reading these texts to a double tension: one between the episodic pattern of quiet scholarship and sexual excess; the other between footnotes that cite "respectable" scholarly sources and those that offer extraordinary etymologies of terms. On one count—that of the episodic pattern in the main text—it may well be argued that Edwardes sidles up to the rhythms of porn itself, understood here in terms of both literature and film. The sex acts, in all their variety (or lack) require narrative scene setting, a lead-up in terms of more-or-less fantasy situation (office, sports fields, alley way, school room, gym locker, weight bench, etc.), an initial encounter that usually requires a reason for the sex and then the act itself. In other words, the story becomes the pretext for the fucking, a vehicle for the sexual numbers that roll out with predictable regularity (Williams 1989, 130). While some have argued that narrative and sex act are mutually exclusive (Goulemot 1994 [1991]: 141; Michelson 1993, 43–44; Žižek 1991a: 111), the narrative delaying access to the real thing in the book, film, porn magazine or website,[18] I would suggest that the episodic nature of porn is part of its generic identity. For even if one removes all the supposed fill-in, the sequence of sex acts is itself a narrative pattern, simultaneously mimicking and determining the episodic nature of sex, for which each closure or (at times) orgasm is but a prelude to the next.

Does Edwardes's work, then, really qualify as a form of intellectual pornography, an academic wank, which can thereby be written off? At some moments, particularly in a work like *The Jewel in the Lotus*, one gains this distinct impression. In that work, he occasionally constructs a narrative, retells a story, or recounts an experience that then rises to a climactic sexual romp. One such instance is the ritual of the *Shukteh-Poojah* in nineteenth-century India, with its supposed propitiation of the lingam-yoni, the gathering of strength to overthrow the East

India Company, and the revival of human sacrifice. Taking a POV (point-of-view) approach characteristic of porn, we descend with Edwardes into the underground caverns where the ritual takes place, only to witness a massive orgiastic rite that resembles most closely scenes from the *Indiana Jones* series of films (I was reminded above all of the climax in *The Temple of Doom* in which Jones at the last moment rescues from the underground cavern with its imminent human sacrifice the leading lady, the worshippers, and countless slaves). Of course, Edwardes supplies what one can only assume has been excised from *Indiana Jones*—the massive cocks and hungry cunts of ecstatic worship (Edwardes 1965, 48–55).

Instead of denying that Edwardes's work evinces elements of porn, I prefer a more dialectical argument: of course it does, but in doing so it shows up the pretensions of "conventional" scholarship. Edwardes hints as much in what may be called the dialectic of porn: "A prime characteristic of Oriental literature is its didactic shock value. The highest morality is hammered home in the lowest of language, in an orgy of exaggeration devised to shame even the most shameless into a revulsion of conscience. Hence, the therapeutic and redeeming function of 'pornography' has ever been recognized by Eastern philosophers" (Edwardes 1967, 91).

This is really another way of describing the orientalist camp I outlined earlier: this "orgy of exaggeration" has its own political point to make, in this case with specific reference to biblical scholarship. With its superficial niceness and brittle politeness, scholarship on the Bible would put even the most pompous Victorian to shame. To do something like Edwardes is to "risk" one's career, to have colleagues not take one seriously, and to send more than one red-nosed scholar into fits of anger at treating the Bible so. In response, Edwardes takes the language and approaches of scholarship and turns them on their head. In juxtaposing the two genres of analysis and the two styles of footnote, he shows that they are not so much poles apart as two sides of the same scholarly discourse. No matter how much scholarship tries to police its "seriousness," the riffraff from the wrong side of the tracks, shirt torn, pants filthy, a scrounged cigarette on the lips, somehow seems close behind. Who has not heard of what goes on beneath the veneer of niceness—scholars masturbating in the toilets at conferences, those with private likings for pornography, the ones who have an eye for extracurricular activities with students, and so on? And since I am as suspicious of such hypocritical guardians as I am of the overtly pious, I prefer one like Edwardes who at least attempts to cut through the crap. In other words, Edwardes's orientalist camp is a way of showing up the pretentions of what passes for conventional, polite scholarship: here is an earthy text, he says, here is the sex in all its glorious diversity, so "fuck you"!

CHAPTER 11

Hittites, Horses, and Corpses

On Bestiality and Necrophilia in the Hebrew Bible

> On the sexual deviancy hierarchy, it's widely held that bestiality is worse than humping your relatives.
>
> —Steve Rinella, "Depraved Indifference"

> But the vehemence with which this prohibition continues to be held, its persistence while other nonreproductive sexual acts have become acceptable, suggests that there is another powerful force at work: our desire to differentiate ourselves, erotically and in every other way, from animals.
>
> —Peter Singer, "Heavy Petting"

I am very interested in bestiality and necrophilia. Under normal circumstances—the common room, a conversation over coffee, a night at the pub, or a simple chat with an attractive friend—such a statement would lead to my interlocutor(s) beating a hasty retreat or perhaps laughing it off a little nervously.[1] But I am very interested in bestiality and necrophilia, especially in the Bible. The reason is that both types of sexual acts are far more important to the Hebrew Bible than a mere ban (in the case of bestiality) and turning a cold shoulder (with necrophilia) would suggest. However, in order to make that argument, I need to look awry, away from the obvious texts in Exodus 22:19, Leviticus 18:23; 20:15–16 and Deuteronomy 27:21, and focus on an unexpected bulge in another place: the connection between Hittites, horses, and corpses, or rather, between Hittites, hippophilia, and necrophilia in both the Hittite law codes and biblical texts. So in what follows we begin with a treatment of some Hittite laws, especially those dealing with horses, mules, oxen, pigs, and the dead. With a reshaped sexual economy so brusquely uncovered, we gallop into the Hebrew Bible find out where Hittites turn up and why. We find them passing over a burial ground to Abraham, in the freshly dead Uriah (former husband of Bathsheba), in the three

wives of Esau and in the mother of Oholibah-Jerusalem in Ezekiel. Horses and corpses aplenty, it seems. But only then, after I have teased out curious practices, innuendos and longing looks in this delectable family of sexual peccadilloes can we reassess those well-known texts from Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, which turn out to be closer to the Hittite laws than we might at first think.

Before we proceed, three comments are in order, one concerning the scope of this study, one the nature of secondary literature, and one on terminology. First, I restrict my study to the Hittite laws concerning sex, the biblical appearances of Hittites in light of these laws, and the biblical injunctions concerning bestiality. More than enough for one study, but a few notable instances of literary bestiality remain: Adam and the animal "helpers" in Genesis 2:18–20 (in the Talmud Adam does indeed have sex with his furry and not-so-furry friends), Eve and the serpent in Genesis 3:1–7, 14–16, Balaam and his ass in Numbers 22, and extrabiblical stories about Eve, and the dove from the flood narrative in Genesis 8 (see Edwardes 1965, 257; Dekkers 2000, 8–10, 127–28). Too much to cover here, however, so that study will have to wait until a future moment.

Second, I must admit that bestiality is not a topic that has fired up the critical juices of biblical scholars, or indeed those of the ancient Near East more generally. As for the Hittites, despite the reasonably voluminous literature that has emerged since they rose from the dust and detritus of millennia to be recognized as yet another people and empire of the ancient Near East, it is well-nigh impossible to find any but the briefest of treatments of these somewhat delicate topics, or body parts for that matter. So also for the Hebrew Bible, even with its much longer history of criticism: the collection of detailed studies is inordinately thin, so much so that I suspect that scholars who have had the enviable opportunity to dwell on human-animal sex have unconsciously invoked the biblical taboo: a scholarly lying with an animal may well lead to a scholarly death (although I am not sure the animal in question would suffer the same fate).[2] Not unexpectedly, one may find far more outside biblical scholarship, although these studies tend to fall into "scientific" studies of sexual "deviancy" (Dubois-Desaulle 1933; Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin 1948; Kinsey et al. 1953; Krafft-Ebing 1965; Ellis 1940; Beetz and Podberscek 2005; Earls and Lalumiere 2007),[3] philosophical considerations in that odious branch known as ethics (Singer 2001), the zoophilic subgenre of pornography, the more fascinating if somewhat eclectic works of political advocacy and animal liberation (Rinella 2006), and theoretical studies concerning the posthuman, which achieve the unenviable double feat of pretending that all this is in some way new and in sucking anything that might be seductive or even interesting out of the topic (McCormack 2004, 2009; Halberstam and Livingston 1995; Badminton 2004). In what follows, although I must forge on largely on my own, I draw on these works where helpful, especially the delightful and brilliant work of Dekkers (1992, 2000), as well as a few biblical critics who make unwitting if uncomfortable contributions.

Third, in regard to terminology, in contemporary usage *bestiality* primarily refers to sexual acts between human beings and animals. However, older usages of bestiality include "the instinct of beasts" and the "beast signs" in astrology. If

one was, in the Middle Ages, showing signs of bestiality it meant not that all furry beasts in the area need watch their rear ends, but that one was behaving like a beast. For terminological specificity, the terms *zoosexuality* or *zooerasty* have been used to refer to sex between human beings and other animals. *Zoophilia* may refer to affections for and relations with animals that are not sexual.[4] However, since bestiality has become the term in common usage since the seventeenth century—largely because it is far more colorful—I will continue to use it here.

Extending the Hittite Family

> There are many ways in which we cannot help behaving just as animals do—or mammals, anyway—and sex is one of the most obvious ones. We copulate, as they do. They have penises and vaginas, as we do.
>
> —Peter Singer, "Heavy Petting"

In the Hittite laws we find the following:

> ¶187 If a man has sexual relations with a cow, it is an unpermitted sexual pairing; he will be put to death.
> ¶188 If a man has sexual relations with a sheep, it is an unpermitted sexual pairing; he will be put to death.
> ¶199 If anyone has sexual relations with a pig or a dog, he shall die . . . If an ox leaps on a man (in sexual excitement), the ox shall die; the man shall not die. They shall substitute one sheep for the man and put it to death. If a *pig leaps on a man (in sexual excitement), it is not an offence*.
> ¶190 If they [have sexual relations] *with the dead*—man, woman—*it is not an offence*.
> ¶200 If a man has sexual relations with *either a horse or a mule, it is not an offense* (Hoffner 1997, 236– 37; emphasis added).

What are we to make of these laws? The obvious and initial point is that horses and mules, randy pigs, and the dead are more liberated sexually among the Hittites. Those with prudish moral codes (e.g., Gagnon 2001)—invariably derived from religious presuppositions—will no doubt excoriate the Hittites as a depraved and deviant group, unlike the upright Israelites, who (supposedly) only ever inserted things in the correct orifices. Such codes rarely get us anywhere interesting, so let us explore what, exactly, the Hittites permitted and what they did not. A few general details concerning these laws: they date from the Old Hittite Period (c. 1650–1500 BCE) and were then copied through to the thirteenth century—in the imaginatively named Middle or New Hittite Period (c. 1500–1180). Some of the laws have undergone revision over time, but generally not in the case of sexual misdemeanors. Unlike some of the laws in the Hebrew Bible, there is no principle of *lex talionis* in these Hittite laws, nor do they claim to have a divine origin (rather astonishing given the way religion permeated nearly every aspect of Hittite life). In other respects, the Hittite and biblical laws do have some similarities: scholars tend to argue that many of them are case laws and that they

cannot be comprehensive (there are two hundred). Further, scholars remain nonplussed by the apparent lack of organization among the laws, seeking to identify some pattern, while admitting that whatever pattern one might find, it is not perfect.[5] I leave those debates aside as so much avoidance of the far more enticing issue of sexual practices.

What were the unacceptable sexual practices relating to nonhuman animals among the Hittites? From the laws, it is obvious that becoming intimate with one's sheep, cow,[6] dog, or pig was out of the question—although if the pig took the initiative since it found you were quite hot, then the law lets you off the hook. Indeed, the issue of the pig immediately raises what may appear to be a contradiction: one may not have "sexual relations" (the Hittite literally has "sins") with a pig, but then it is fine if the pig should mount you. Penetration is clearly in question: penetrating a pig (given that a "man" is addressed) is unacceptable, but being penetrated by a pig causes less concern.[7] Unless of course the law actually means not so much porcophilia but "pig-sex" as a generic term—that is, a sexual act that is considered outrageous or outside the norms of socially acceptable sexual behaviors, such as water sports, defecation, bondage, group sex, and bestiality. But one must be wary of taking too much interpretive license.

The ox is a slightly more tricky issue, for even though it is an offense for an ox to mount a man, the man in question is not to be killed (unlike the deviant ox). Instead, a substitutionary lamb is led to the slaughter, to take the punishment for him. A pre-Christological motif perhaps? If so, Christology is an extraordinary universalization from a very unlikely particular: as a sheep is to a man mounted by an ox, so is Christ to a sinner. On a more general level, one gains the clear impression of a thoroughly agricultural society, in which there is an everyday possibility that an ox or a pig—two of the key animals domesticated in the ancient Near East by human beings—might take a fancy to you as you bend over to perform some menial chore on the land.[8] It would be a waste of human beings to do away with them every time such a connection of the plumbing occurred. However, the laws are less keen on the image of a randy farmer going about penetrating at will any and all of his domesticated animals; except of course with horses, mules, and the dead. But before I examine those practices in some more detail, one last simple point: a law is based on its transgression. We never have a law prohibiting something if the prohibited act has not been performed (unless of course we wish to argue for the perverse point that the law does indeed imagine such possibilities and thereby creates the possibility of their enactment in the first place). We can assume, then, that among the Hittites sex between human beings, cows, sheep, pigs, and dogs did take place, so much so that one needed laws to indicate that these acts were taboo.

Hittite Hippophilia

> Female donkeys and mares are well equipped in this area . . . Seen from behind, with a slight sway of the hips, presenting their large vulva at an inviting height, they can easily lead a man into temptation.
>
> —Midas Dekkers, *Dearest Pet* (Dutch *Lief Dier*)

> The hussars who occasionally used their horses for a different purpose traditionally used an upturned bucket.
>
> —Midas Dekkers, *Dearest Pet* (Dutch *Lief Dier*)

But sex also did happen between human beings and horses, mules, and the dead—and these were sanctioned! Why these and not others? The few who have noted these laws are puzzled, since one would expect that the assumed codes of pollution applied here as they are supposed to have done with the sheep, pigs, and cows. Yet a tortured sentence by Billie Jean Collins points to at least two possible reasons for the exception that applies to horses and their cousins: "The indemnification of the equids probably has less to do with a perverse fondness on the part of the Hittites for their horses than with the distinct status of the equids among the domesticates" (Collins 2007, 121). Obviously not comfortable with the topic—her prose is usually lucid and engaging—Collins disavows one reason and postulates another. I would suggest both apply: Hittites, particularly the men in question, *were* perversely fond of their horses, just as they were perversely fond of their wives and the dead. Given that Hittite free men undertook campaigns when there were threats to the empire—that is, just about every year—and that they spent long periods of time away from home, the horse would have become like a wife on the road (as long as one avoided fellatio).[9]

Collins's other reason is also important: the "equids" (horses, mules, donkeys) did have a different status from the other domesticated animals. They had, to put it in terms I will explore more fully later, a distinct role within the extended Hittite family. Not only were the Hittites among the first to make extensive use of the horse for burden and warfare, but the care for and training of a horse became a comprehensive, detailed, and much-loved pastime—as the training manual for a chariot horse written by one Kikkuli from circa 1345 BCE shows all too well.[10] The massed and disciplined Hittite chariotry was widely feared, although perhaps for more reasons than are usually adumbrated. For example, the Egyptians depicted this central feature of the Hittite military with great care, noting especially three men in the chariot, one a driver, one an archer, and one to protect both of them (see Garstang 2009, 344, 364). In short, not only did horses have an elevated status, especially for males who had the time and opportunity to devote themselves to a horse, but Hittite and horse also became terms of automatic association (see 1 Kings 10:20 and 2 Chron. 1:17).

If the horse was the beast of glory, the mount, companion, and soul mate of the charioteer on campaign, the mule or donkey was the beast of everyday labor. Plainer, smaller, and less glamorous than its stately and graceful cousin, the mule was sturdier and more reliable, less given to fits of temper, jealousy and petulance, and much more patient in the face of quotidian drudgery. A Hittite saying that

should have been: a horse for the road and a mule and a wife at home: what more can a man want? To which we might add: what goes on tour stays on tour. Admittedly, there is the curious qualification in regard to the horse and mule: the man who happened to insert his member into an equid must not approach the king or become priest (Hoffner 1997, 237). The suggestion that this was to avoid pollution of the king or priesthood seems rather lame to me; why say such an act was not an offense if it was polluting? Instead the following interpretation makes much more sense: since it was not an offense, the man need not approach the king for judgment, and since humping one's horse was the sign of total commitment to a vocation, the seal if you will of one's devotion, it would be unconscionable to have such a man give up his vocation in order to become a priest.

Incorporating the Dead

> The Bashi-Bazouk, whose procedure on killing a man was to take full sexual advantage of the anal spasms. With horror, the Russians beheld that familiar flagrancy on a Turkish battlefield, the "bestial Toorks," their pantaloons down, working heatedly upon the freshly slain. When hesitantly asked about this "horrible desecration of human beings" by a certain war correspondent, the indifferent Turk characteristically replied: "it is, to be sure, effendi, a most devilish matter of expert timing."
>
> —Allen Edwardes, *The Jewel in the Lotus*

But what of our third group—the dead? Once again, the law reads: "¶190 If they [have sexual relations] *with the dead*—man, woman—*it is not an offence*" (Hoffner 1997, 236). Note the gender inclusiveness of this law: it matters not whether one takes a fancy to a male or female corpse.[11] It goes without saying that such practices applied to those buried rather than cremated (a common practice, at least for Hittite nobility). From what can be ascertained from the archaeological and written materials, Hittite funerary and especially mortuary practices were elaborate and detailed (see Collins 2007, 169–72, 192–95). The afterlife—most of which was located in the underworld—may have been a little dreary, with limited recognition of those close to one, but it was better than no afterlife at all. The exception was the king, for he really hoped to ascend to the realm of the gods. Clearly the dead lived on, so much so that it was not uncommon for one to be buried—should one require their services—with the occasional ox, pig, sheep, goat, dog, horse, or mule (Collins 2007, 195). Contact with the dead was a crucial feature of Hittite life and that contact might well take the form of a last passionate bonk. If the border between life and death was a fluid one, then one might from time to time pass some fluids across that border. The law is tantalizingly recalcitrant on precisely which dead might be blessed with such good graces, although I would suggest that what applied in life applied to the dead: no pigs, cows, or dogs, but certainly one's wife, horse, or mule.

