



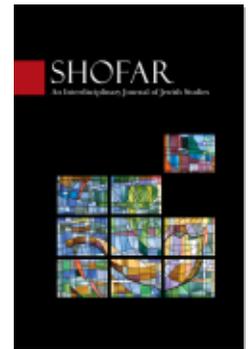
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JUDAIC CINECORPOREALITY: FLESHING OUT THE HAREDI MALE BODY IN AVISHAI SIVAN'S *THE WANDERER*

Dan Chyutin

ABSTRACT

This essay discusses the representation of the ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) male body in Avishai Sivan's noted feature *The Wanderer* (2010) as representative of contemporary Israeli cinema's attitude towards Judaic corporeality. Using both sociological and theological literature, it highlights the ways by which this film orchestrates the details of ultra-Orthodox reality to mount a damning critique of Judaic regimes of corporeal regulation. According to this critique, Judaic corporeality exists in a condition of continuous repression, whereby it seeks to absent bodily desires, and even its own material presence. Through the adolescent protagonist Yitzhak, *The Wanderer* charts a trajectory of transgression and release from this repressive framework. The journey, however, does not entail liberation but rather culminates in destructive violence, consequently allowing the film to define pathological bodily behavior as inescapable both inside and outside the Haredi ghetto. While foregrounding the relevance of this assertion, the essay's conclusion also traces its limits, which derive from the film's problematic attempt to reduce ultra-Orthodox corporeality to the contours of certain antisemitic stereotypes of Old World Jewry.

Religion, in Judeo-Christianity as well as other traditions, is often seen as a matter of spirituality, first and foremost.¹ For many, to enter into dialogue with a divine entity requires a process in which the immaterial is favored over the material; the spiritual becomes the site where interaction takes place, and belief, ephemeral as it is, functions as the sole vehicle for (human) participation. In various sites, the idealized religious life is imagined as one where the believers divorce themselves of worldly attachments, becoming instead a meaningful abstraction, imitative but inherently distortive of the indescribable Holy. To fully inhabit religion, "Mankind" must then, in this context, evolve (and dissolve) into "Spirit."

Yet, as much as this pervasive mode of spiritualization seems to resonate with fundamental aspects of religious sentiment, it nevertheless fails to acknowledge the role the body plays within religious practice and doctrine. Religion is a lived reality, and therefore is shaped by the material—and especially the bodily—conditions that govern our existence. Believers experi-

ence transcendence through viscera, exercise spiritual values via corporeal rituals, fashion their physical demeanor in light of religious codes, enter into affective relationships with incarnate figures of religious importance. They seek to understand the godly through their bodies, and their bodies through the godly. Consequently, it becomes clear that, in the words of sociologist Meredith McGuire, “the body should be an important component of our consideration of the social aspects of religion.”²

If the body is important to religions, then Judaism is by no means an exception; in fact, Judaic tradition has been engrossed in matters of the flesh, offering a wealth of insight into the problematic negotiation of spiritual and bodily concerns. Corporeal terms, as will be explained below, frame the everyday life of observant Jews: each minute gesture carries with it religious meaning, thereby becoming a coded text for others to interpret. Accordingly, to be an observant Jew is to *act* like one, with bodily behavior emerging as a privileged platform for articulating devotion and asserting social identity and belonging.

The nuances of this Judaic performance are ingrained in religious practitioners from early childhood; to the community of nonbelievers, however, they are largely unfamiliar. Partly to blame for this ignorance has been cinema’s general tendency towards depicting Jewish bodies through an ethnic rather than religious lens.³ This particular predilection may potentially be linked to the fact that many of the films dealing with Jewish identity originate from national contexts in which Jews are not the dominant force, and in which professing religious particularity could be disadvantageous. Yet even in the most Jewish of national contexts—Israel—the pattern of marginalizing the religious body has been strenuously maintained. Thus, as handmaiden to Zionist ideology, Israeli cinema has traditionally posed the native “Sabra”—an emblem of virility, forged through combat and manual labor—as the golden standard for all to uphold, consequently excluding those bodies that could or would not measure up to this ideal. Amongst those excluded was the observant Jew, whose religious devotion seemed out of place in Zionism’s dream of a modernized, physically oriented “New Jew.”