To conclude, within the sexual economy of the Hittite male, at least a Hittite male of reasonable means, his wife, horse, donkey, and the dead were all within

the range of acceptable sexual partners. Humping them was a sign of their higher status within the network of Hittite life; to be humped by the man of the house was thereby a sign of one's elevated status. The wife and mule at home, the horse on campaign, and the dead when one was thinking about one's own mortality.

On the Nature of Incest

> The candle, guttering beside the bed, was strangled in the grasp of a prehensile foot, and darkness received, like a ripple in velvet, the final happy sigh.
>
> —Collier, *His Monkey Wife*, 1931, qtd. in Midas Dekkers, *Dearest Pet* (Dutch *Lief Dier*)

> "The Pilgrimage to Mecca is not perfected save by copulation with the camel!" was a popular saying in El-Islam.
>
> —Allen Edwardes, *The Jewel in the Lotus*

I have, however, slipped into an approach characteristic of biblical critics when dealing with laws—selecting a few that fit a category familiar to us and analyzing them as though they were also part of a category coherent to the framers and users of those ancient laws. In my case, I have—thus far—isolated the laws concerning bestiality and necrophilia and treated them as distinct. Yet when we consider these laws in their context, they are part of a larger collection concerning what one does with one's genitals, or rather penis, since the laws assume a male as the natural subject: one must not have sex with one's mother, daughter, son, with two sisters and their mother, a living brother's wife, a wife's daughter by another man, or a wife's mother or sister (Hittite Laws ¶¶ 189, 191, 195 [Hoffner 1997, 236–37]). Even here we face a challenge, since the first three—mother, daughter, son—are what we would usually call consanguineous incest, but not the remainder. Add to this the prohibition of sex with a cow, sheep, dog, or pig (where one should happen to penetrate one of our porcine cousins rather than be penetrated by one) and we have a very different sexual economy. In other words, mother, cow, daughter, sheep, son, dog, two sisters, pig, a living brother's wife, and so on all belong to the same group: one (a man) should not penetrate them with his penis. If we wish to continue to use the term "incest," we will need to stretch it considerably—not impossible with a good regimen of exercise and practice—to fit quite a number of unexpected items, well beyond Lévi-Strauss's great and already accommodating text on the universality of the incest taboo (Lévi-Strauss 1969, especially 12–25; 1978, 211–21).[12]

It should be obvious whither my argument is headed (that family, gens, or clan in the Hittite world extended well beyond its human limitations), but what of the other group of permitted sexual activities? One may have sex with a horse, a donkey, or the dead. But you may also hump your stepmother if your father is dead, two sisters who do not live in the same country, the sister of your deceased wife, sisters or mother or daughter who are slaves, or father and son may have sex with the same slave or prostitute, or indeed two brothers with a free woman (Hittite Laws ¶¶ 191, 192, 193, 194 [Hoffner 1997, 236]). Once again, an

extraordinary list in which difference outplays identity in relation to laws familiar to Western traditions.

Various reasons have been proposed for this sexual economy, such as concern over pollution (Collins 2007, 121; Cohen 2002, 93–94), as well as the obvious masculine focus of the laws. But I am interested in another issue entirely—namely, the tendency for these laws to deal with what can only be called group sex. In the number of condoned sexual acts, note how many concern sexual multiples—threesomes, foursomes, and so on. So we find what are known in the business as FFM (two sisters are fine, as long as one travels from country to country to do so), FMM (father and son with slave or prostitute; two brothers with a free woman), and FFFFM or "lucky man" sex (mother, daughter, and sisters who are slaves). And if we go back and consider the prohibited acts, then here too we find a concern with group sex: two sisters, a living brother's wife, and a wife's mother or sister—threesomes and even a possible foursome. To be sure, there is a concern with one-on-one sex, but it is by no means foregrounded. As for the animals in this wide family, here too multiples appear: both horse and mule offer their services in the same law, as do dog and pig in another, and then ox and pig in subsequent elaboration of the same law. Now, it may not be the case that one should be so fortunate as to be penetrated by an ox and pig in the same session, or indeed to have the pleasure of both a horse and a mule at one time, but the literary pairing is the crucial issue here.

The Hittite sexual laws bring us to three conclusions: first, the laws give wide scope to sex as a collective act, or to group sex (to put it in common parlance), so much so that they seem to operate with collective social assumptions; second, the notion of what constitutes a family or clan or gens is far wider than human beings, for it includes domesticated animals as well; third, within this sexual economy the line of what may at a stretch be called the incest taboo runs according to a very different logic. The Hittite male had a range of penetrable options—done with affection of course—such as the dead, horses (and their cousins), one's wife (and also stepmothers and sisters of wives as long as one's father or wife was dead, and then slaves), prostitutes, and free women (even sisters if they live in different countries). But one must have standards, so the incest taboo swings into action with mothers, cows, daughters, sheep, sons, dogs, two sisters, pigs, living brothers' wives, and so on.

Galloping into the Hebrew Bible

> The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their *abominations* [*to'avotehem*], from the Canaanites, the *Hittites*, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites.
>
> —Ezra 9:1

With this Hittite sexual economy fresh on our minds, let us follow the Hittites into the Hebrew Bible. Here my discussion must follow two separate paths that will

converge at the end. One path follows the laws concerning bestiality (to which I will return) and the other answers the very simple question, where do the Hittites appear in the Bible? Often they turn up in lists as one of the people of the land of Canaan to be conquered, driven out, and generally dispossessed, along with a range of other "ites" (as the Book of Mormon would have it): Canaanites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, as well as occasional Girgashites (Gen. 15:20; Exod. 3:8, 17; 13:5; 23:23, 28; 33:2; 34:11; Num. 13:29; Deut. 7:1; 20:17; Josh. 1:4; 3:10; 9:1; 11:3; 12:8; 24:11; Judg. 3:5; 1 Kings 9:20; 2 Chron. 8:7; Neh. 9:8).[13] They also appear as one of the sources of Solomon's wives (1 Kings 11:1) and even as possible military allies of the Israelites (2 Kings 7:6). Far more alluring are those texts that connect Hittites with the dead, horses, and the ancestry of Israel itself. In the first category, we find Ephron the Hittite's burial ground for Abraham's family in Genesis 23 (also 25:9–10; 49:29–32; 50:13) and the story of Uriah the Hittite in 2 Samuel 11 (also 2 Sam. 12:9–10; 23:39; 1 Kings 15:5). The second—concerning horses—is really a word association with Hittite and horse (1 Kings 10:29; 2 Chron. 1:17). But the third is exceedingly seductive: the various hints and suggestions that Israel's own mythical ancestry includes Hittites, especially with the hairy Esau and his Hittite wives (Gen. 26:34; 27:46; 36:2), and Ezekiel's genealogical taunts (Ezek. 16:3, 45; see also Gen. 10:15; 1 Sam. 26:6; 1 Chron. 1:13; 11:41). Given the smallness of the second category, in what follows I tackle the stories of Ephron and Uriah first, followed by the account of Esau's wives and then the curious matter of Israel's Hittite genealogy.

Corpses

Throughout Genesis a necro-rhythm is established whereby various members of Abraham's clan are buried in the grave originally acquired—as a "tenure of a grave," *'akhuzzath qever* (Gen. 23:4, 9, 20)—from Ephron the Hittite, or the "son of Heth." Sarah is first into the cave in the field of Machpelah, as it is called. Afterward, Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, and Jacob all end up in the same sepulcher (Gen. 23:9; 49:29–32; 50:13). As we now know, sex with the dead was not a crime among the Hittites, so it is intriguing why the grave—a collective or clan one, it should be noted—is acquired from a Hittite. Necrophiliac orgy, anyone?

A perverse reading? Perhaps not, since some curious features of Genesis 23—in which Abraham acquires tenure of the grave—suggest otherwise. To begin with, I have always been puzzled by the strange process of haggling in this story, or rather, *reverse* haggling.[14] On a first reading, it seems as though the Hittites are extremely poor hagglers. After Sarah dies, Abraham asks the local Hittites for somewhere to bury his dead. How do the Hittites respond? Instead of being cagey, instead of offering less land for a higher price, they offer more land for nothing. So upon Abraham's inquiry, they do not point to some poor, rocky piece of wasteland and ask an exorbitant price; instead they say, with lascivious smiles: "Hear us, my lord; you are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our sepulchers; *none of us will withhold from you his sepulcher, or hinder you from burying your dead*" (Gen. 23:4). And then when Abraham says,

"Well, how about the cave of Machpelah down the back of Ephron the son of Zohar's field," Ephron speaks up and says, "Cave? I give you the whole field, cave included and even the trees, so you can bury your dead." Finally, at the end of the process and after Abraham's insistence, Ephron gives in and says, "Fine, if you want to give me silver, what about 400 shekels of silver?" Ephron seems to regard the silver as a bonus to the pleasure of handing over the field. Or perhaps that is not the only pleasure for Ephron and company.

Three items germane to my argument arise from this text. First, why does Abraham approach the Hittites, of all people? The usual answer is that he happened to be in "their" land (whatever that means). But in the mythical landscape of the first books of the Hebrew Bible, the land is also populated by Canaanites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, and even Girgashites. So there must be a specific reason for approaching the Hittites. Is it because they had the best sepulchers? Did they have a reputation for showing that little extra care for the corpses of their loved ones?

Second, Abraham and Ephron seem to be operating at cross-purposes. Abraham desperately tries to get a conventional haggle going, but Ephron is not interested. He wants to give Abraham tenure of the choicest cave and the best field and he is not interested in piles of silver. Why? A far greater prize awaits him with a fresh corpse. Forget the desire for filthy lucre, or even the acquisition of status through a magnanimous gift; Ephron has his eyes set on a higher love. He is a little too generous, a little too eager, for there is nothing like a fresh corpse in the neighborhood.

Third, we need to be wary about the assumed meaning of terms.[15] I am particularly interested in *qvr*, usually translated as "bury" or "grave," depending on its function as verb (Gen. 23:4, 6, 11, 13, 15, 19) or substantive (Gen. 23:4, 6, 9, 20). However, *qvr* has some hidden treasures, especially if we look laterally across the gutturals and engage in some creative linguistics. In particular, *khvr* is quite revealing, for it means (in *qal*) to join, unite, and couple with one another. The other forms of the verb (*piel*, *pual*, and *hithpael*) carry on the same sense with variations on partnering, making alliances, and generally joining up—people, armies, curtains, and wings (in Exod. 26:3 and 10; Exod. 1:9 and 11), parts of a building or interior decoration (Exod. 26:6, 9, 11 and 38:10, 13, 16, 18), or even to join a daughter in marriage (Sir. 7:25). At a stretch, we could say that burial involves not merely some excavation but also coupling and joining. Is this perhaps a hint that the Hebrew terms for burial may owe more to the Hittites than one might at first imagine? Perhaps, especially if we consider another, minor sense of *khvr*: in the participial form (Deut. 18:11 and Psalm 58:6 [ET 5]) it has the sense of a charmer, perhaps a "snake" charmer, who sits cheek by genital with a necromancer, medium, and a wizard. So we have an intriguing semantic cluster: one who buries is also a "snake" charmer keen on some coupling, as they call it. Or is it perhaps the case that the corpse charms the "snake" of the one burying so that he longs for some necro-coupling? No wonder that the Hittites speak of "choicest of our sepulchers" (*bemivekhar qevareni*; Gen. 23:6) for Sarah.[16] Now, the narrative of Deuteronomy 18:9–14, where we find our snake charmer,

depicts this and other practices—necromancy, divination, and so forth—as the "abominable practices" of the nations within Canaan, practices that justify the driving out of those nations. However, by now we know that the nations in question include the Hittites, who will turn out to have much more to do with the Israelites than the propaganda of Deuteronomy will admit.

It is, then, no coincidence that Abraham approaches the Hittites for a family grave, or indeed that the Hittites are associated with death and burial in the Hebrew Bible. Thus far I have uncovered an undercurrent of exquisite attention to burial, a passionate embrace of the departed, and—via some creative etymology—even a semantic connection that suggests a greater Hittite presence in the matter of the dead.

The most famous Hittite in the Hebrew Bible is, of course, Uriah, who is far more sexually useful in his dead state than his living one.[17] Close attention to the rhythms of the story in 2 Samuel 11—following the embryonic proposals for "rhythmanalysis" by Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre 2004, 1992)—suggest that Uriah's sexual potency increases with his death. While alive, he is less than useful sexually, preferring to sleep with David's servants at the door of the king's house (2 Sam. 11:9 and 13). While that might have been pleasurable for Uriah, it was of little use for David, since Uriah thereby arrests the necessary rhythm of going down to his house (vv. 9, 13) in order to "wash his feet" in Bathsheba's vaginal juices.[18] A better, if not frenzied, rhythm emerges as Uriah's death draws near: the narrative is full of pushing forward and drawing back in the fighting (vv. 15, 17, 23), the sending of messages and messengers back and forth (vv. 14, 18, 22, 25), drawing nigh to gates and entrances of gates (v. 23), and penetrating missiles, arrows, and swords (2 Sam. 11:20–21, 24–25; 2 Sam 12:9–10). In short, with all the thrust and counterthrust of the narrative of 2 Samuel 11, the importance of Uriah's death is not that David has unimpeded access to Bathsheba (vv. 26–27), but that Uriah is the—barely—concealed third in this threesome, the necro-rhythmic enabler of the birth of Solomon. Sex and death, if not sex with the dead, seem to follow the Hittites around the Hebrew Bible.

Hairy Genealogies

> No one seems to consider that the offspring [of human beings and the bonobo ape, our closest animal relatives] might combine the best of the apes with the best of human beings, and swinging from the chandeliers of the Royal Library, reciting the poetry of Cees Buddingh, improving banana-growing, and at last combining a healthy mind and a healthy body, lecture us on what we always wanted to know: what our place in the world is. At last we would find out who we are. We ourselves are the missing link.
>
> —Translation modified; Midas Dekkers, *Dearest Pet* (Dutch *Lief Dier*)

On a genealogical level, the Hebrew Bible works hard to draw a clear line between the Israelites and the people of the land—the Canaanites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, and Girgashites (as we saw earlier). But every now and then the texts let us peek into a deeper truth, almost as though the biblical

authors had read the works of Norman K. Gottwald who argued that Israel was an autochthonous people, intimately, socially, and genetically tied to the people of Canaan (Gottwald 1999). One of those texts is Ezekiel 16:3 and 45 (although in the second verse the order is inverted): "Your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite"!

Ezekiel is of course referring to Jerusalem and I will return to that text in a moment. First, however, another genealogical hint: in Genesis 26:34–35 it says, "When Esau was forty years old, he took as a woman Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite; *and there was bitterness of spirit for Isaac and Rebekah*" (my translation; emphasis added). Two were not quite enough Hittites for Esau, so in Genesis 36:2, Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite joins the throng. Intriguingly, the word for bitter is an odd one: *morat ruach*—bitterness of spirit.[19] The usual word for bitter is *marah*, and *morah* (of which *morat* is the construct) may be a form of it. If so, what exactly does the bitterness refer to then? Bad breath? Something swallowed? This is where *ruach* becomes interesting, since it means not only breath, wind, and so on, but also "blow (job)." A bitter blow job? Did Rebekah suddenly find Isaac's cum bitter after he began worrying about their Hittite daughters-in-law?

Perhaps—someone may object—this linguistic search is taking too much license with the text. Agreed to some extent, so let us take a different tack: the word *morah* in its usual form means "shearing knife." Remember that Esau was a hairy man, so much so that his skin resembled the fur of a goat (Gen. 27:16).[20] And recall that Hittites had a liking for the hairier creatures of God, or at least horses, mules, and randy pigs. No wonder Esau liked Hittite women.

At the least, one outcome from the account of Esau and his wives is that Israel's pedigree has a good deal of Hittite within it. Now one may dismiss the evidence of Esau, Judith, Basemath, and Adah, since the main line goes through Joseph. But—and here I return to the text from Ezekiel—one cannot dismiss the direct statement that Israel's mother was a Hittite or, rather, that Jerusalem's mother was a Hittite (Ezek. 16:3 and 45). By Ezekiel 23 she becomes Oholibah, the sister of Ololah (Samaria). Now what does Oholibah end up doing in Ezekiel 23? Worse than her sister, she lusts not merely after "horsemen riding on horses" (Exod. 23:12) but also after donkey-sized and horse-like cocks, as we already saw in Chapter 5: "She was horny [*ta'gevah*] for her toyboys [*pilgeshehem*], whose cocks [*besaram*] were the size of donkey schlongs [*besar-hamorim*] and whose ejaculations [*zirmatam*] were like horse cum [*zirmat-susim*]" (Ezek. 23:20).[21] As the prophets know well, horses have large cocks and balls: in Jeremiah 5:8, a text I have quoted on a couple of occasions already, we find the observation that the Jerusalemites are "horny [*meyuzanim*] stallions with massive balls [*mashkim*]."[22] Even the text from Ezekiel, with its donkey schlongs and horse cum, offers us a spattered word play, for *zirmah* (ejaculation) comes from *zrm* (i.e., to pour or overwhelm), with the noun, *zerem*, meaning a downpour or a rainstorm. So what Ezekiel 23:20 is really saying is that Jerusalem longs for an equine cum storm, a zoological zirmah, if I may coin a phrase, or bestial bukkake,[23] as it is known in the business.

I would suggest that this insult plays on the widely known Hittite appetite for horses and donkeys. Even more, it is a good bet that by saying that Oholibah was attracted to cocks of donkey-like proportions and horselike ejaculatory capacity, Ezekiel was making a sly allusion to her maternal Hittite ancestry: "Like mother, like daughter" (Ezek. 16:44).[24]

Conclusion: Concerning the Biblical Family

> If I was a sheep, slated to be someone's lamb chop, I'd damn sure hope a farmer would take a liking to my booty, rather than slit my throat and chop me into pieces of meat.
>
> —Steve Rinella, "Depraved Indifference"

> "What does the animal think about it?" is consequently the most interesting question in the area of bestiality . . . Sheep and donkeys at best meekly let human beings have their way with them. With cows it is very difficult to know what they think about anything, as they show the same equanimity whatever happens, but dogs obviously enjoy themselves, and sometimes eagerly take the initiative.
>
> —Midas Dekkers, *Dearest Pet* (Dutch *Lief Dier*)

Of course, taxonomies like those of genealogies are constructed, malleable, and constantly reshaped to suit social and political agendas. But what we have in the story of Esau and especially in the diatribe against Jerusalem (Oholibah) in Ezekiel 16 and 23 is not only a Hittite connection but also an allusive link with Hittite sexual codes. In the Hebrew Bible it seems that "Hittite" sets off a whole series of subliminal word associations that include hairy, animal lover, donkey sex, horse cum, and hippophilia, let alone necrophilia in the accounts of Ephron and Uriah.[25]

Now at last it is time to pick up the second path I promised at the beginning of my study, for I have looked awry long enough, and consider the prohibitions against bestiality in the Hebrew Bible. On this level it may well be asked whether the sexual codes of the Hebrew Bible are ultimately different from the Hittites. Is not Israel an uptight exception to the liberal laws of the ancient Near East? Those prohibitions read as follows:

> Whoever has sex with [*shokhev*][26] a beast shall be put to death. (Exod. 22:18 [19 in ET])
>
> And you shall not ejaculate [*titten shekhovtekha*][27] into any beast and defile yourself with it, neither shall any woman bend over before [*ta'amodh lifne*][28] a beast to copulate [*rv'*] with it: it is a perversion. (Lev. 18:23)
>
> If a man ejaculates [*yitten shekhovto*][29] into a beast, he shall be put to death; and you shall kill the beast. If a woman approaches any beast to copulate [*rv'*] with it, you shall kill the woman and the beast; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them. (Lev. 20:15–16)
>
> "Cursed be he who has sex [*shokhev*] with any beast." And all the people shall say, "Amen." (Deut. 27:21)

Spare a thought for the extraordinary liturgical scene in the last text, in which the Levites say with a loud voice on Mount Gerizim (after the people have crossed the Jordan) that anyone who has sex with an animal shall be put to death. I would love to see that creed reintroduced into churches and synagogues, to be answered with a resounding "Amen."[30]

Apart from the consistent pattern of translations attempting to soften the crass directness of the Hebrew, it is worth noting that first, these texts ban sex with any animal[31] and, second, that the command explicitly (and graphically in the case of Lev. 18:23) addresses women as well as men on two occasions. On both counts these prohibitions differ from the Hittite laws. Or at least they do so on a superficial reading. In order to gain a wider sense of these laws, I take a similar tack to my reading of the Hittite laws, where a focus on horses, mules, pigs, oxen, dogs, and sheep misses the all-important literary context of the laws. So also with these laws from the Hebrew Bible: for instance, in Exodus 22:19, the prohibition of bestiality is preceded by the commandment to kill sorceresses and it is followed by a ban on sacrificing to other gods. The immediate context concerns religious practice, suggesting the importance of animals in religions from which the writers of these laws wanted to distance themselves, especially animal representations of deities, fertility rites, and mythology in which animal figures were important. In this respect, bestiality is therefore as much a religious as a social and moral question.

More important, however, three of the four occurrences of the ban on bestiality in the Hebrew Bible appear in a very similar context to the Hittite laws. In Leviticus 18:23, bestiality comes at the conclusion of a long passage on the incest taboo (Lev. 18:6–18), where we find bans on: sex with one's (assuming a man's) mother, father's wife (who is obviously different from mum), sister or even stepsisters (daughters of one's mother or father), granddaughters, half sisters, paternal and maternal aunts, a paternal uncle's wife, daughter-in-law, brother's wife, a woman, her daughter and granddaughter, and sisters. At the close of this collection of incest taboos, we also find laws against sex with a woman during her period (or Moses sex, parting the "Red Sea"), sex with a man's neighbor's wife, devoting one's children in the fire to Molech, a ban on male-on-male sex, and finally on bestiality. Rather similar lists of incest taboos, albeit with a few less examples, appear in Leviticus 20:10–21 (in which vv. 15–16 are found) and in Deuteronomy 27:20–23 (the context for v. 21).[32] In other words, the ban on bestiality is one instance of a much more flexible and extended incest taboo, a taboo that includes not merely relations by blood but also wider clan relations, menstrual sex, male-on-male sex, and bestiality.[33]

Three conclusions may be drawn from these biblical texts. First, the texts from the Hebrew Bible operate with a massively different sexual economy[34] in which there is no sliding scale of sexually forbidden acts: bestiality is on the same level as having sex with one's aunt by marriage or a menstruating woman. That is, sex with animals, the same sex, and extended relatives are on the same par. Second, the biblical laws are much closer to the Hittite laws in terms of the assumed scale of the sexual economy. Minor variations apart, both collections share the

deep assumption that animals are on the same level, sexually, as a man's extended family or tribe and his fellow men. The clan does not stop with human beings. Hence the laws on bestiality are located within a much expanded range of incest taboos. Third, both sets of laws assume that men are the only ones considered by the law to be responsible beings; as such they are equally responsible for their dependents, be they wives, children, or animals. It is notable, then, that two occurrences of the law on bestiality address women, even if the way the text does so is to assume that the woman takes the passive position—bending over before an animal—in order to be penetrated by a male animal.

What, then, are we to make of the tension between the stern prohibition of bestiality in the laws of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy and the curious pervasiveness of bestial themes in the Hebrew Bible? I have already argued that the variations in the laws between the Hittites and the Hebrew Bible are superficial, for at a deeper level they partake of the same assumptions concerning the gens or clan and the (lack of) difference between human beings and other animals. Perhaps we can go further, and pick up Wendy Doniger's argument (1995) in relation to mythology—namely, that the hypocrisy of the prohibition on bestiality is that it marks the covert pervasiveness of bestial themes in our social and cultural imagination. I would go further still and argue that the prohibition is itself the very means of that pervasiveness. This is not merely the simple point that the law is based on its transgression, that one enacts laws in order to prohibit an existing practice, but that the law itself produces the transgression in the first place. And by making that ban universal, it makes the transgression universal too.

This page intentionally left blank.

Conclusion

There is little need for an elaborate conclusion, for each of the chapters makes its own argument clearly enough. And should one wish a summary of those chapters, I have provided synopses in the introduction. However, let me close with a word on pleasure, as well as the thematic divisions in the text, between the Song of Songs, masculinities, and paraphilias. Instead of a recipe imposed on the ingredients to be followed slavishly, the structure of the book grew organically from the various chapters. Rather than work to a plan, as I have done on more than one occasion, I adhered to the slogan to write only on a topic that tickled, excited, and drew some genuine passion—the erotics of knowledge in all its waywardness is perhaps the best way to describe how the book came together. And so the pieces of the book came together, some older pieces now heavily reworked and much new material.

The book has three sections. I will not dwell here on the Song of Songs, except to say that it is an old love of mine, perpetually drawing me back for another bout of analysis and the hope of a new insight. Masculinities emerged as a surprise topic, the persistent theme of a string of chapters that initially had no common agenda. Why a surprise? I tend to view masculinity studies as both an offshoot of feminism and as a way to dress up an old program with new clothes—the study of men by men. But as I began exploring the masculine codes of Chronicles, the testicular logic of biblical Hebrew, or the forms of prophetic, or of male bodybuildingit became increasingly obvious that this masculinity is earthy, queer, and futile; that is, the hegemony is dreadfully and thankfully unstable. So I thoroughly enjoyed myself in poking holes in this biblical hegemony.

Paraphilias is a relatively new interest, or at least full studies of bestiality, necrophilia, and unknown perverts from the 1960s, although those with a passing knowledge of *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* may detect a healthy interest in paraphilias even there. Why paraphilias? They enticingly challenge the vanilla assumptions of biblical scholarship with its long training and heavily policed codes of politeness and decorum for what passes as "serious scholarship." My interest in paraphilias also produces an estrangement effect (to gloss Brecht) in a stronger form than the other studies, abruptly bringing us, willingly or

(mostly) unwillingly, to face a text that has become decidedly strange in its earthy crudeness.

All of which brings me to enjoyment. As Virginia Burrus and Stephen Moore have divined quite astutely, what shows through in a work like this is the thorough pleasure it brings me, the sheer enjoyment I take in researching and writing on matters such as Annie Sprinkle, hooker hermeneutics, hygrophilia, hippophilia, caninelingus, Jeremiah the bejerked, the pervasiveness of testicles in the Hebrew Bible, the prophetic spermatic spluttering pen(is), and the sensuousness of plants and animals. It also means that the old slogan applies here too: pleasure and enjoyment are political issues. My only hope is that you have enjoyed reading it as thoroughly as I took pleasure in writing it.

Notes

Part I

1. From the time of modern criticism at least, if not at a few moments in the medieval era, one may safely say that nearly all interpretations operate with this assumption. See the two edited collections by Athalya Brenner (1993c; 2000) as well as Diane Bergant (2001), J. Cheryl Exum (2005), Phyllis Trible (1978, 144–65), Marvin Pope (1977), and Michael V. Fox (1985).
2. See the response by Virginia Burrus and Stephen D. Moore (2003) to which I respond in more detail in Chapter 2.

Chapter 1

1. A bumbling effort at the foreplay for such an allegory may be found in my earlier *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* (Boer 1999a, 53–70)
2. In what would soon become a signature style, Žižek offers a brief story in the vein of Freud's idiosyncratic humor: "There is a well-known story about an anthropological expedition trying to contact a wild tribe in the New Zealand jungle who allegedly dance a terrible war dance in grotesque masks; when they reached this tribe, they begged them to dance it for them, and the dance did in fact match the description; so the explorers obtained the desired material about the strange, terrible customs of the aborigines. However, shortly afterwards, it was shown that this wild dance did not itself exist at all: the aborigines had only tried to meet the wishes of the explorers, in their discussions with them they had discovered what they wanted and had reproduced it for them . . . This is what Lacan means when he says that the subject's desire is the desire of the Other" (Žižek 1991a, 108).
3. Lacan also connects the game with the foundation of language—the child speaks when playing the game—so that language and desire are linked: "The moment when desire becomes human is also the moment when the child is born into language" (1991b, 173).
4. In a characteristically partial fashion, Žižek (1989, 100–114) comments on only the first three of the graphs, thereby enacting the moment of castration in the last.
5. For a preliminary effort at such a reading, see my *Political Myth* (Boer 2009b).

6. Or, as Žižek puts it, "desire in its purity is of course 'death-drive,' it occurs when the subject assumes without restraint its 'being-towards-death' " (1991a, 266). For a fuller treatment of the twisted path of both Lacan's and Žižek's interpretations of Romans 7, see my *Criticism of Heaven* (Boer 2007a, 351–59).
7. Except for Luis Stadelmann (1992), a literal—that is, erotic, nontheological and often female perspective if not authorship—reading of some sort or other is pursued by all the commentators I have consulted (Bekkencamp and Van Dijk Hemmes 1993, 79–81; Brenner 1989, 1993b, 1993a; Cotterell 1996; Falk 1993; Fox 1985; Goitein 1993; Goulder 1986; Keel 1994; Munro 1996; Murphy 1981, 1990; Pope 1977; Bergant 2001; Exum 2005). It is an underlying feature of the *Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs* (Brenner 1993c); of Pope's well-hung commentary (1977), although he also notes the history of allegorical readings in smaller type; and even Exum's sober commentary (2005), from which she strips all of the more exciting feminist elements of her earlier work. Even fundamentalists like to read the Song as a sex guide, verses like 2:6 justifying clitoral stimulation (Weaver 1989, 73). Only Trible (1978, 144–65) and Landy (1983a, 1983b) pursue the implications of poetic language although, romantics that they are, they are more concerned with "love." One of the problems with all these readings is a rampant heterosexual focus, although Trible's has a decidedly queer tone.
8. Transliterations follow the General Purpose Style of *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 28–29. This style has the advantage for non-Hebrew readers of rendering the text in a readable phonetic-like form. Appropriately, confusion reigns over this word for "hole" (*ḥaḥor*). Murphy (1990) reads it as a door latch, while Robert Gordis (1974, 91) suggests it means that the male withdraws his hand from the gate hole, for "vagina," of course, is "nonsense" here. Othmar Keel's flat reading (1994, 189–90) sees here merely the locked-out lover. Pope (1977, 517–18), however, reads "hand" as a euphemism for penis and, sweating over the possibility that he may offend his pious readers, suggests that "the statement 'my love thrust his "hand" into the hole' would be suggestive of coital intromission" (Pope 1977, 519). Of course, this is less a literal reading than a renewed allegory.
9. Since versification differs at times between the Hebrew text and the English translation, I indicate the variation by means of square brackets and the English after the Hebrew reference.
10. The locked garden and sealed fountain of 4:12 also begs an opening.
11. In 7:10/9, the reading of "teeth" comes from the LXX (*odousin*), Syriac and Vulgate. The MT reads "one who sleeps" (*yšnm*).
12. An undercurrent of this chapter is the effort to trace the construction of sexuality that the Song produces, an effort continued in the next two chapters (see also Boer 1999a). Apart from gender indeterminacy, one item in such a reconstruction would be the distinct emphasis on penetration, although not with the strongly coded active / passive, social actor /social receptor code that David Halperin finds in ancient Athens (1990), or that Ken Stone (1995) locates in the Hebrew Bible. In the Song, openings and receptivity do imply penetration, but it is not clear who/what penetrates and who/what is penetrated, nor that being penetrated implies social submission as Halperin and Stone might argue. What is clear is a more active role for the receptor. For instance, the images of grasping and holding—most notably the hands and fingers on the "handles of on the bolt" in 5:5—signal such an active role. But reception is also something that happens with breasts, which nestle a lover (1:13). The mouth is a major receptor for all types of food and liquid, often in a distinctively

active role (2:3; 2:5). Now, the mouth also registers other orifices, especially in the lower body—vagina and anus. Not to be neglected in this cluster is the close association of feeding/eating with sex, and with eating the mouth is the active receptor. This receptivity is echoed by the fruits and flowers mentioned throughout the Song, none of which is phallic (as, say, cucumbers or carrots), but rather open out to receive (flowers like the sensuous lilies), or are round, soft, and opened for their juice or consumption.

13. In my effort at reconstruction of the sexuality of the Song, an important item is the perpetual presence of liquids of all types—wine, honey, milk, pomegranate juice, oils, perfumes, spices, and waters—which signal a marked difference with Western constructions of sexuality. Annie Sprinkle has usefully drawn attention to the absence of body fluids in acceptable sex acts not only through her name but also through her claim to find all bodily fluids erotically charged (Sprinkle 1998; 2005). In much Western sexuality, only semen and female ejaculate seem to be acceptable, as well as saliva either through kissing or as a lubricant, although even these items are now highly suspect in the age of AIDS. Other fluids such as blood, sweat, urine, mucus, and menstrual fluid do not fare so well. Perhaps the Song itself indicates a far more crucial role for liquids in its sexual construction.
14. The sexual body is, variously, a garden (4:12, 16; 5:1; 6:2; 8:13), a vineyard (1:6; 2:15; 7:13 [ET 12]; 8:11), an orchard (4:13) and a nut orchard (6:11), or an apple or fig or palm tree (2:3, 13; 7:8–9 [ET 7–8]; 8:5). Plants and fruits include a cluster of henna blossoms (1:14; see also 4:13), crocus (2:1, 2), lily (2:1, 16; 4:5; 5:13; 6:2; 7:3 [ET 2]), flowers (2:12), vines (2:13; 7:9 [ET 8], 13 [ET 12]), blossoms (6:11), grape blossoms (7:13 [ET 12]), wheat (7:3 [ET 2]), fruit with a sweet taste (2:3), choicest fruits (4:13), raisins (2:5), apples (2:5; 7:9 [ET 8]), pomegranates (4:3; 6:7, 11; 7:13 [ET 12]), and mandrakes (7:14 [ET 13]).
15. See further my detailed treatment of bestiality in Chapter 11.
16. The next two chapters become enamored of that linguistic barrier, seeking to understand its function and call its bluff.
17. In a moment of domestic nostalgia, if not "domestication" in a rather literal sense, Daniel Grossberg (1994) even suggests that the Song is concerned with home and family.
18. Erich Bosshard-Nepustil (1996) likes it both ways—two identifiable couples, one a king and queen, the other a woman and a shepherd.
19. Landy (1983a, 33–58) has a bet both ways.
20. For example, Fox traces the repetition of kisses in 1:2 and its connections with 8:1; 8:2; 1:4; 4:10; 4:3; 2:3; 5:16; 7:10; 1:3; 7:14 (Fox 1985, 71–74).
21. See also Linda Williams (1989, 126–28) on the various "sexual numbers" of straight porn films.
22. Alan Soble (1986, 55–102) attempts a Marxist turn—unfortunately too simplistic and somewhat misdirected—on this argument: pornography consumption (the assumption is heterosexual males) signals defeat by males in their economic, social, and sexual lives. It is not a signal of power, but rather its lack. However, he argues for a distinct place for pornography in communist society, since it will be produced communistically and have sexual value for communist people (1986, 103–49).
23. This means that peep shows express the reality of sex: the dancers, dressed in fantasy costumes, dance behind a screen (on which the fantasy is projected) that is opened for a few seconds at a time when a coin drops in the slot (see Dudash 1997; Funari 1997).