For over a decade, however, a change in the attitude towards the Jewish body has been registered on the Israeli screen (as well as globally),⁴ with an unparalleled number of contemporary films turning their attention to the corporeal facets of Judaic practice.⁵ This shift marks a meaningful cultural attempt at determining what it means to be a Jew in Israel; its sig-

nificance, however, has largely been overlooked by Israeli cinema scholars, who rarely engage the bodies of religious Jews, even within the context of corporeally centered studies. When the Judaic body is referenced in Israeli film literature, it is often through the reductive trope “Old World Jew,” understood in light of antisemitic discourses as being either hypermasculine or effeminate/“castrated.”⁶ The surfacing of these stereotypes serves scholars to support the claim that Israeli cinema has responded to the gradual decline of traditional Zionism by recovering its repressed, exilic Other. Such an argument seems useful in interpreting the ideological operation of many of contemporary Israeli cinema’s Jewish representations, but when applied to imaged Judaic figures, it also stands the risk of losing sight of their religious specificity.

Recently a small number of studies have attempted to counter this tendency by addressing filmic renditions of Judaic life more directly, especially from the perspective of gender behavior;⁷ in spite of these efforts, however, Judaic “cinecorporeality”—and in particular its male variants—has still to receive sufficient attention within contemporary scholarship. Without neglecting the important insights of past research, the following paper will try to respond to this scholarly gap, using a single text as its guide: Avishai Sivan’s critically acclaimed fiction feature *The Wanderer* (2010). Like many other secular films that deal with Israel’s Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) minority, *The Wanderer* draws from details regarding the body regimes of the Haredim to shape a highly critical perspective on those corporeal practices and the subculture more broadly. But the film is also distinguished from these in its suggestion that the secular body (and the nation as secular body) does not provide us with a viable alternative. This commentary is articulated primarily through the protagonist Yitzhak, whose bouts with abdominal pain eventually propel him to transgress religious corporeal norms in extreme, and at times violent, ways. Accordingly, the next sections will closely trace the contours of Yitzhak’s body—in isolation, motion, and sexual interaction—and relate them to sociological and theological literature on Judaic corporeality in an effort to unearth their hidden message. Thus framed, the resulting analysis will not refer to all the facets of Judaic corporeality described by this literature but necessarily concentrate on those most relevant to one particular form: the Haredi male body.⁸ Nevertheless, many of the insights provided herein with regard to the physical behavior of ultra-Orthodox masculinity may be used—albeit with an acute awareness of difference—in interrogating other Judaic bodily modes, as they are fashioned on film.

THE HAREDI BODY IN ISOLATION

Jews have often been described as the “People of the Book,” yet this title is somewhat misleading, since it makes Judaism seem wholly removed from the material reality of the body. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. As Melvin Konner explains, the Jewish people “became obsessed”⁹ about the body, with this obsession originating from the most central of questions: what is the nature of God? Indeed, if God is disembodied, then corporeality is seen as a site of impurity which one should strive to deny for the purpose of enhancing spirit. But “Man” is also made in God’s image, and must perform physical acts of worship. As a result, to deny corporeality would be to deny God and godly commandments. Holy or unholy? The body thus emerges as “a source of conflict,” perpetually “caught between contradictory impulses.”¹⁰

To alleviate this tension, Jewish lawmakers established a hierarchy wherein body is not fully denied, but its presence is reduced so to facilitate spiritual elevation. This scheme was then sustained through a convoluted system of rituals that covered every aspect of physical reality while paradoxically “divert[ing] attention from the fundamental conflicts that surround the body.”¹¹ The success of this strategy hinged on the production of, to borrow on Foucauldian terminology, “docile bodies.” Hence, in his classic *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault speaks of how, within the corporeal regimes of premodern monastic Christianity, “every detail [became] important since, in the sight of God, no immensity is greater than a detail, nor is anything so small that it was not willed by one of his individual wishes.”¹² Accordingly, the faithful were provided with countless rules that helped them account for the religious implications of reality’s details and “increase . . . the mastery of each individual over his own body.”¹³ Those willing to abide by the frameworks of Christian monasticism—and I would argue, of traditional Judaism—were subsequently reconstituted from within, taking on a “discipline of the minute”¹⁴ as a second nature.