Chapter 2

1. It matters little whether such heterosexual love is for a married couple (as Kristeva suggests in a dubious moment of "'love patriarchalism'; lightly secularized" [Burrus and Moore 2003, 26; see Kristeva 1987, 83–100; Kristeva 1983, 83–98]) or an unmarried couple (as is assumed in the essays collected in both volumes of the *Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs* [Brenner 1993c; 2000]).
2. I will not repeat the panoply of references (many of which may be found in the previous chapter) that Burrus and Moore provide of "an entire 'school' of feminist commentary on the Song" (2003, 29) that takes its lead from Trible's famous but problematic chapter "Love's Lyrics Redeemed" in her *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (1978, 144–65).
3. Few feminist critics dissent from the majority, although see Fiona Black's work (2000; 2001; 2006).
4. They focus on the chapter called "Night Sprinkles" in my *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* (Boer 1999a), as well as an earlier version of chapter one of this book (see Boer 2000b).
5. Picking up Alice Bach's wonderful assessment of an earlier version of my "King Solomon Meets Annie Sprinkle" (Bach 1998, 303; see Chapter 9 and Boer 2000a). Indeed, Bach does not seem to realize that she plays the role of the censor that Burrus, Moore, and I identify as problematic.
6. For an excellent survey, see Simon Estok (2001).

Chapter 3

1. Especially useful for my purposes is the approach of Daniel Grossberg (2005) who admirably highlights the centrality of the natural world in the Song. But then he too is seduced by the metaphoric temptation, arguing that the natural metaphors evoke human love.
2. For instance, see Fox's nuanced discussion of metaphor, where he distinguishes between presentational and representational metaphor and explores the idea of metaphoric distance (1985, 272–76).
3. For example, Kate Rigby speaks of the "ultimate precedence of nature vis-à-vis culture," which "extends to a consideration of the ways in which human languages, cultures and textual constructs are themselves conditioned by the natural environment" (2002, 156).
4. A not uncommon assumption, but one that has also bedeviled other forms of political criticism, such as postcolonial criticism, feminism, or gay and lesbian criticism—and the list goes on.
5. In this chapter I am particularly indebted to the masterly, if slightly too careful, commentary of Exum (2005).
6. Unless indicated otherwise, the translations are mine.
7. Although "dove" (*yonah*) is usually understood as a term of endearment for a human being, there is nothing in the text that suggests it is necessary so, especially in light of my argument.
8. On the absence of gender-specific language, and especially the indeterminacy as to who is addressing whom, see further on this my chapter "Night Sprinkles" in *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* (Boer 1999a).

9. Grossberg also comments on the way that this pronominal ambiguity "raises several possibilities of affinity between the man and the animal" (2005, 237).
10. This is a world into which the commentators unwittingly immerse themselves with their obsessions over the identity of the plants, flowers, and animals. For an example among many, see Bergant (2001, 23). Early Christian and medieval commentators, in their search for allegorical hints, often give detailed attention to the features of the plants and animals—for instance, the "gazelle is so-called because of its native sharp-sightedness," writes Theodoret of Cyrus (Norris 2003, 117)—to the extent that they often seem to come to life in these commentaries (see further Norris 2003, 90–133).
11. This fiction of mutual love in the Song is well explicated by Alicia Ostriker (2000), although she is seduced by the fiction at the same time.
12. On the connections with Genesis 2–3, see Landy (1983a: 183–89), who argues that the Song is an inversion of the Genesis narrative—the couple goes back to the garden. See also Grossberg (2005, 234).

Chapter 4

1. A nonexhaustive list includes albondigas, apples, bangers, baubles, beecham's pills, bean bag, bearings, berries, bijoux de famille, bird's eggs, bolivers, booboos, boys down under, bullets, bum balls, buttons, cannon balls, charlies, chestnuts, clangers, clappers, clock weights, coffee stalls, coin purse, couilles, cojones, crystals, cubes, danglers, diamonds, doodads, doohickeys, eggs, family jewels, footballs, frick and frack, globes, gonads, gooseberries, grapes, itchy and scratchy, jingleberries, johnny bench nut cups, knackers, knockers, little boys, love apples, low hangers, male mules, marbles, marshmallows, mountain oysters, mud flaps, nads, niagara falls, nicknacks, nutmegs, nuts, nut sack, orchestra stalls, oysters, pebbles, pee-nuts, pills, ping and pong, plums, potatoes, punching bag, rocks, seeds, skittles, sperm factory, spunk holders, stones, swingers, tallywags, testimonials, the twins, vitals, ye olde creamery, and whirlygigs. In what follows I seek to repeat not one term for testicles. As for the penis, I can only bow to the comprehensive list at http://www.gregology.net/Entertainment/Dicktionary. For a more serious study, albeit not without its own attractions, see Martha Cornog (1986).
2. As one example, the Danish word *køre* refers to both driving a car (or truck or bus) and riding a bicycle. Danes will often speak of driving a bicycle, or simply "driving" to somewhere when they mean riding a bicycle. To an English speaker it sounds odd, since for him or her the semantic cluster of "drive" does not include bicycles.
3. During the presentation of an earlier version of this paper to a puzzled and eventually bemused audience at the Society for Asian Biblical Studies conference in Hong Kong (June 14–15, 2010), I discovered during question time that a good number of those present were Bible translators. Needless to say, most of the discussion focused not so much on the viability of my reading (which is to a large extent incontestable), but on the cultural, religious, and historical sensitivities of translating Hebrew words in all their earthy crudity. I can only hope that the many copies I sent out to those interlocutors after the session are now circulating among translators in the Asian region.
4. See the more weighty discussion of this text in Chapter 10.
5. Needless to say, the commentaries shy away from any serious discussion of such a text. William Beuken, for example, lamely offers "*hüften*" (hips) and "*lenden*" (loins, or the lumbar region) for our respective terms, suggesting a military background

before swiftly, with a sigh of relief, moving on (2003, 300, 312–13). For Hans Wildberger, such a tight-fitting ball bag is nothing less than a sign of the messiah (1972, 455), while John Watts hints that Yahweh's massive nuts may well be in question here (1985, 172–73).

6. Following LXX *he osphys*.
7. See the fuller discussion of this scribal spluttering pen(is) in the next chapter.
8. Once again we do not have to look far for blushing commentators: Gray speaks of the "homely hyperbole" of which the Hebrews were, he opines, quite fond (1970, 306).
9. We should not be surprised at the frequency of the term in Ezekiel, given the graphic sexual nature of much if his imagery—the source for more than one exploration of the text's or even the reputed author's psychological state (Halperin 1993; Schmitt 2004; Garber 2004; Jobling 2004).
10. *Dhvq* also has the sense of sticking to something, which is always a risk with a soiled and smelly egg bag.
11. Once again the commentators are a joy to behold: William McKane finds it a "difficult passage," daring to suggest that the point of verse 11 is to show "that the constant contact of the loin-cloth with Jeremiah's body is indicative of the indissolubility of the bond between Yahweh and his people" (1986, 290). William Holladay allows himself the observation that a loincloth is "the most intimate garment" but prefers to spend his time discussing geography and theological symbolism (1986, 397).
12. In a brilliant circumlocution, Hermann Gunkel calls it the "oath by the reproductive member" (1997, 248). For Gerhard von Rad, it is "a very ancient custom" (how does he know?) that "presupposes a special sanctity of this part of the body" (1972, 254). Tempting as it is to call von Rad "Captain Obvious," he has nothing on Gordon Wenham's observation that swearing on one's nuts is comparable to swearing on the Bible: "In the ancient Orient, solemn oaths could be taken while holding some sacred object in one's hand, as it is still customary to take an oath on the Bible before giving evidence in court" (1994, 141). And in an extraordinary moment that echoes the old British Empire and the very quaintness of biblical scholarship, John Skinner offers an example from none other than the Australian Aborigines, via the explorer George Grey (1841, 341). On Grey, English explorers of Australia, the Bible, and Aborigines, see *Last Stop Before Antarctica* (Boer 2008).
13. Gunkel (1997, 244) argues that in its initial form—should one assume such layering of sources—the story may have included Abraham's death.
14. Edwardes (1965, 65; 1967, 59) points out that in Latin one also finds a distinctly legal sense, since the words *testicle* and *testis* are derived from the roots *testiculi* and *testes*, meaning "the (two) witnesses."
15. On these matters, I am by and large in agreement with the commentators (Gunkel 1997, 248; Von Rad 1972, 254; Wenham 1994, 141; Skinner 1910, 341).
16. Eilberg-Schwartz (1993, 152–53), following Smith (1990), argues that *yarekh* does indeed refer to the genitals—Eilberg-Schwartz's obsession is the penis—but only as a euphemism. Obviously, I go a step further.
17. Gunkel makes the intriguing suggestion that—given the indeterminateness of the pronouns in verse 26—it may well have been Jacob who kneed the god in the divine bum balls (1997, 349–50). By verse 33 we find a later and more "acceptable" interpretation.
18. Ilona Rashkow (2000b, 133–39) comes closest to my reading, interpreting the story as a dream embodying the castration anxiety. Yet she does not join the dots.

19. Theodore Jennings's effort (2005, 253–59) to read Genesis 32 as a paradigmatic homoerotic story (see also Carden 2006, 50)—full of fury, violence, blessing, and love—would have been enhanced immeasurably had he realized the import of the Hebrew.
20. The retentive Walther Zimmerli unwittingly suggests as much when he speaks of the "best pieces of meat" (1979b, 499). Only G. A. Cooke is up front, simply noting that in this everyday rhyme, "loin" is an obvious ingredient (1985, 266).
21. This sense also applies to *hagerah . . . motneha* in Proverbs 31:17, where "gird her loins" refers to the superwoman of Proverbs 31.
22. In a work concerned with procreation and politics, I find it exceedingly strange that Mark Brett (2000) has completely missed the importance of these phrases. Needless to say, my trusty commentators completely desert me at this point, although Wenham nervously notes the graphic image of descendants coming out of Jacob's loins in Genesis 35:11 (1994, 325).
23. Without even the trace of a fear of the nocturnal emissions that troubled the church fathers so. Concerning those patriarchal anxieties, see Daniel Brakke (2009).

Chapter 5

1. Commentators are spectacular in missing the importance of this verse, perhaps because its claims are unremarkable for the male guild of biblical scholars (Zimmerli 1979b: 248; Eichrodt 1970, 130–31; Cooke 1985, 104; Greenberg 1983, 176). If any comment is made, it involves one of the commentator's favorite moves: repeat a speculative point made by another, but now as a thoroughly verifiable statement. In this case it involves a loose etymological connection with an Egyptian (!) word, *gst(y)*, perhaps a dubious picture, and thereby it is established that scribes would carry their horns somewhere in the nether regions.
2. Thanks to Stefanie Schön for this observation when she responded to an early version of this chapter presented to a seminar at the Centre for Gender Research at the University of Oslo, October 15, 2010.
3. Or, as Greenberg unwittingly and ambiguously puts it, "a scribe's kit" (1983, 176). Cooke's "a writer's inkhorn" (1985, 104) and Zimmerli's "a scribe's instrument" come close to such a scrotal wordplay (1979b, 224). For Zimmerli, the English is far more telling than the German "original," which has "*Schreibzeug des Schreibers*" (1979a, 188).
4. The King James Version edges closest with its "a writer's inkhorn by his side," but even here the translators quailed before the direct reference to balls and the scribal penis.
5. To suggest it merely means the "common script" or "with an ordinary pen" (distinguishing *'nosh* from *'ish*) is about as persuasive as the argument that "man" is a neutral term for "humanity" (Childs 2001, 70; Beuken 2003, 213). Misleading as well is Wildberger's "*unheils' griffel*" and Watts's "stylus of disaster" (Wildberger 1972, 311–12; Watts 1985, 148).
6. Robert Carroll (1986) fails to deal with this material, although he does note the tradition of interpretation that sees the possibility of Jeremiah being raped by God—a possibility even the naughty Carroll finds too much. Similarly, other commentators may flirt with the sexual overtones of Jeremiah 20:7; however, they focus on the suggestions of seduction if not rape in the first part of the verse, missing the connection

with Jeremiah the Bejerked (McKane 1986, 469–70; Holladay 1986, 552–53; Lundblom 1999, 854–55).

7. Edwardes also sees the semantic cluster spill over into *tzhq*, especially in the story of Ishmael and Isaac. Here Ishmael "mocks" (*mtzhq*), or rather "rubs" with Isaac (as the Greek and Latin would have it). So Isaac's name refers not so much to the fact that Sarah laughed at the suggestion she would bear a son in her old age (Gen 18:10–15 and 21:1–7) but because of Ishmael's rubbing of Isaac, whose name actually means "Phallus-Beater" or "Phallus-Beaten" (Edwardes 1967, 94–95).
8. See the fuller discussion of this text in Chapter 11, although I must already thank N. T. Wrong for alerting me to this verse and offering the translation, which is much closer to the Hebrew.
9. Of the commentators I have consulted, only David Halperin sees the full possibilities of oral sex in Ezekiel 2–3. The remainder simply misses it entirely (Zimmerli 1979b: 91–93, 106–7; Eichrodt 1970, 59–65; Cooke 1985, 30–38; Greenberg 1983, 60–81).

Chapter 6

1. Needless to say, the reading offered here differs from anything the reader will find in the standard commentaries on Chronicles. See, for example, Edward L. Curtis (1910), Peter R. Ackroyd (1973), Sara Japhet (1993), Steven L. McKenzie (2004), and Gary N. Knoppers (2004a; 2004b). Even John Jarick's mildly different commentary (2007a; 2007b) does not come close.
2. I am actually falling in line here with the standard scholarly position on Chronicles and the cult, but see Schweitzer (2007a), who argues that in a text like 2 Chronicles 30, with its repentance and unworthiness for keeping the cult the way they have, the people seek forgiveness.
3. "Ideology" Althusser famously defines as the representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence, thereby revolutionizing Marxist approaches to ideology (it is not simply false consciousness). It is not the *imaginary relationship* itself that is ideology—for instance, an illusion such as belief in justice, or God, or the honesty of one's rulers. It is not, in other words, a deliberate concealment of the truth by a conspiracy of priests and the powerful. Rather, ideology is the way this imaginary relation is *represented*. It operates at a second remove from reality.
4. This position runs through Negri's works (1991b, 1991a, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008b; Negri and Casarino 2008; Negri and Defourmantelle 2004; Negri and Scelsi 2008) but has made its largest impact through *Empire* (Hardt and Negri 2000; Negri 2008a), *Multitude* (Hardt and Negri 2004), and *Commonwealth* (Hardt and Negri 2009). See also Boer (2011a).
5. In contrast to ancient Greece and Rome, there is still relatively little on this subject in biblical studies. See especially the work of Stephen Moore (1996; 2003), David Clines (1995), and Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (1993), who make far greater use of deconstructive strategies, which soon run into their limits.
6. See note 1 of this chapter.
7. In traditional historical critical scholarship, such a perspective has been described as eschatology or messianism (Braun 1979, 59–61; Williamson 1977, 135; 1982, 24–26).

8. The desperate effort by Gary N. Knoppers (2001) and Antje Labahn and Ehud Ben Zvi (2003) to salvage some role for women in Chronicles only reinforces this point.
9. See Julie Kelso (2007), but see the argument by Steven Schweitzer (2003; 2007b) that the disenfranchising of priests, Zadokites, and the high priest has an implicit democratizing tendency, since it breaks the stranglehold on power by the traditional priesthood as well as moving the focus away from the monarchy. I must admit to being rather skeptical of such an argument.
10. For a comparable assessment of the role of the temple in Ben Sira, see Claudia V. Camp (2002). See, however, Kelso's study (2007), where she argues that the temple also contains within itself a womb, appropriating the productive capacity of women into a male-only world.
11. On what follows, see especially Kelso (2007), whom I follow quite closely here.
12. In fact, when the mother's name does appear in the formula, the syntax breaks down. It seems as though that masculine world cannot handle the presence of women even in the structure of its sentences. For example, in 1 Chronicles 2:18 there is the strange sentence: "Caleb the son of Hezron begat (*holidh*) Azubah, his wife, and Jerioth." Or is that "Caleb the son of Hezron begat by means of (*'et*) his wife, Azubah and with Jerioth?" It is unclear here whether the *'et* is a marker of the direct object—in which case Caleb begets his wives—or the preposition "with."
13. The estrangement effect, or *Verfremdungseffekt*, owes itself famously to both Bertholt Brecht and the Russian Formalists (*Ostrenanie*).
14. On camp, see Susan Sontag (1994, 275–92), Pamela Robertson (1996), Al LaValley (1995), Moe Meyer (1994), Kim Michasiw (1994), Jack Babuscio (1977), Fabio Cleto (1999), and Matthew Tinkom (2002).
15. This is the well-known "immediate divine retribution" first identified by Julius Wellhausen (1994, 203–10). To spell it out, the divine response to obedience or disobedience is immediate blessing or punishment, particularly by the kings and often exhibited in terms of cultic correctness (see, for example, 2 Chronicles 29–31). The inevitable punishment that follows disobedience may be averted by repentance after a warning. However, this immediate retribution may not be as smooth or as immediate as many have assumed. See especially Raymond Dillard (1993) and Brian Kelly (2003).

Chapter 7

1. "He had achieved the look gained only by the most advanced builders. While my body was a mess of straight edges and right angles, his, so preposterously muscled, was a mass of curves, fleshy ellipses and ovals" (Fussell 1991, 50).
2. In earlier versions of this paper presented at different conferences, my oral delivery was part of a larger performance piece in which I stripped down to gym jocks or G-string, threw a set of classic poses, and juxtaposed those poses with slides of vast bodybuilders in the same poses. The audience was then asked to judge which bodies they preferred. Apart from the sheer narcissism of such acts, there is an immense pleasure in being watched and ogled.
3. See also the discussion of fort-da in Chapter 1. On the matter of *objet petit a*, the inquisitive reader might also want to consult further Lacan's *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (1994), especially pages 263–76. He also discusses it in the almost impenetrable Seminar XX, *On Feminine Sexuality* (1998).

4. I worry too about another of my great loves—long distance cycling—where "bicycler's penis" is a risk. In that crucial zone of the perineum, compression and damage to the nerves may lead to impotence (Andersen and Bovim 1997; York 1990).
5. "They swept their arms out to the side, as if the sheer massivity of their lat wings necessitated it. They burrowed their heads slightly into their shoulders to make their necks appear larger. They looked bowlegged, absurdly stiff, and infinitely menacing" (Fussell 1991, 55).
6. Elsewhere Freud speaks of circumcision as a symbol of castration (Freud 2001, 23:91). It is an act with other parallels such as knocking out a front tooth (Freud 2001, 15:165) or blinding (Freud 2001, 23:190). Alternatively, it is a "recognizable relic" of the primeval castration visited by a jealous father on growing boys (Freud 2001, 22:86–87). He interprets it as a sign of submission to the father's will—the one who carries out the symbolic castration. This is reinforced by the observation that in many primal societies circumcision takes place at puberty as a rite of initiation (Freud 2001, 13:153).
7. This is also a distinctly masculine holiness. Rashkow, for instance, argues that circumcision, as that which asserts the possible threat of castration and its denial, allows the son to emulate the father while being dependent on the deity's power. Circumcision ensures the chain of male connection, yet it also is a feminizing process, threatening to make the Israelite male female through bleeding and castration (Rashkow 1993, 91–95).

Chapter 8

1. Even in Denmark, where porn on regular television may be watched after midnight, the comment was made, "he's a bit extreme, isn't he?" (Comment passed on by word of mouth.) Apart from expressions of disgust, anger, dismissals as "self-serving and icky," bans on teaching, and vows to ensure that I never get anywhere, another response is that of Virginia Burrus and Stephen Moore, who observe that I was the only one to "disrupt the sexual orthodoxy (which is the orthodoxy of 'sexuality' itself) that has dominated feminist scholarship" of the Song of Songs and other biblical texts (Burrus and Moore 2003, 34).
2. At this point, a curious slippage emerges, for Avaren's concern with 1 Kings 3:16–28 is different from the text I interpreted in "King Solomon Meets Annie Sprinkle," where I analyzed 1 Kings 10:1–13. But a slip is never merely a slip (so Freud): was my reading of Sheba in light of Sprinkle, a one-time porn star and sex worker, one that then brought Sheba into the realm of prostitute texts like that of 1 Kings 3?
3. Shelly Resnick has since died in a police cell.
4. This text numbers among the most influential statements from the Vatican. Others were to follow, refining and extending this initial document—*Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), *Mater et Magistra* (1961), *Pacem in Terris* (1963), *Dignitatis Humanae*, and *Gaudiem et Spes* (1965—conciliar documents from the Second Vatican Council), *Populorum Progessio* (1967), *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971), *Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Solicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), *Centesimus Annus* (1991), *Evangelium Vitae* (1995), and *Deus Caritas Est* (2005). A brief look at the dates already tells us much, for these documents appeared at times of economic and social unrest, often with connected labor crises. So the initial *Rerum Novarum* (1891) came as a response to social instability, class conflict, worker agitation, and the rising influence of socialism. Forty

years later, as the title *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) indicates, finds us in the midst of the Great Depression. Then no less than six statements appeared out of the turmoil of the 1960s. Finally, the last four bar one were part of the aggressive agenda of John Paul II, weaving in and out of the impact of liberation theology, the dramatic rolling back of communism in Eastern Europe and the triumphalism of neoliberal capitalism. The last of these, promulgated by Benedict XVI, comes in the wake of the "War on Terror," asserting nervously that Christianity is a religion of love, not hatred and war.

5. In other words, it is the well-tried formula of defining what is "catholic" or universal by excluding what does not fit the model.

Chapter 9

1. The possible texts are endless, as some of the corners of this book attest, but the precursor must be Annie Sprinkle's erotic reading of Genesis 1, performed with Mike Anderson at Jennifer Blowdryer's Smutfest (Sprinkle 1998, 98)
2. My argument comes close to, but is not identical with, those of Kendrick (1996) and Ellis (1988), for whom the auratic quality (following Walter Benjamin) of pornography is generated by its censored status. For a full survey of the "porn wars" of the 1980s, debates over the problematic cause-and-effect position (that porn incites the mistreatment of women); the troubled distinction between erotica and pornography and between obscenity and art; the complete neglect of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transvestite, S-M, genderfuck, and other healthy, nonsexist queer practices; the inadequate debate in biblical studies on pornography and pornoprophetics; and the close connections between prostitution and pornography on the one hand and political radicalism on the other, see the survey (with voluminous references) in Boer (1999a).
3. "Thereupon it [the instinctual impulse] renews its demand, and, since the path to normal satisfaction remains closed to it by what we may call the scar of repression, somewhere, at a weak spot, it opens another path for itself to what is known as a substitutive satisfaction, which comes to light as a symptom, without the acquiescence of the ego, but also without its understanding. All the phenomena of the formation of symptoms may justly be described as the 'return of the repressed.' Their distinguishing characteristic, however, is the far-reaching distortion to which the returning material has been subjected as compared with the original" (Freud 2001, 23:127).
4. In characteristic fashion, Lacan gives this another dialectical turn by arguing that repression and the return of the repressed are the same thing (1991a, 191–92).
5. I am far less interested in the inordinate and often fruitless scholarly attention given to matters such as source and redaction with these chapters, particularly in the light of the Septuagint, which has some notable additions to the text (although it may of course be that the Hebrew text was later trimmed down), as well as their possible use for historical reconstruction.
6. 1 Kings 11:1–13 oscillates between libido and religion: 11:1, 3, 5, and 7–8 talk about the foreign women Solomon marries, while 11:2, 4, and 6 give theological commentary, ending with the oracle delivered to Solomon in 11:9–13.
7. "In fact, women's performance art is mostly about personal experience: 'real life' presence of the artist, actor, author" (Bell 1994, 137).
8. See also her official websites: http://anniesprinkle.org and http://www.loveartlab.org.

9. From this perspective, she has moments of despair about the porn industry, but sees the utopian possibilities of sex in these newer directions (see Sprinkle 1996).
10. In these chapters, David is the passive receptor of a host of phallic items—that is, foreskins, spears, arrows, and the attentions of Saul and Jonathan (see further Boer 1999a).
11. Yahweh addresses Solomon in a dream, "Ask what I should give you." This Althusserian interpellation is comparable to Annie Sprinkle's realization that she was a prostitute. In order to settle down after an itinerant hippie life, she began working in a massage parlor, feeling horny after the massages, and fucking the guys as a bonus. "But finally," as she relates, "after about 3 months one woman used the word 'trick' and I realized, 'Ohmigod—they're *tricks!* Oh shit—I'm a *hooker!*' " (Sprinkle qtd. in Juno 1991).
12. I am now the proud possessor of an autographed copy of this video, through the good graces and excellent connections of Avaren Ipsen—she knows Sprinkle.
13. The same riddle is told again and again in the tradition, as in the Midrash ha-Hefez and the Yemenite tale of Saadiah ben Joseph. See Lassner (1993, 163, 174).
14. A similar method is used in the story from the Muslim *al-Kisa'i* (Lassner 1993, 211).
15. Bilqis or Balqis is the name of the queen in some of the traditions. In the Ethiopian *Kebra Negast* (Glory of Kings, a manuscript from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century CE), the queen's name is Makeda, and the offspring from her and Solomon, Menelik, establishes the Ethiopian dynasty, bearing forever the title "Lion of Judah." *Kebra Negast* also relates how the ark came to Ethiopia through subterfuge (Isaac 1993).
16. As I indicate in the next chapter, the feet or legs are a common euphemism in the Bible for the genitals.
17. The experimental video *Canineling*us (Carlson 1992) has Sprinkle being licked by a famous dog, whose name will not be released for privacy reasons. The video is somewhat difficult to obtain.
18. "I still like to keep my finger in the pie; it's like I have to remember my roots or something. So I still turn an occasional trick with my friend, Karen, who lives downstairs . . . Ninety percent of what I do with Karen is just fuck her clients in the ass. They come to Karen because she's a transsexual, and most guys that go to transsexuals want to get fucked in the ass. So I fuck them, and I spank them and I call them a few names. And I feel great afterwards. I'll feel totally rebalanced, like I can find myself again" (Sprinkle qtd. in Chapkis 1997, 90–91).
19. "I could squirt because I could pee and hit the ceiling in a shoulder stand position if I drink [*sic*] tons of water. It's just like this huge fountain. Everyone loved it because people are amazed that you can pee upside down" (Sprinkle on the "DuPont Circle Fountain," performed at the Gay and Lesbian March in Washington in 1993, qtd. in Kapsalis 1997, 130).

Chapter 10

1. To open them and turn their thick pages reminds me above all of the experience of opening books in the 1980s in the Gillespie library at the University of Sydney. Now dispersed, it was then the library for students studying divinity at the university, with many thick-paged, luxuriantly printed, exotic works from the nineteenth and

twentieth centuries. At times I was the first to read these books, for some still had the pages attached to one another in the fashion of the four-folded sheets common in an earlier period of publication.

2. "Finding a fatalistic and philosophic justification for free will and strong sensual inclinations, the Oriental, prodded by climate, spicy food, and custom, plunged headlong into the sea of diverse sexual pleasure" (Edwardes 1965, 200–201).
3. Among the ever expanding literature on orientalism and sex, see especially the complex and informed studies of McClintock (1995) and Massad (2007).
4. For the debate over Sontag's essay, see Moe Meyer (1994), D. A. Miller (1989), Michael Moon (1989), Kim Michasiw (1994), Jack Babuscio (1977), and Chuck Kleinhans (1994).
5. By the late 1970s and 1980s, the Julian Press went into orbit, publishing works on reincarnation, goddesses, and cracks in the cosmic egg, although as true child of the sixties, there was always a tendency of the press to deal with alternative spiritualities and psychologies.
6. Needless to say, the droll biblical commentators make not even the slightest gesture at this rabbinic gem (so Allen 1983, 44–56; Kraus 1978, 903; Dahood 1970, 71; Weiser 1962, 682; Briggs and Briggs 1909, 356).
7. Compare Eilberg-Schwartz's tentative suggestion that the scene restores the sensuality of El into Yahweh and is therefore erotic (Eilberg-Schwartz 1993, 108–9). I hardly need to point out that other commentators simply lack Edwardes's exegetical depth, hampered by a good dose of religious prudery (so Childs 1974, 565–56; Propp 2006, 553).
8. Edwardes has the ability to depict the most vivid of images with a few words. One of my favorites: "Thus in Persia it was not uncommon for a lecherous physician to order his constipated patient to bend over and then insert either his own fleshly one or an artificial phallus smeared with olive oil" (Edwardes 1965, 219).
9. "If there were only three, she was capable of gratifying each simultaneously by lying on her side and offering fellatio . . . and vulvar and anal coition. Hence, the popular feeling that woman is insatiable" (Edwardes 1965, 32).
10. In *The Jewel of the Lotus*, Edwardes shows another dimension of this pattern, moving from sexological concerns with lists—of traditional characterizations of women, names for the sex organs, terminology for masturbation, history of the condom, and the terminology of the sexual skills of prostitutes (Edwardes 1965, 59–61, 68–69, 112–15, 123–24, 154–62)—to explicit discussions of excessive sexual practices.
11. The first edition of John Bright's *A History of Israel* appeared in 1959.
12. My lagging commentators are not up to the task of helping me either (Propp 1999, 204–5; Childs 1974, 60–64).
13. Mieke Bal is, strangely, far more prudish, venturing the possibility that Jael "probably lures him into love" and then, with a sigh of relief, moving on (1988, 24). Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes also makes the briefest of mentions (2004, 96), not least because a comprehensive fuck with the enemy does not become a female hero. In Bal's book-length study of this episode, *Murder and Difference*, she devotes a scant couple of pages (Bal 1992, 102–4) to the possible sexual connotation of some of the verbs, but our helpful R. Johanan does not even make an appearance. Indeed, Bal prefers to discuss the matter with Yair Zakovitch (1981), and Cheryl Exum (2007, 72) in her turn relies on Bal. David Gunn (2005, 56–57) at least does acknowledge Johanan, but in a commentary dealing with the reception of a text, it would have

been remiss of him not to do so. Robert G. Boling (1975, 115–20), Robert Polzin (1980, 167), George Moore (1918, 164, 166), and Trent Butler (2009, 155–56) hardly dare breathe a mention of such possibilities.

14. Edwardes's text goes on to cite the rabbinic fantasies concerning the sex of Zimri and Cozbi, before Phinehas spears them in a lethal threesome: "424 times; no 60 will do, for her vagina was like a silo, its opening a cubit, and thereby Zimri's member was fearsome" (1967, 17).
15. And an example that makes me feel that I have encountered my double, for I too am interested in such etymologies (see Chapter 4 and Boer 1999a: 30–31).
16. The first sentence comes from Proverbs 31:10, the second from Proverbs 30:15–16.
17. Edwardes also sees the semantic cluster spill over into *tzhq*, especially in the story of Ishmael and Isaac. See further note 7 for Chapter 5. Note also that Gen 26:8 has Isaac *shq*-ing Rebecca and in Gen 39:17, Potiphar's wife accuses Joseph of doing the same to her.
18. So much so that some porn films promote themselves by promising "pure sex" from the beginning, without all the narrative filling.

Chapter 11

1. Even in the calculated edginess of porn studies, bestiality is notable for its absence from mainstream analyses (see, for example, Williams 2004; Goulemot 1994 [1991]; Kaite 1995). Initially, the excellent study by Bernard Arcand (1993) seems to be an exception, but here too we are disappointed, for the myth of the anteater and the jaguar from Brazil becomes a parable of human sexuality, and his discussion of death merely deals with our changing attitudes to sex and death.
2. I could find only two occurrences: the pompous and pious J. Harold Ellens speaks briefly of bestiality as "bad sex," as a topic usually encountered only by therapists and those "dark-side persons who make a commercial entertainment out of it under the shadow side of society" (2006, 144). For some strange reason, Ellens the psychologist misses the perverse appeal of the "shadow side of society." The other occurrence is the extremely unhelpful survey of biblical texts by Anil Aggrawal (2009), which deals with sexual paraphilias in the Bible and is published in, of all places, the *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*. This skirting of zoophilia is even more noticeable at precisely those moments where one would expect a treatment of the topic, as in the studies of "The Bawdy Bible" (Ullendorf 1979) in relation to the incest laws of Leviticus 18:23, 20:15–16, and Deuteronomy 27:21 (Brenner 1994); psychoanalytic treatments of incest (Rashkow 2000b); landmark queer readings of the Bible (Guest et al. 2006); edited collections on Jewish sexuality, barring the briefest of mentions (Magonet 1995); discussions of Israelite households or the domestic mode of production (Meyers 1988, 1997, 2005; Jobling 1991, 1998; Simkins 2004; Yee 2003); sacred marriages (Nissinen and Uro 2008); and in treatments of agriculture in ancient Israel, where encounters with animals must have been frequent enough to produce laws (Borowski 1987; Stępień 1996). Only Hugh Pyper has played with such themes, allusively exploring the dangerous liaisons of wolves and lambs (2005, 156–68), although he does have a study of donkeys and Balaam on its way. I was able to find but one very brief reference to Hittites and bestiality in Brevard Childs's commentary on Exodus, where he notes "Hittite law only forbade the practice with certain animals" (1974, 478)—and then hurriedly moves on.

3. Among many of Alfred Kinsey et al.'s controversial findings, the one on bestiality has become (in)famous: in the United States in the 1950s, about 8 percent of males (mostly of rural background) had sexual contact with animals and 3.6 percent of females. Males tended to prefer farm animals while females preferred pet dogs and cats. The reports found that vaginal or anal sex was the most common form for males, followed by masturbating male or female animals, as well as fellatio by the animal of the male and masturbation by friction against the animal's body. Females followed a different pattern, usually by means of general body contact or masturbation of the animal.
4. To this collection *mixoscopic zoophilia*—namely, sexual pleasure experienced while watching copulating animals—should be added. Unfortunately—and adding to confusion—sodomy and buggery have also been used, especially in legal texts, to denote bestiality, albeit as a catch-all term that included male-on-male sex (and not so often female-on-female sex), sex with Jews and Muslims, and at times sex with Africans (see Dekkers 2000, 118–19; 1992, 133–34).
5. In her introduction to the translation of the Hittite laws, Martha Roth (1997, 215) opines that someone has tried to give the laws some organization, implying of course that the ancient dolts in question did not do such a good job. She suggests that the two hundred laws fall into the categories of homicide (1–6, 42–44); assault (7–18); stolen and runaway slaves (19–24); marriage (26–36); land tenure (39–41, 46–56); lost property (45); theft of or injury to animals (57–92); unlawful entry (93–97); arson (98–100); theft of or damage to plants (101–120); theft of or damage to implements (121–44); wages, hire, and fees (150–61); prices (176–86); and, of greatest interest to us, sexual offenses (187–200) (see also Collins 2007, 118). I am not sure that this helps matters at all. Apart from the haphazard nature of these categories, we also find odd individual laws appearing in between the ones listed above. For some strange reason, Roth bypasses the organizing category of the Hittite scribes: the first hundred were known as "if a man" and the second hundred as "if a vine" simply because these are the first words of each section. Any serious consideration of the economic nature of Hittite society would pay much closer attention to such terms since they indicate the primary role of agriculture in that socioeconomic system.
6. Unless one is the sun god, since in that case sex with a cow leads to the production of a human being (see Collins 2007, 149).
7. The terminology is actually quite vague, so it does leave open the possibility for smooching, fellatio, cunnilingus, and so on.
8. As Midas Dekkers puts it, "A bull mounts anything globe-shaped—hence the danger to farm workers bending over" (Dekkers 2000, 66; 1992, 75).
9. Perhaps the Hittites were merely the first to engage in such hippophilia: "In order to understand something of the love of a man for his horse all one need do is look around a historic city. Everywhere one sees statues of men with horses, seldom if ever of men with their wives. With such an intimate bind between horse and rider it is understandable that men should sometimes wish to mount their steed. In the army especially, with many horses and few women available, it must have happened often" (Dekkers 2000, 18; 1992, 24).
10. A method that has been revived and fruitfully deployed by a former colleague of mine, the hippophiliac and passionate Anne Nyland. See http://www.kikkulimethod.com and the translation of this early work of equine passion (Kikkuli 2009 [c. 1345 BCE]).