Of the different sects of Judaism, the ultra-Orthodox Haredi society seems most stringent in following the regimes of docile corporeality. The Haredi movement originated during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in response to the rise of modernity and the threat of Jewish assimilation. The stance of its founding members—the Lithuanians and the Hassidim—was to reject “as much as possible the attractions of the host cultures” and present in their place a strict form of traditionalism wherein “books—especially codes of conduct—took on greater importance than

ever before.”¹⁵ Sequestered in courts or schools (yeshiva), these diasporic communities grew in strength until the Holocaust brought about their disintegration. Immigrating to Israel after the war, the surviving Ashkenazi Orthodoxy, with the help of a burgeoning Haredi Mizrahi constituency that modeled itself after Lithuanian norms,¹⁶ attempted to reclaim past separatist traditions and “nurture a counterlife”¹⁷ in defiance of dominant secular realities. Within the context of this resistance, it became vitally important for Haredi society to produce proper Jewish bodies, and for this purpose all were enlisted to perform acts of supervision. Haredi corporeal regulation has since operated through “mainly negative formal and informal ways” that forcefully teach the subject “how *not* to behave”;¹⁸ yet in addition to being onerous, this governing mechanism has also helped the Haredim to both solidify their communal boundaries and articulate their uniqueness as “infinite creatures . . . belonging to spirit.”¹⁹

Though still a mainstay of Haredi culture, the traditional strategy of body suppression has nevertheless been recently met with disapproval from different precincts of the community. Finding this model too restrictive, many Haredim have thus begun to supplant it with modern modes of corporeal activity.²⁰ This process of “Israelization,”²¹ while making the Haredi sector more diversified, should not, however, be simplistically understood as an avenue of release. As Foucault reminds us, modernity did not counter the disciplinary regime of Christian monasticism with freedom, but in effect, “accelerated it, changed its scale, gave it precise instruments.”²² Consequently, these changes to Haredi reality should be seen as placing the community in an intermediate position between the enclosed structure of religious governance and a more diffused, but arguably more invasive, secular “disciplinary society.”²³ The oscillation between these two modes often reinforces regulation within Haredi society; it can also, however, create tensions and breed transgression.²⁴

The regulation of the Judaic body—particularly its masculine version—and the possibilities of transgression stand at the heart of *The Wanderer*. These themes are interpreted through the physical relationship between Yitzhak (Omri Fuhrer), the film’s adolescent protagonist, and his elderly parents, Natan (Ali Nassar) and Tamara (Ronit Peled), both “born again” Mizrahi Haredim (“hozrim betshuva”) with affiliations to the Lithuanian Haredi tradition (as implied by Natan’s wardrobe and by their choice to have Yitzhak attend an Ashkenazi yeshiva). Generally speaking, the characters’ bodily behavior is shown to be lethargic, reflecting a con-

scious attempt to avoid pleasure-seeking animation. The family dynamic is also highly formalized: in scenes of meals as in scenes of prayer, actions are shown to be repetitious and synchronized, thereby mirroring Gideon Aran's point about the Haredi body being "characterized by typical movements and gestures . . . the large part of which have halachic or Kabbalistic meaning and are imbued with a symbolic dimension."²⁵ In addition to being patterned, the interaction between the characters is largely devoid of interpersonal contact: touching takes place only at moments of medical emergency (when Natan helps the ailing Yitzhak) or during sanctioned rituals (when Natan prays with Yitzhak at the synagogue); and even at moments of potential intimacy, the characters' gazes seem almost always to be directed inwardly. Intimacy is further subverted by the fact that within the home, at least initially, all the characters are always fully clothed with the standard Haredi apparel (for men—black pants and jacket, white shirt, yarmulke; for women—a shapeless gown, head covering); if, as Aran claims, the Haredi uniform "restricts and defines [the wearer's] consciousness and behavior,"²⁶ then this persistent presence of clothed bodies in the home scenes blurs the distinction between public and private and in so doing—reveals that bodily regulation exists in both. This claim is also asserted through the film's formal strategy of shooting both indoor and outdoor scenes from a stationary camera position, and usually from a third person perspective. In doing so, Sivan is able to stress the static quality of behavior and implicate the frame in the operation of Haredi panoptical surveillance; as a result, the spectator is prompted to understand characters' physical language as determined by that particular Haredi anxiety of "living in a glass menagerie."²⁷

Thus envisaged, the representation of this familial setting, especially as reflected through the parents, seems geared towards defining Haredi corporeal regulation as oppressive and alienating. Overall, bodies in *The Wanderer* exist within a safe distance of each other, and are mainly preoccupied in maintaining their own homeostasis. Their characterization—which is made one dimensional at times—identifies them as self-made prisons, subjected to a strict regime of asceticism. Following Foucault's argument, the relative effectiveness of this regime appears to rely on the willful acceptance of a "discipline of the minute" by the parents (who, in the common practice for "born-again" Haredim, "not only enthusiastically adapt themselves to the principles of Haredi faith, [but] also adopt the social practices and manifest gestures of belonging to the Haredi world.")²⁸ Yet the film also imagines a challenge to this isolation through the figure of Yitzhak.