11. Unless the text refers to a man or a woman having sex with a corpse: in that case, given the physical arrangements of body parts on male and female mammals, one can only assume that a woman might avail herself of that brief period of rigor mortis, unless of course we imagine the very real possibilities of penetrative necrophilia by women as well.
12. That stretching will need to go beyond Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Slavoj Žižek, and others in the psychoanalytic tradition; despite the great attention to incest via the Oedipus complex, it is difficult to find any references to bestiality or zoophilia in their work.
13. In other words, they appear as part of Canaanite culture, a feature that always makes an unimaginative historical critic sweat and squirm, for they seem to be somewhat distant from the so-called historical Hittites of Anatolia. But that is to succumb to the flat type of interpretation one comes to expect from such critics, who miss entirely the literary features of a text that operates in terms of a mythical landscape. Gerhard von Rad (1972, 247) attempts to overcome this pseudoproblem by arguing that the Hittites had spread south by this time and the Israelites used "Hittite" as a generic term for any Canaanite.
14. All the commentators I have consulted puzzle over the absence of haggling, or rather its strange pattern. For example, Gordon J. Wenham (1994, 128) cannot understand why Abraham does not try to bring the excessive price down. Lawrence A. Turner (2000, 101) is also bothered by the price but can't quite make sense of the absence of haggling, especially when Abraham is exceedingly good at it, as Genesis 18:22–33 suggests. E. A. Speiser (1964, 172) is a little more ingenious, arguing that Ephron is shifty, pretending to offer the land as a gift, and then extracting an exorbitant price from Abraham. John Skinner (1910, 334), however, offers the most nonsensical answer, arguing that Abraham outsmarts the deceitful Hittites and manages to get the land despite their efforts to avoid it. And in a moment that one might add to the list of orientalisms in Edward Said's study of the same name, Von Rad bends over backward to show that this is "a delightful miniature of adroit Oriental conversation" (1972, 247). Just in case we harbored the suspicion that this is an extremely astute and counterintuitive way to haggle, then all we need do is turn to Genesis 18:22–33, for there Abraham can haggle with the best of them.
15. In a forthcoming project called *The Sacred Economy*, I challenge, among other matters, the deeply held assumptions concerning private property in this text: Abraham "buys" some land that becomes his "private property."
16. *Mivekhar*—the most select or choicest item—is part of the semantic cluster of *bkhr*, the key term for God's choosing of Israel to be his people. We are now in a major theological zone.
17. Studies of 2 Samuel 11 typically concern David and, especially in the case of feminist studies, Bathsheba, while Uriah receives short shrift; critics simply follow the text and kill him off (e.g., see Valler 1994; Klein 2000).
18. *Rekhats ragleka* is a well-known euphemism for having sex, for another sense of *rekhats* is to "tremble" or "hover" and *regel* is a metonym for genitals. "Wash your feet" may also be translated as "pump your cock."
19. I feel impelled, in a type of scholarly hangover, to check once again my straight and faithful commentators. Once again, they are unhelpful to the point of being obstructionist, for none of them offer the merest comment here (Speiser 1964, 202; Von Rad 1972, 273; Skinner 1910, 368).

20. It could be argued that Esau's goat-like appearance fills in a lacuna in the Hittite laws. The only domesticated animal not covered by those laws is the goat. But if it is the case that Hittite women loved goats and that the laws deal exclusively with men, then it could well be the case that the Hittite women had a passion for goats; hence Esau's harem of Hittite women.
21. As intimated in Chapter 5, I must thank N. T. Wrong for alerting me to this verse and offering the translation, which is much close to the Hebrew. While Edwardes has "whose meat was like the meat of asses, and whose jitting was like the jitting of stallions" (1967, 90), the RSV has, lamely, "and doted upon her paramours there, whose members were like those of asses, and whose issue was like that of horses." Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes offers a slightly better but still very tame translation: "She lusted after the paramours there, whose organs are like the organs of asses and whose ejaculation is like the ejaculation of stallions" (1995, 252). Erin Runions (2001, 166n27) and David J. Halperin (1993, 117, 146) also note the fascination with megacocks. More straightlaced commentators are quick to skip by such a verse, whose meaning can only with great difficulty be avoided (Allen 1990, 41, 43, 49; Cooke 1985, 252, 261).
22. One soon becomes accustomed to an image of polite translators squirming over such passages and thereby producing limp offerings such as "well-fed lusty stallions" or "sleek and lusty" (Bright 1965, 36). Not unexpectedly, Robert Carroll has some fun with the difficulties of commentators, suggesting "well hung" for *mashkim* (1986, 178). To his credit, William McKane gives the verse some space, even if he ends up offering the flat and properly scientific translation "with big testicles" (1986, 119). Edwardes, of course, goes the whole hog, suggesting "they were big-ball'd horses, well-hung stallions" (1967, 95). The word *meyuzanim* offers us an insight into perceptions of Yahweh. *Meyuzanim* is pual participle for *yzn*, which means to be on heat, horny, dying for a hump. That would suggest that the name Jezaniah, or *Jezaneyahu* (Jeremiah 40:8 and 42:1), means not, as some as have argued, "Yahweh hears" but "Yahweh is raging for a hump." I should note William L. Holladay's effort (Holladay 1986, 180–81) to deny, after a lengthy discussion, any sexual or testicular meaning at all!
23. *Bukkake* is a far more appropriate translation of *zirmah* than it at first seems to be. *Bukkake* is the noun form of the Japanese verb *bukkakeru* (ぶっ掛ける), and it means "to dash," "splash" or "heavy splash." The word *bukkake* is often used in Japanese to describe pouring out water with sufficient momentum to cause splashing or spilling. Indeed, *bukkake* designates a type of dish where the broth is poured on top of noodles, as in *bukkake-udon* and *bukkake-soba*. In pornography it describes a scene where a number of men ejaculate on a woman. It is a form of hygrophilia, sexual arousal from contact with bodily secretions. So I would suggest a formula: zoological zirmah :: bestial bukkake.
24. Following the impetus of Halperin, many are keen to see these and other texts as signs of Ezekiel's—even if he is understood to be a literary construct—psychological problems (Halperin 1993; Schmitt 2004; Garber 2004). I am not so sure, since Ezekiel seems spot on to me, but see Jobling's excellent essay (Jobling 2004).
25. Even city names have this undertow of perverse associations. Judges 1:26 reads, "And the man went to the land of the Hittites and built a city, and called its name Luz; that is its name to this day." This man has the dubious honor of having betrayed his own city, but having done so he is allowed to escape . . . to the land of the Hittites

to build a city. But the name of the city is intriguing, for *Luz* is part of the semantic cluster of the verb *lvz*, which means to be perverse.

26. The basic sense of *shkhv* is to lie (down), but it includes within its semantic cluster sex and—with linguistic hints of a Hittite connection—dying.
27. Very euphemistically translated as "lie with" in RSV and other translations, *titten shekhovtekha* means to literally give a load of semen; hence, "ejaculate."
28. As is so often the case, the translations try to "civilize" the explicit earthiness of the Hebrew text. The RSV has "give herself to," while the Hebrew literally reads stand or "take a position before"; and what position does a woman take before an animal? She turns her ass toward it and bends over.
29. See Chapter 11, note 2.
30. These laws played a pervasive role in the Middle Ages in which the animal in question was put to death along with the human being, especially during the waves of mass hysteria from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries (when witches too were hunted down with extraordinary zeal). However, in earlier centuries, animals were put on trial, judged, sentenced, and (sometimes) acquitted for biting, goring, trampling; for plagues and swarms; and even for sins of omission (not preventing a rape in the house, for instance). All of which came to an abrupt end with the separation of church and state after the French Revolution—or at least in those regions where French law (the Code Napoléon) was established. Now it was no longer the role of the state to appease God and enforce his law (see further Dekkers 2000, 116–25; 1992, 130–40; Evans 1998).
31. However, it seems that relatively large, domestic animals are in mind here, and that practices such as formicophilia are simply off the radar. Formicophilia is, strictly speaking, sex with ants, but includes any small creatures, such as snails, slugs, and frogs. Penetration in these cases would be a little tricky, but it is said that to have them crawling—enticed perhaps by some honey or other tidbit—over one's cock or cunt produces the most exquisite orgasm.
32. The text in Leviticus 20:15–26, the liturgical recitation on Mount Gerizim, becomes even more intriguing, since the four incest laws appear in the midst of twelve laws than can only be called a variation on the Ten Commandments. Now, of course, they are the Twelve Commandments.
33. At this point, the studies of incest by Athalya Brenner (1994) and Ilona Rashkow (2000b) simply fail to see that incest applies beyond human beings. So also Calum Carmichael (2010, 135–57).
34. So different, in fact, that Frymer-Kensky's careful study (1995) concludes that she cannot discern any coherent system for dealing with sex in the Bible.

References

Ackroyd, Peter R. 1973. *I & II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah*. London: SCM.

Adorno, Theodor W. 1989. *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*. Translated by R. Hullot-Kentor. *Theory and History of Literature*, vol. 61. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Aggrawal, Anil. 2009. References to the Paraphilias and Sexual Crimes in the Bible. *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine* 16 (3):109–14.

Allen, Leslie C. 1983. *Psalms 100–150: Word Biblical Commentary.* Waco: Word Books.

———. 1990. *Ezekiel 20–48: Word Biblical Commentary.* Dallas: Word Books.

Althusser, Louis. 1971. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Translated by B. Brewster. London: New Left Books.

———. 1995. *Sur la Reproduction*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Andersen, K. V., and G. Bovim. 1997. Impotence and Nerve Entrapment in Long Distance Amateur Cyclists. *Acta Neurologica Scandinavica* 95:233–40.

Arcand, Bernard. 1993. *The Jaguar and the Anteater: Pornography Degree Zero*. Translated by W. Grady. London: Verso.

Babuscio, Jack. 1977. Camp and the Gay Sensibility. In *Gays and Film*, edited by R. Dyer, 40–57. London: British Film Institute.

Bach, Alice. 1998. On the Road Between Birmingham and Jerusalem. *Semeia* 82:295–306.

Badminton, Neil. 2004. *Alien Chic: Posthumanism and the Other Within*. London: Rooutledge.

Bal, Mieke. 1988. *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 1992. *Murder and Difference: Gender, Genre, and Scholarship on Sisera's Death*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Barrett, Michèle. 1991. *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Beetz, Andrea M., and Anthony L. Podberscek, eds. 2005. *Bestiality and Zoophilia: Sexual Relations with Animals*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press.

Behdad, Ali. 1994. *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Bekkencamp, Jonneke, and Fokkelien van Dijk Hemmes. 1993. The Canon of the Old Testament and Women's Cultural Traditions. In *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs*, edited by A. Brenner, 67–85. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Bell, Shannon. 1994. *Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostitute Body*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
———. 1995. *Whore Carnival*. New York: Autonomedia.
Bergant, Diane. 2001. *The Song of Songs*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.
Beuken, William A. M. 2003. *Jesaja 1–12. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament*, Translated by U. Berges. Freiburg: Herder.
Bird, Phyllis. 1997. *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
Black, Fiona C. 2000. Unlikely Bedfellows: Allegorical and Feminist Readings of the Song of Songs 7.1–8. In *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs, 2*, edited by A. Brenner. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
———. 2001. Nocturnal Egression: Exploring Some Margins of the Song of Songs. In *Postmodern Interpretations of the Bible*, edited by A. K. M. Adam, 93–104. St. Louis: Chalice Press.
———. 2006. *The Artifice of Love: Grotesque Bodies and the Song of Songs*. London: T & T Clark.
Black, Fiona, and J. Cheryl Exum. 1998. Semiotics in Stained Glass: Edward Burne-Jones's Song of Songs. In *Biblical Studies/Cultural Studies: The Third Sheffield Colloquium*, edited by J. C. Exum and S. Moore, 315–42. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
Blonsky, Marshall. 1992. *American Mythologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Boer, Roland. 1996. *Jameson and Jeroboam*. Atlanta: Scholar's Press.
———. 1997. *Novel Histories: The Fiction of Biblical Criticism*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
———. 1998. Ezekiel's Axl, or, Anarchism and Ecstasy. In *Violence, Utopia and the Kingdom of God*, edited by T. Pippin and G. Aichele, 21–46. New York: Routledge.
———. 1999a. *Knockin' on Heaven's Door: The Bible and Popular Culture*. London: Routledge.
———. 1999b. Utopian Politics in 2 Chronicles 10–13. In *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture*, edited by M. P. Graham and S. L. McKenzie, 360–94. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
———. 2000a. King Solomon Meets Annie Sprinkle. *Semeia* 82:151–82.
———. 2000b. The Second Coming: Repetition and Insatiable Desire in the Song of Songs. *Biblical Interpretation* 8 (3):276–301.
———. 2001. Yahweh as Top: A Lost Targum. In *Queer Commentary and the Hebrew Bible*, edited by K. Stone, 75–105. Cleveland: Pilgrim.
———. 2006. The Law of the Jealous Man. In *Voyages in Uncharted Waters: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Biblical Interpretation in Honour of David Jobling*, edited by W. Bergen and A. Siedlecki, 87–95. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix.
———. 2007a. *Criticism of Heaven: On Marxism and Theology*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
———. 2007b. Keeping It Literal: The Economy of the Song of Songs. *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 7:1–14. doi: 10.5508/jhs.2007.v7.a6.
———. 2007c. The Sacred Economy of Ancient "Israel." *The Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 21 (1):29–48.
———. 2007d. Skin Gods: Circumcising the Built Male Body. *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* 1 (1):35–44.
———. 2008. *Last Stop before Antarctica: The Bible and Postcolonialism in Australia*. Rev. ed. Atlanta: SBL Publishing.
———. 2009a. *Criticism of Religion: On Marxism and Theology II*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

———. 2009b. *Political Myth: On the Use and Abuse of Biblical Themes*. Durham: Duke University Press.
———. 2010a. Of Fine Wine, Incense and Spices: The Unstable Masculine Hegemony of the Books of Chronicles. *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* 4 (1):19–30.
———. 2010b. Too Many Dicks at the Writing Desk, or How to Organise a Prophetic Sausage Fest. *Theology and Sexuality* 16(1): 95–108.
———. 2011a. *Criticism of Theology: On Marxism and Theology III.* Leiden: E. J. Brill.
———. 2011b. The Patriarch's Nuts: Concerning the Testicular Logic of Biblical Hebrew. *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* 5(2): 41–52.
———. 2012. *Criticism of Earth: On Marx, Engels and Theology*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
———. In press. *In the Vale of Tears: On Marxism and Theology V*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
———, ed. 2001b. *A Vanishing Mediator? The Absence/Presence of the Bible in Postcolonialism, Semeia*. Atlanta: SBL Publications.
Boling, Robert G. 1975. *Judges: The Anchor Bible*. Garden City: Doubleday.
Boone, Joseph. 2001. Vacation Cruises; or, the Homoerotics of Orientalism. In *Postcolonial, Queer: Theoretical Intersections*, edited by J. C. Hawley, 43–78. Albany: SUNY Press.
Borowski, Oded. 1987. *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
Bosshard-Nepustil, Erich. 1996. Zu Struktur und Sachprofil Des Hohenlieds. *Biblische Notizen* 81:45–71.
Boyarin, Daniel. 1990. The Song of Songs: Lock or Key? Intertextuality, Allegory and Midrash. In *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory*, edited by R. Schwartz, 214–30. Oxford: Blackwell.
———. 1997. *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
———. 2009. Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and Jewish Masculinity. In *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism: A Critical Reader*, edited by B. Krondorfer, 82–95. London: SCM.
Brakke, Daniel. 2009. The Problematization of Nocturnal Emissions in the Early Christian Church. In *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism: A Critical Reader*, edited by B. Krondorfer, 338–54. London: SCM.
Branch, Michael P. et al, ed. 1998. *Reading the Earth: New Directions in the Study of Literature and the Environment*. Moscow: University of Idaho Press.
Braun, Roddy. 1979. Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah: Theology and Literary History. In *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament*, edited by J. A. Emerton, 52–64. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
Brenner, Athalya. 1989. *The Song of Songs*. Sheffield: JSOT Press.
———. 1993a. "Come Back, Come Back the Shulammite" (Song of Songs 7.1–10): A Parody of the *Waṣf* Genre. In *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs*, edited by A. Brenner, 234–57. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
———. 1993b. To See Is to Assume: Whose Love Is Celebrated in the Song of Songs. *Biblical Interpretation* 1:266–84.
———. 1994. On Incest. In *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, edited by A. Brenner. Sheffield, 113–38: Sheffield Academic Press.
———. 1995. On Prophetic Propaganda and the Politics of "Love": The Case of Jeremiah. In *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, edited by A. Brenner, 256–74. Sheffield: Sheffield University Press.
———. 1996. Pornoprophetics Revisited: Some Additional Reflections. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 70:63–86.