From the outset, Yitzhak is constituted as a corpus-in-crisis, struggling to negotiate bodily restraint with his passion to occupy a position beyond Haredi regulation. Although outwardly displaying the Haredim's visual markers, he fails to participate in their rituals: for example, as when he comes late for class at the yeshiva and then refuses to complete the day's share of study. At times, he is even noticeably critical of his parents' self-denial, particularly surrounding the choice to limit their diet to eggs. Yet the most profound resistance comes from Yitzhak's own body. In the earliest stages of the narrative, we come to know this body as suffering from extreme pain, whose cause is ultimately related to an abnormal enlargement of a scrotum vein. The pain's genital origin carries significance in this context because it foregrounds the lower body, a corporeal site which "is relatively distant from the sky, the abode of God, and closer to the floor, associated with materialism, lowliness and contamination."²⁹ Since the film represents Haredi society as extremely repressive, and since "most prohibitions applied by the Haredim to their body concentrate on the lower parts,"³⁰ it may thus come as no surprise that pain would appear within this region of Yitzhak's resistant physique, enacting a veritable "return of the repressed." This pain, in turn, is also subsequently equated with Natan's own affliction—recurring nightmares which, according to the father, are manifestations of his sinful secular past coming back to haunt him. The fact that Yitzhak ultimately attempts to treat his own ailment by taking his father's nightmare-suppressing medication thus establishes a link between the pains of the two men, marking both their bodies as sites of struggle between desire and its disavowal.

The father's management of Yitzhak's pain eventually lays bare the workings of religious government within the family. When the discomfort first surfaces, it is Tamara who is there to offer aid to her son, uncharacteristically expressing physical and emotional warmth. Upon Natan's arrival at Yitzhak's room, however, she immediately retreats in shame, possibly reminded of the halakhic ordinance that denies mothers "physical contact with sons whom they no longer breastfeed."³¹ In contrast to the mother's compassionate bodily reaction, the father stands at a distance from his son and asks him whether he can restrain himself from going to the hospital until the passing of the Sabbath; consequently, through this interaction, Natan is turned into the nexus of religious law, understood as valuing the control of mind over matter. On later occasions, the father also forcefully attempts to take responsibility for the son's treatment, but his reasons for

this seem less to do with genuine compassion than with the concern, expressed by the likes of Jewish lawmaker R. Joseph Caro (1488-1575), that “ill-health not only impedes the service of God” but “prevents it, both *de facto* and *de jura*.”³² Accordingly, his health advice to Yitzhak to drink more water, although not without medical merit, also reveals his definition of the son’s body as a vessel for worship in need of purification.

In these dealings surrounding his illness, Yitzhak comes to see Natan as an antagonist. He initially believes that his pain is punishment for the father’s sins, and places a note at the Wailing Wall asking God for absolution. As the narrative progresses, however, he renounces both father and God—a change which is registered, amongst other things, through his evolving relationship with water. Yitzhak moves from constantly drinking water to disposing the contents of his water bottle over a city bridge. Later, he will twice arrive at the seashore, only to refrain from entering the water: first, he lies down in the sand, thereby breaking the religious taboo against having “direct physical contact with the ground”;³³ and afterwards, he gazes in horror as the waves crash on two rat carcasses. Water—and the godly presence it evokes³⁴—become for Yitzhak a mark of contamination; through his acts, he therefore attempts to turn the halakhic hierarchy of purity on its proverbial head.

THE HAREDI BODY IN MOTION

In a recent and illuminating study, Haviva Pedaya discusses at length the functions of “wandering”—that is, walking without a particular destination—within Jewish tradition. In relation to the Hebrew Scriptures, Pedaya defines wandering as the result of sin and the subsequent trauma of expulsion. As such, she recognizes two types of Judaic wandering: the first, originating from the story of Cain, refers to an involuntary exile, whereby a sinner is forced out of the social body and pressed into a search for atonement; and the second, originating from the story of Ezekiel, wherein walking is employed voluntarily as a performative ritual, meant to both represent for the community the traumas of exile and offer a way to “work through” them. In the former, the wanderer seeks to recover a stable identity; in the latter, the wanderer purposefully rejects stability, opting instead to remain in a permanent state of diffusion. In both cases, wanderers commit (willfully or not) to a fragmentary perspective of continued mobility, and in turn prolong the fragmentary nature of the initial trauma beyond its original moment of occurrence.

The significance of wandering in Jewish reality is connected to the exile which Jews have experienced since the destruction of the First and Second Temples. As a people, Jews suffered numerous instances of “scattering,” resulting in sustained nomadism. In response to exile, certain precincts of the Jewish people ingathered into communities and, to further stabilize their identity, followed the narrative of Cain by casting sinners out of their midst. In other parts—particularly the Sephardic diaspora during the sixteenth century—mystics chose to follow the path of Ezekiel and voluntarily employ the wanderer’s perspective. Pedaya focuses on two central figures in this mystical movement—R. Moshe Cordovero (1522-1570) and R. Yitzhak Lurya (1534-1572)—and discusses their ideas on wandering as a response to the trauma of the Spanish Expulsion (1492). In both instances, Pedaya finds an attempt to “create concentrated evocations of the memory of separation from the divine source”³⁵ as a way of re-experiencing and transcending trauma. The two mystics preached for a deliberate and ritualized disintegration of self in order to redeem society and merge with a diffused deity.

While these details of Jewish nomadism were lost on many European Christians, the phenomenon itself occupied a central place in their cultural imaginary. Drawing too on Cain’s narrative, Christian tradition ostensibly equated Jewish wandering with sin and criminality; consequently, they produced an inordinate number of antisemitic myths, of which the “Wandering Jew” has been the most enduring. This mythical figure achieved prominence, according to Galit Hasan-Rokem, because it

served multiple functions in European culture in its complex processes of change from medieval times through postmodernity. . . . The figure offered Christendom a definable and contained embodiment of the theology of guilt related to the legendary episode between the Wandering Jew and Jesus, in which the former denied the latter rest on the wall of his house on the Via Dolorosa. Moreover, the figure of the Wandering Jew enabled a consolidation of the Europeans’ self-image as indigenous inhabitants of their continent and later in their particular national territories, in counterdistinction to the itinerant Other. The versatile figure of the Wandering Jew later transformed from outright demonization as the blasphemer of Christ, to Romantic idealization as an individualist or even a revolutionary hero. Finally the figure became a model of modern alienation *cum* psychological introspection in its various formations—for which James Joyce’s Leopold Bloom is still a prime example.³⁶

While not born in modernity, the association of Jews with wandering—in European Christian discourses at least—certainly renewed its momentum during the latter half of the nineteenth century and first part of the twentieth.³⁷ This was in no small part due to the construction of railway systems, which ushered in a new age of human mobility. During the period, “Jews were ubiquitous on trains,”³⁸ as railways provided greater opportunities for oppressed minorities to escape political persecution. Yet the conditions of modern travel did not only profoundly affect the Jewish minority but also the non-Jewish majority. In this new state of affairs, the unthinkable happened: instead of using the wandering Jew as a reassuring Other, the gentiles, “first in Europe and then elsewhere, had to become more like the Jews: urban, mobile, literate, mentally nimble, occupationally flexible, and surrounded by aliens.”³⁹ In the process, they also acquired the Wandering Jew’s fragmented outlook—one which was, according to Todd Presner, “characterized by the dissolution of the very possibility of solid ground, the utter destruction of a knowing subject with a transcendental perspective on the world, the relativity and contingency of all temporal and spatial frames of reference, and, finally, the articulation of an interconnected world of mass mobility.”⁴⁰