———, ed. 1993c. *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs: A Feminist Companion to the Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
———, ed. 2000. *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs, 2: A Feminist Companion to the Bible, Second Series*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
Brett, Mark. 2000. *Genesis: Procreation and the Politics of Identity*. London: Routledge.
Brettler, Marc Zvi. 1991. The Structure of 1 Kings 1–11. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 49:87–97.
Briggs, Charles, and Emily Briggs. 1909. *Psalms Vol. III: The International Critical Commentary*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
Bright, John. 1965. *Jeremiah: The Anchor Bible*, 2nd ed. Garden City: Doubleday.
———. 1980. *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. London: SCM.
Burrus, Virginia, and Stephen D. Moore. 2003. Unsafe Sex: Feminism, Pornography, and the Song of Songs. *Biblical Interpretation* 11 (1):24–52.
Burton, Richard. (1885) 1959. *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*. New York: Modern Library.
———. 1963. *The Perfumed Garden of the Shaykh Nefzawi*. London: Luxor Press.
Burton, Richard, and Foster Fitzgerald Arbuthnot. (1883) 1964. *The Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana*. London: Luxor Press.
Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
———. 1993. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York: Routledge.
Butler, Trent C. 2009. *Judges: Word Biblical Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
Camp, Claudia V. 2002. Storied Space, or, Ben Sira "Tells" a Temple. In *Imagining Biblical Worlds: Studies in Spatial, Social and Historical Construction in Honor of James W. Flanagan*, edited by D. Gunn and P. M. McNutt, 64–80. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
Carden, Michael. 2006. Genesis/Bereshit. In *The Queer Bible Commentary*, edited by D. Guest, R. E. Goss, M. West, and T. Bohache, 1–60. London: SCM.
Carlson, W. 1992. *Canineling*us. Los Angeles: Video X Pix.
Carmichael, Calum. 2010. *Sex and Religion in the Bible*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Carroll, Robert. 1986. *Jeremiah*. London: SCM.
———. 1995. Desire Under the Terebinths: On Pornographic Representation in the Prophets—A Response. In *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, edited by A. Brenner, 275–308. Sheffield: Sheffield University Press.
Chapkis, Wendy. 1997. *Live Sex Acts: Women Performing Erotic Labor*. New York: Routledge.
Childs, Brevard. 1974. *Exodus: Old Testament Library*. London: SCM.
———. 2001. *Isaiah: Old Testament Library.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
Cleto, Fabio, ed. 1999. *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject—A Reader*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
Clines, David J. A. 1995. *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
Cohen, Michael. 1999. Letter. *PMLA* 114 (5):1092–93.
Cohen, Yoram. 2002. *Taboos and Prohibitions in Hittite Society: A Study of the Hittite Expression natta āra ("Not Permitted")*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag.
Collins, Billie Jean. 2007. *The Hittites and Their World*. Atlanta: SBL Publications.
Comisso, Giovanni. 1966. *Oriental Love in Action*. London: Luxor.
Connell, R. W. 2005. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Cooke, G. A. 1985. *Ezekiel: International Critical Commentary.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

Cornog, Martha. 1986. Naming Sexual Body Parts: Preliminary Patterns and Implications. *Journal of Sex Research* 22 (3):393–98.
Cotterell, Peter. 1996. The Great Song: Some Linguistic Considerations. *Bible Translator* 47:101–8.
Creekmur, Cory K., and Alexander Doty. 1995. Introduction. In *Out in Culture: Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Essays in Popular Culture*, edited by C. Creekmur and A. Doty, 1–11. Durham: Duke University Press.
Curtis, Edward L. 1910. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles 1 & 2: The International Critical Commentary.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
Czekay, Angelika. 1993. Distance and Empathy: Constructing the Spectator of Annie Sprinkle's Post-POST PORN MODERNIST—Still in Search of The Ultimate Sexual Experience. *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 7 (2):177–92.
Dahood, Mitchell. 1970. *Psalms III: 101–150: The Anchor Bible*. Garden City: Doubleday.
Davies, Philip. 1998. *Scribes and Schools: The Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
Dean, Tim. 1993. Transsexual Identification, Gender Performance Theory, and the Politics of the Real. *Literature and Psychology* 39 (4):1–25.
Deckers, M. 1993. The Structure of the Song of Songs and the Centrality of *Nepes*. In *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs*, edited by A. Brenner, 172–96. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
Dekkers, Midas. 1992. *Lief Dier: Over Bestialiteit*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Contact.
———. 2000. *Dearest Pet: On Bestiality*. Translated by P. Vincent. London: Verso.
Deleuze, Gilles. 1991. Coldness and Cruelty. In *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty and Venus in Furs*, by G. Deleuze and L. von Sacher-Masoch, 7–138. New York: Zone Books.
Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1977. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H. R. Lane. New York: Viking Press.
Derrida, Jacques. 1976. *Of Grammatology*. Translated by G. C. Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Dillard, Raymond. 1993. Reward and Punishment in Chronicles: The Theology of Immediate Retribution. *Westminster Theological Journal* 46 (164–72).
Doniger, Wendy. 1995. The Mythology of Masqueraidng Animals, or Bestiality. *Social Research* 62 (3):751–72.
Douglas, Annie. 1993. Annie Sprinkle: Post Post Porn Modernist. *New Formations* 19:95–108.
Dube, Muse. 2000. *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. St. Louis: Chalice.
Dubois-Desaulle, G. 1933. *Bestiality: An Historical, Medical, Legal and Literary Study*. New York: Panurge.
Dudash, Tawnya. 1997. Peepshow Feminism. In *Whores and Other Feminists*, edited by J. Nagle, 98–118. London: Routledge.
Dupré, Louis. 1983. *Marx's Social Critique of Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Dutton, Kenneth. 1995. *The Perfectible Body: The Western Ideal of Physical Development*. London: Cassell.
Dyer, Richard. 1993. *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations*. London: Routledge.
Eagleton, Terry. 1991. *Ideology: An Introduction*. London: Verso.
Earls, Christopher M., and Martin L. Lalumiere. 2007. A Case Study of Preferential Bestiality (Zoophilia). *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment* 14 (1):83–88.
Edwardes, Allen. 1963. *Death Rides a Camel: A Biography of Richard Burton*. New York: Julian Press.

———. 1965. *The Jewel in the Lotus: A Historical Survey of the Sexual Culture of the East*. New York: Julian Press.
———. 1967. *Erotica Judaica: A Sexual History of the Jews*. New York: Julian Press.
Edwardes, Allen, and Robert E. L. Masters. 1962. *The Cradle of Erotica: A Study of Afro-Asian Sexual Expression and an Analysis of Erotic Freedom in Social Relationships*. New York: Julian Press.
Eichrodt, Walther. 1970. *Ezekiel: A Commentary*. Translated by C. Quin. London: SCM.
Eilberg-Schwartz, Howard. 1993. *God's Phallus and Other Problems for Men and Monotheism*. New York: Beacon.
Ellens, J. Harold. 2006. *Sex in the Bible: A New Consideration*. Westport: Praeger.
Ellis, Albert. 1958. *Sex without Guilt*. New York: Lyle Stuart.
Ellis, Havelock. 1940. *Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Volume 5*. New York: Random House.
Ellis, Richard. 1988. Disseminating Desire: Grove Press and "The End[s] of Obscenity." In *Perspectives on Pornography: Sexuality in Film and Literature*, edited by G. Day and C. Bloom, 26–43. Houndmills: Macmillan.
Estok, Simon. 2001. A Report Card on Ecocriticism. *AUMLA: The Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association* 96:220–38.
Evans, Edward Payson. 1998 [1906]. *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*. Clark, NJ: Lawbook Exchange.
Exum, J. Cheryl. 1977. A Literary and Structural Analysis of the Song of Songs. *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 85:47–79.
———. 2005. *Song of Songs: A Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
———. 2007. Feminist Criticism: Whose Interests Are Being Served? In *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, edited by G. A. Yee, 65–89. Minneapolis: Fortress.
Falk, Marcia. 1993. *The Song of Songs: A New Translation*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
Fontana, Benedetto. 1993. *Hegemony and Power: On the Relation between Gramsci and Machiavelli*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Fox, Michael V. 1985. *The Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
Freud, Sigmund. 2001. *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Translated and edited by James Strachey. New York: Vintage
Frisch, Amos. 1991b. Structure and Its Significance: The Narrative of Solomon's Reign (1 Kings 1–12.24). *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 51:3–14.
———. 1991a. The Narrative of Solomon's Reign: A Rejoinder. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 51:22–24.
Frymer-Kensky, Tivka. 1995. Law and Philosophy: The Case of Sex in the Bible. In *Jewish Explorations of Sexuality*, edited by J. Magonet, 3–14. Providence: Berghahn Books.
Funari, Vicky. 1997. Naked, Naughty, Nasty: Peep Show Reflections. In *Whores and Other Feminists*, edited by J. Nagle, 19–35. London: Routledge.
Fussell, Sam. 1991. *Muscle: Confessions of an Unlikely Bodybuilder*. London: Cardinal.
Gagnon, Jean. 1988. *Pornography in the Urban World*. Translated by J. Boake and J. Svoboda. Toronto: Art Metropole.
Gagnon, Robert A. J. 2001. *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Text and Hermeneutics*. Nashville: Abingdon.
Gaines, Charles. 1977. *Pumping Iron: The Art and Sport of Body-Building*. London: Sphere Books.

Garber, David J. 2004. Traumatizing Ezekiel, the Exilic Prophet. In *Psychology and the Bible: A New Way to Read the Scriptures*, edited by J. H. Ellens and W. G. Rollins, 215–36. Westport: Praeger.

Garstang, John. 2009 [1910]. *The Land of the Hittites: An Account of Recent Explorations and Discoveries in Asia Minor, with Descriptions of the Hittite Monuments*. Piscataway: Gorgias.

Gas, Y. Z., H. Nasr, I. Mazen, N. Salah, and R. El Ridi. 1997. 5–Alpha-Reductase Deficiency in Patients with Micropenis. *Journal of Inherited Metabolic Disease* 20:95–101.

George, Mark K. 2009. *Israel's Tabernacle as Social Space*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Ginzberg, Louis. 2008 [1909]. *The Legends of the Jews, Volume III & IV*. Charleston: Forgotten Books.

Glotfelty, Cheryl, and Harold Fromm, eds. 1996. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Goitein, S. D. 1993. The Song of Songs: A Female Composition. In *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs*, edited by A. Brenner, 58–66. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Gordis, Robert. 1974. *The Song of Songs and Lamentations: A Study, Modern Translation and Commentary*. New York: KTAV.

Gottwald, Norman K. 1999. *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of Liberated Israel 1250–1050 BC*. Reprint with new preface. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Goulder, Michael D. 1986. *The Song of Fourteen Songs*. Sheffield: JSOT Press.

Goulemot, Jean Marie. 1994 [1991]. *Forbidden Texts: Erotic Literature and Its Readers in Eighteenth-Century France*. London: Polity.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

———. 1992. *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 1. Translated by J. A. Buttigieg and A. Callari. New York: Columbia University Press.

———. 1996. *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 2. Translated by J. A. Buttigieg. New York: Columbia University Press.

———. 2007. *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 3. Translated by J. A. Buttigieg. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gray, John. 1967. *Joshua, Judges and Ruth*. London: T. Nelson and Sons.

———. 1970. *I & II Kings*, rev. ed. London: SCM.

Greenberg, Moshe. 1983. *Ezekiel 1–20: The Anchor Bible Commentary*. Garden City: Doubleday.

Grey, George. 1841. *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia, during the Years 1837, 38, and 39, under the Authority of Her Majesty's Government Describing Many Newly Discovered, Important, and Fertile Districts, with Observations on the Moral and Physical Condition of the Aboriginal Inhabitants*. 2 volumes; London: T. & W. Boone.

Griffin, Susan. 1981. *Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge against Nature*. New York: Harper & Row.

Grossberg, Daniel. 1990. *Centripetal and Centrifugal Structures in Biblical Poetry*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

———. 1994. Two Kinds of Sexual Relationships in the Hebrew Bible. *Hebrew Studies* 35:7–25.

———. 2005. Nature, Humanity, and Love in Song of Songs. *Interpretation* 59 (3):229–42.

Guest, Deryn, Robert E. Goss, Mona West, and Thomas Bohache, eds. 2006. *The Queer Bible Commentary*. London: SCM.
Guider, Margaret Eletta. 1995. *The Daughters of Rahab: Prostitution and the Church of Liberation in Brazil*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
Gunkel, Hermann. 1997 [1964]. *Genesis*. Translated by M. E. Biddle. Macon: Mercer University Press.
Gunn, David M. 2005. *Judges: Blackwell Bible Commentaries*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Halberstam, Judith, and Ira Livingston, eds. 1995. *Posthuman Bodies*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
Halperin, David J. 1993. *Seeking Ezekiel: Text and Psychology*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
Halperin, David M. 1990. *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love*. New York: Routledge.
Harding, Sandra. 1991. *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge: Thinking from Women's Lives*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. 2000. *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
———. 2004. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin.
———. 2009. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge: Belknap.
Harvey, David. 1998. What's Green and Makes the Environment Go Round? In *Cultures of Globalization*, edited by F. R. Jameson and M. Miyoshi, 327–55. Durham: Duke University Press.
Hoffner, Harry. 1997. Hittite Laws. In *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and the Asia Minor*, edited by M. T. Roth, 213–40. Atlanta: Scholar's Press.
Holladay, William L. 1986. *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1–25: Hermeneia*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
Hooper, Charlotte. 2001. *Manly States: Masculinities, International Relations, and Gender Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. 2002. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. Translated by E. Jephcott. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Hornsby, Teresa. 2006. Ezekiel. In *The Queer Bible Commentary*, edited by D. Guest, R. E. Goss, M. West, and T. Bohache, 412–26. London: SCM.
Ipsen, Avaren. 2004. Political Economy, Prostitution, and the *Eschaton* of the Whore Babylon. In *Dem Tod Nicht Glauben: Sozialgeschichte der Bibel*, edited by F. Crusemann, M. Crusemann, C. Janssen, R. Kessler, and B. When, 504–27. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus GmbH.
———. 2007. Solomon and the Two Prostitutes. *Bible and Critical Theory* 3 (1):1–12.
———. 2009. *Sex Working and the Bible*. London: Equinox.
Irigaray, Luce. 1985. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Translated by G. C. Gill. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Isaac, Ephraim. 1993. Is the Ark of the Covenant in Ethiopia? *Biblical Archaeology Review* 19 (4):60–63.
Jameson, Fredric. 1991. *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
———. 1998. *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983–1998*. London: Verso.
———. 2009. *Valences of the Dialectic*. London: Verso.
Japhet, Sara. 1993. *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
Jarick, John. 2007a. *1 Chronicles*, 2nd ed. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix.
———. 2007b. *2 Chronicles*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix.

Jennings, Theodore W. 2005. *Jacob's Wound: Homoerotic Narrative in the Literature of Ancient Israel*. New York: Continuum.

Jobling, David. 1991. Feminism and "Mode of Production" in Ancient Israel: Search for a Method. In *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, edited by D. Jobling, P. L. Day, and G. T. Sheppard, 239–51. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press.

———. 1992. "Forced Labor": Solomon's Golden Age and the Quesion of Representation. *Semeia* 54:57–76.

———. 1998. *1 Samuel*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.

———. 2004. An Adequate Psychological Approach to the Book of Ezekiel. In *Psychology and the Bible: A New Way to Read the Scriptures*, edited by J. H. Ellens and W. G. Rollins, 203–14. Westport: Praeger.

Juno, Andrea. 1991. Annie Sprinkle. In *Angry Women*, edited by A. Juno and V. Vale, 23–40. San Francisco: Re/Search Publications.

Kaite, Berkeley. 1995. *Pornography and Difference*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Kamionkowski, S. Tamar. 2001. Gender Reversal in Ezekiel 16. In *Prophets and Daniel*, edited by A. Brenner, 170–85. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Kapsalis, Terri. 1997. *Public Privates: Performing Gynecology from Both Ends of the Speculum*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Karpman, Benjamin. 1954. *The Sexual Offender and His Offence*. New York: Julian Press.

Katz, Jonathan Ned. 1995. *The Invention of Homosexuality*. New York: Dutton.

Keel, Othmar. 1994. *The Song of Songs*. Translated by F. J. Gaiser. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Kelly, Brian. 2003. "Retribution" Revisited: Covenant, Grace and Restoration. In *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, edited by M. P. Graham, S. L. McKenzie, and G. N. Knoppers, 206–27. London: T & T Clark.

Kelso, Julie. 2007. *O Mother, Where Art Thou?: An Irigarayan Reading of the Book of Chronicles*. London: Equinox.

Kendrick, Walter. 1996. *The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kikkuli. 2009 [c. 1345 BCE]. *The Kikkuli Method of Horse Training*. Sydney: Smith and Stirling.

Kinsey, Alfred. C., Wardell. B. Pomeroy, and Clyde. E. Martin. 1948. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders.

Kinsey, Alfred. C., Wardell. B. Pomeroy, Clyde. E. Martin, and P. H. Gebhard. 1953. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders.

Klein, Lillian R. 2000. Bathsheba Revealed. In *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings, 2*, edited by A. Brenner, 47–64. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Kleinhans, Chuck. 1994. Taking Out the Trash: Camp and the Politics of Parody. In *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, edited by M. Meyer, 182–201. London: Routledge.

Knoppers, Gary N. 2001. Intermarriage, Social Complexity and Ethnic Diversity in the Genealogy of Judah. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120:15–30.

———. 2004a. *1 Chronicles 1–9: The Anchor Bible.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

———. 2004b. *1 Chronicles 10–29: The Anchor Bible.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm. 2001. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. 2 vols. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Krafft-Ebing, R. von. 1965. *Psychopathia Sexualis*. New York: Scarborough Books.

Kraus, Hans-Joachim. 1978. *Psalmen 60–150: Biblische Kommentar Altes Testament.* Neukichen-Vluyn: Neukichener Verlag.

Kristeva, Julia. 1983. *Histoires d'Amour*. Paris: Éditions Denoël.
———. 1987. *Tales of Love*. Translated by L. S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press.
Krondorfer, Björn. 2009. Editor's Introduction. In *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism: A Critical Reader*, edited by B. Krondorfer, 165–66. London: SCM.
Labahn, Antje, and Ehud Ben Zvi. 2003. Observations on Women in the Genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1–9. *Biblica* 84:457–78.
Lacan, Jacques. 1977. *Écrits: A Selection*. Translated by A. Sheridan. New York: Norton.
———. 1990. Kant with Sade. *October* 51:53–104.
———. 1991a. *The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955*. Translated by J. Forrester. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, vol. 2. New York: Norton.
———. 1991b. *Freud's Papers on Technique: 1953–1954*. Translated by J. Forrester. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, vol. 1. New York: Norton.
———. 1992. *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959–1960*. Translated by D. Porter. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, vol. 7. London: Tavistock.
———. 1994. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*. Translated by A. Sheridan. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, vol. 11. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
———. 1998. *On Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972–1973.* Translated by B. Fink. *The Seminary of Jacques Lacan,* vol. 20. London: Norton.
Landy, Francis. 1983a. *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs*. Sheffield: Almond Press.
———. 1983b. The Song of Songs. In *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, edited by R. Alter and F. Kermode, 305–19. Cambridge: Belknap.
Larrain, Jorge. 1983a. Ideology. In *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, edited by T. Bottomore, 219–23. Oxford: Blackwell.
———. 1983b. *Marxism and Ideology*. London: Macmillan.
Lassner, Jacob. 1993. *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba: Boundaries of Gender and Culture in Postbiblical Judaism and Medieval Islam*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Laura, Ronald, and Kenneth Dutton. 1991. *The Matrix Principle: A Revolutionary Approach to Muscle Development*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
LaValley, Al. 1995. The Great Escape. In *Out in Culture: Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Essays in Popular Culture*, edited by C. K. Creekmur and A. Doty, 60–70. Durham: Duke University Press.
Lefebvre, Henri. 1992. *Éléments de rythmanalyse*. Paris: Éditions Syllepse.
———. 2004. *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. Translated by S. Elden and G. Moore. London: Continuum.
Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1969. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Translated by J. H. Bell, J. R. von Sturmer, and R. Needham. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode.
———. 1978 [1973]. *Structural Anthropology 2*. Translated by M. Layton. London: Penguin.
———. 1989 [1955]. *Tristes Tropiques*. Translated by J. Weightman and D. Weightman. London: Picador.
Limmer, R. R. 1969. *Sex and the Unborn Child*. New York: Julian Press.
Lundblom, Jack R. 1999. *Jeremiah 1–20: The Anchor Bible*. New York: Doubleday.
MacKendrick, Karmen. 1999. *Counterpleasures*. Albany: SUNY Press.
Magonet, Jonathan, ed. 1995. *Jewish Explorations of Sexuality*. Providence: Berghahn Books.

Marx, Karl. 1845a. Theses on Feuerbach (Original version). In *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, vol. 5, 3–5. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
———. 1845b. Thesen über Feuerbach. In *Marx Engels Werke*, vol. 3, 5–7. Berlin: Dietz.
Massad, Joseph A. 2007. *Desiring Arabs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Masters, Robert E. L. 1962. *The Homosexual Revolution*. New York: Julian Press.
———. 1966. *The Hidden World of Erotica: Forbidden Sexual Behaviour and Morality*. New York: Julian Press.
McClintock, Anne. 1995. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. London: Routledge.
McCormack, Patricia. 2004. Perversion: Transgressive Sexuality and Becoming Monster. *Thirdspace: A Journal of Feminist Theory and Culture* 3 (2). http://www.thirdspace.ca/journal/article/view/maccormack.
———. 2009. Queer Posthumanism: Cyborgs, Animals, Monsters, Perverts. In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Queer Theory*, edited by N. Giffney and M. O'Rourke, 111–26. Farnham: Ashgate.
McKane, William. 1986. *Jeremiah Volume 1: I–XXV: The International Critical Commentary*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
McKenzie, Steven L. 2004. *1–2 Chronicles*. Nashville: Abingdon.
McKinlay, Judith. 2004. *Reframing Her: Biblical Women in Postcolonial Focus*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix.
Meredith, Oscar. 1969. *The Lure of Lust: The Saga of Man's Ceaseless Search for Sexual Excitement*. London: Tallis.
Meyer, Moe, ed. 1994. *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*. London: Routledge.
Meyers, Carol. 1988. *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*. New York: Oxford University Press.
———. 1997. The Family in Early Israel. In *Families in Ancient Israel*, edited by Leo G. Perdue, Joseph Blenkinsopp, John J. Collins, and Carol Meyers, 1–47. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
———. 2005. *Households and Holiness: The Religious Culture of Israelite Women*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
Michasiw, Kim. 1994. Camp, Masculinity, Masquerade. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* (6):146–73.
Michelson, Peter. 1993. *Speaking the Unspeakable: A Poetics of Obscenity*. Albany: SUNY Press.
Miles, Robert. 1991. *The Rites of Man: Love, Sex and Death in the Making of the Male*. London: Grafton Books.
Miller, D. A. 1989. Sontag's Urbanity. *October* 49:91–101.
Modleski, Tania. 1988. *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*. New York: Methuen.
Montano, Linda. 1989. Summer Saint Camp 1987, with Annie Sprinkle and Veronica Vera. *The Drama Review* 33:94–119.
Moon, Michael. 1989. Flaming Closets. *October* 51:19–54.
Moore, George. 1918. *Judges: The International Critical Commentary*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
Moore, Stephen D. 1996. *God's Gym: Divine Male Bodies of the Bible*. New York: Routledge.
Moore, Stephen D., and Janice Capel Anderson, eds. 2003. *New Testament Masculinities*. Atlanta: SBL Publications.
Munro, Jill M. 1996. *Spikenard and Saffron: The Imagery of the Song of Songs*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Murphy, Roland E. 1981. *Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther*: *Forms of Old Testament Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
———. 1990. *The Song of Songs: A Commentary on the Book of Canticles or the Song of Songs: Hermeneia*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
Negri, Antonio. 1991a. *Marx beyond Marx: Lessons on the Grundrisse*. Translated by H. Cleaver, M. Ryan, and M. Viano. Brooklyn: Autonomedia.
———. 1991b. *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics*. Translated by M. Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
———. 2003. *Time for Revolution*. Translated by M. Mandarini. London: Continuum.
———. 2004. *Subversive Spinoza: (Un)contemporary Variations*. Translated by T. S. Murphy, M. Hardt, T. Stolze, and C. T. Wolfe. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
———. 2006. *The Political Descartes: Reason, Ideology and the Bourgeois Project*. Translated by M. Mandarini and A. Toscano. London: Verso.
———. 2008a. *Empire and Beyond*. Translated by E. Emery. Cambridge: Polity Press.
———. 2008b. *The Porcelain Workshop: For a New Grammar of Politics*. Translated by N. Wedell. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).
Negri, Antonio, and Cesare Casarino. 2008. *In Praise of the Common: A Conversation on Philosophy and Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Negri, Antonio, and Anne Defourmantelle. 2004. *Negri on Negri*. Translated by M. B. DeBevoise. New York: Routledge.
Negri, Antonio, and Raf Valvola Scelsi. 2008. *Goodbye Mr. Socialism*. Translated by P. Thomas. New York: Seven Stories Press.
Nissinen, Martti, and Risto Uro, eds. 2008. *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
Norris, Richard A., ed. 2003. *The Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
Ostriker, Alicia. 2000. A Holy of Holies: The Song of Songs as Countertext. In *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs, 2*, edited by A. Brenner, 36–54. 104–29. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
Parker, Kim Ian. 1988. Repetition as a Structuring Device in 1 Kings 1–11. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 42:19–27.
———. 1991. The Limits to Solomon's Reign: A Response to Amos Frisch. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 51:15–21.
———. 1992. Solomon as Philosopher King? The Nexus of Law and Wisdom in 1 Kings 1–11. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 53:75–81.
Petterson, Christina. In press. *The Missionary, the Catechist and the Hunter: Foucault, Protestantism and Colonialism*. Studies in Critical Research on Religion. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
Polzin, Robert. 1980. *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History, Part One: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Pope, Marvin H. 1977. *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, *The Anchor Bible*. Garden City: Doubleday.
Pritchard, James B., ed. 1955. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Propp, William H. C. 1999. *Exodus 1–18: The Anchor Bible*. New York: Doubleday.
———. 2006. *Exodus 19–40: The Anchor Bible*. New York: Doubleday.
Pyper, Hugh. 2005. *An Unsuitable Book: The Bible as Scandalous Text*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix.

Rashkow, Ilona. 1993. *Phallacy of Genesis: A Feminist-Psychoanalytic Approach*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.

———. 2000a. Oedipus Wrecks: Moses and God's Rod. In *Exodus to Deuteronomy*, edited by A. Brenner, 59–74. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

———. 2000b. *Taboo or Not Taboo: Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

———. 2004. "What's in a Name? That Which We Call a Rose By Any Other Name Would Smell as Sweet": God's Name, Lacan, and the Ultimate Phallus. In *Psychology and the Bible: A New Way to Read the Scriptures*, edited by J. H. Ellens and W. G. Rollins, 237–66. Westport: Praeger.

Rigby, Kate. 2002. Ecocriticism. In *Literary and Cultural Criticism at the Twenty-First Century*, edited by J. Wolfreys, 151–78. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Rinella, Steven. 2006. Depraved Indifference. *Nerve*. http://www.nerve.com/personalessays/rinella/depravedindifference.

Robertson, Pamela. 1996. *Guilty Pleasures: Feminist Camp from Mae West to Madonna*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ross, Andrew. 1993. The Popularity of Pornography. In *The Cultural Studies Reader*, edited by S. During, 221–42. London: Routledge.

Roth, Martha T. 1997. *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and the Asia Minor: Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World Series*. Atlanta: Scholar's Press.

Runions, Erin. 2001. Violence and the Economy of Desire in Ezekiel 16:1–45. In *Prophets and Daniel*, edited by A. Brenner, 156–69. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Sacher-Masoch, Leopold von. 1991. *Venus in Furs*. In *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty and Venus in Furs*, by G. Deleuze and L. von Sacher-Masoch, 141–271. New York: Zone Books.

Sade, Marquis de. 1991. *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom and Other Writings*. London: Arrow.

Said, Edward. 1992. *Orientalism*, 2nd ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Sayres, Sohnya, Anders Stephanson, Stanley Aronowitz, and Fredric Jameson, eds. 1984. *The 60s, without Apology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Schmitt, John J. 2004. Psychoanalyzing Ezekiel. In *Psychology and the Bible: A New Way to Read the Scriptures*, edited by J. H. Ellens and W. G. Rollins, 185–202. Westport: Praeger.

Schweitzer, Steven. 2003. The High Priest in Chronicles: An Anomaly in a Detailed Description of the Temple Cult. *Biblica* 84: 388–407.

———. 2007a. Exploring the Utopian Space of Chronicles: Some Spatial Anomalies. In *Constructions of Space I: Theory, Geography, and Narrative*, edited by J. L. Berquist and C. V. Camp, 141–56. London: T & T Clark.

———. 2007b. *Reading Utopia in Chronicles.* New York: T & T Clark.

Shell, Marc. 1997. The Holy Foreskin; or, Money, Relics, and Judeo-Christianity. In *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies*, edited by J. Boyarin and D. Boyarin, 345–59. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Simkins, Ronald. 2004. Family in the Political Economy of Ancient Israel. *The Bible and Critical Theory* 1 (1):1–18.

Singer, Peter. 2001. Heavy Petting. *Nerve*. http://www.nerve.com/Opinions/Singer/heavyPetting.

Skinner, John. 1910. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis: The International Critical Commentary*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

Smith, S. H. 1990. "Heel" and "Thigh": The Concept of Sexuality in the Jacob-Esau Narratives. *Vetus Testamentum* 40 (4):464–73.
Soble, Alan. 1986. *Pornography: Marxism, Feminism, and the Future of Sexuality*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Sontag, Susan. 1994. *Against Interpretation*. London: Vintage.
Speiser, E. A. 1964. *Genesis: The Anchor Bible*. Garden City: Doubleday.
Sprinkle, Annie. 1991. Beyond Bisexual. In *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out*, edited by L. Hutchins and L. Lani Kaahumanu, 103–7. Boston: Alyson.
———. 1998. *Post-Porn Modernist: My 25 Years as a Multimedia Whore*. San Francisco: Cleis Press.
———. 2005. *Dr. Sprinkle's Spectacular Sex: Make Over Your Love Life with One of the World's Greatest Sex Experts*. New York: Tarcher/Penguin.
———. 2007. *Annie Sprinkle's Amazing World of Orgasm*. DVD. Eurospirit. Directed by Joseph Kramer.
———. 2008. *Dr. Annie Sprinkle's How to Be a Sex Goddess in 101 Easy Steps*. DVD. Directed by Joseph Kramer.
Sprinkle, Annie, and Maria Beatty. 1992. *The Sluts and Goddesses Video Workshop: Or How to Be a Sex Goddess in 101 Easy Steps*. DVD. Directed by Joseph Kramer.
Sprinkle, Annie, Albert Jaccoma, and Johnny Armstrong. 1990. *Linda/Les & Annie: The First Female-to-Male Transsexual Love Story*. Video. Directed by Albert Jaccoma.
Sprinkle, Annie, and Gabrielle Cody. 2001. *Hardcore from the Heart: The Pleasures, Profits and Politics of Sex in Performance*. London: Continuum.
Stadelmann, Luis. 1992. *Love and Politics: A New Commentary on the Song of Songs*. New York: Paulist.
Stępień, Marek. 1996. *Animal Husbandry in the Ancient Near East: A Prosopographic Study of Third-Millennium Umma*. Bethesda: CDL Press.
Stone, Ken. 1995. Gender and Homosexuality in Judges 19: Subject-Honor, Object-Shame? *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 67:87–107.
Stott, Katie M. 2008. *Why Did They Write This Way? Reflections on References to Written Documents in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Literature*. London: T & T Clark.
Thomas, Peter. 2009. *The Gramscian Moment*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
Tinkom, Matthew. 2002. *Working Like a Homosexual: Camp, Capital, Cinema*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Trible, Phyllis. 1978. *God and Rhetoric of Sexuality*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
Turner, Lawrence A. 2000. *Genesis*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
Ullendorf, Edward. 1979. The Bawdy Bible. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 42 (3):425–56.
Valler, Shulamit. 1994. King David and "His" Women: Biblical Stories and Talmudic Discussions. In *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings*, edited by A. Brenner, 129–42. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
Van Dijk-Hemmes, Fokkelien. 1995. The Metaphorization of Woman in Prophetic Speech: An Analysis of Ezekiel 23. In *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, edited by A. Brenner, 244–55. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
———. 2004. *The Double Voice of Her Desire*. Translated by D. E. Orton. Leiden: Deo.
Vitzthum, Virginia. 2000. Annie Sprinkle Swims On. *Salon*, February 9. http://www.salon.com/2000/02/08/sprinkle.
Von Rad, Gerhard. 1972. *Genesis: Old Testament Library*, Translated by J. Bowden. London: SCM.
Watts, John D. W. 1985. *Isaiah 1–33: Word Biblical Commentary. W*aco: Word Books.

Weaver, Mary Jo. 1989. Pornography and the Religious Imagination. In *For Adult Users Only: The Dilemma of Violent Pornography*, edited by S. Gubar and J. Hoff, 68–86. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Weiser, Artur. 1962. *The Psalms: Old Testament Library.* Translated by H. Hartwell. London: SCM.
Wellhausen, Julius. 1994 [1885]. *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*. Atlanta: Scholar's Press.
Wendland, Ernst R. 1995. Seeking the Path Through a Forest of Symbols: A Figurative and Structural Survey of the Song of Songs. *Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics* 7:13–59.
Wenham, Gordon J. 1994. *Genesis 16–50: Word Biblical Commentary*. Waco: Word Books.
Wildberger, Hans. 1972. *Jesaja: Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukichener Verlag.
Williams, Linda. 1989. *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible."* Berkeley: University of California Press.
———, ed. 2004. *Porn Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Williamson, H. G. M. 1977. *Israel in the Books of Chronicles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
———. 1982. *1 and 2 Chronicles*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
Yee, Gale A. 2003. *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
York, J. P. 1990. Sports and the Male Genitourinary System: Genital Injuries and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. *Physician and Sports Medicine* 18 (10):92–96, 98–100.
Zakovitch, Yair. 1981. Siseras Tod. *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 93:364–74.
Zimmerli, Walther. 1979a. *Ezechiel 1. Teilband: Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukichener Verlag.
———. 1979b. *Ezekiel 1: Hermeneia*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
Žižek, Slavoj. 1989. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso.
———. 1991a. *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. London: Verso.
———. 1991b. *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*. Cambridge: MIT.
———. 1994a. *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality*. London: Verso.
———, ed. 1994b. *Mapping Ideology*. London: Verso.
———. 1996. *The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters*. London: Verso.

This page intentionally left blank.

Index