Arguably the most influential contribution to our understanding of the connections between perception, human movement, and modernity originated in Walter Benjamin’s work on the *flâneur*. Attempting to account for his own experiences as a wandering Jew, Benjamin chose Charles Baudelaire, the quintessential *poète maudit*, as his “Jewified” alter-ego. Through Baudelaire, he returned to an early moment in modernity when the city, still a fluid space, had yet to fall prey to capitalism’s “extensive network of controls.”⁴¹ Rather than stabilize the animated cityscape, as the crowd does in its synchronous movement, Benjamin/Baudelaire’s *flâneur* “demanded elbow room and was unwilling to forgo the life of a gentleman of leisure.”⁴² Uncomfortable in his own skin, and defiant of all external supervision, he sought to move through the cracks of an entity that is as fragmentary as his own consciousness. The European metropolis offered him such an opportunity, becoming “a landscape that opens up to him and a parlor that encloses him,”⁴³ and in response to this invitation, he playfully oscillates between the safety of permanence and the danger of disintegration, never committing to either. As such, the *flâneur* emerges as an unlikely descendent of the mystics Cordovero and Lurya and the prophet Ezekiel, who advocated voluntary wandering as a transgressive ritual; the major difference between Baudelaire and these antecedents, however, is that the latter

enacted fragmentation as a melancholic losing of selfhood for the purpose of recovering the link between God and the people, while the former revealed in fragmentation as a way of forming a new selfhood, independent of both community and deity.⁴⁴

Like the flâneur, the Haredi community was born before modernity came into its own. Unlike the flâneur, however, the proto-ultra-Orthodoxy chose to negotiate the twofold trauma of a legacy of nomadism and the upheavals of early modernity through the denial of fragmentation. Understanding that “discipline sometimes requires enclosure,”⁴⁵ they created yeshivas and courts as a bulwark against the outside world. This approach, which resulted in the exponential growth of their community, also informed the Haredi rehabilitation efforts in Israel after the Holocaust. Hence, as in the diaspora, Israeli Haredim live today in urban enclaves (or “ghettos”) which allow for the separation necessary to ensure (relatively) effective regulation. Inside the enclosed realm, different places—the home, the synagogue, the commercial street, etc.—are invested with operational rules, effectively becoming Foucauldian “analytic spaces” that “provide fixed positions . . . and establish operational links.”⁴⁶ Haredim are cognizant of the operation of these spaces, and of the fact that they are constantly being observed, so they shape their bodily behavior accordingly. On the level of mobility, for one, this consciousness leads Haredim to traverse public spaces in a “hasty and purposeful manner” so as not to be negatively perceived as “people of leisure.” Consequently, aimless Jewish wandering is replaced by “continuous movement, which creates the impression of very intensive and serious business.”⁴⁷

Often those markedly committed to wandering have been forced out of the limits of the Haredi community like the sinner Cain. Yet, as the Haredi ghettos expand and encroach on secular areas, this mode of sanctioning becomes less enforced. Like Baudelaire’s nineteenth-century Paris, the new ghetto is now in transition between the enclosed and diffused regimes of corporeal regulation described by Foucault, and as a result, it opens up spaces for contemporary Haredim to voluntarily inhabit the flâneur’s fragmented sensibility. Such is evident, for example, from Tamar El-Or and Eran Neria’s observation that Jerusalem’s secular Malcha Mall serves the Haredim as “a good place for flâneurism. The ultra-Orthodox use it for wandering without buying, for exercising the contemporary experience of leisure in the presence of merchandise, [and] for presenting themselves as potential customers who should be recognized.”⁴⁸

This relationship between space and bodily regimes is a dominant theme in *The Wanderer's* articulation of Haredi society. Yitzhak's family lives in the Haredi city of Bnei Brak, on the outskirts of the predominantly secular Tel Aviv. The choice of shooting this religious ghetto in long takes from immobile wide angles, as well as the cyclical return to familiar locales (the apartment, the synagogue, the pedestrian bridges which lead to Bnei Brak), give the impression of an enclosed terra firma. Within these sites, there is a sense of (Foucauldian) compartmentalization, as is visible in one poignant scene where we see the family members resting separately in different locations around the apartment. This notion of division is further underscored through the avoidance of cuts on action: consequently, instead of experiencing seamless spatial continuity, the characters seem to be sequestered into the prison of the static frame. At the same time, however, this decision also makes the overall landscape of the ghetto appear considerably fragmented. As a result, more than being an enclosed mechanism of domination, the ghetto is depicted as a contested space, where tensions—bodily or otherwise—become palpably present.

As the landscape that surrounds him, Yitzhak's existence is also permeated by tension, which, according to the film's conceptual framework, must lead to "abnormal" bodily behavior. Abnormality first appears as pain, but eventually also manifests itself in a different form: like Natan, Yitzhak begins to suffer from sleeping disorders; but while the father attempts to allay his anguish through worship and medication, the son releases his repressed angst via compulsive walking. Responding to his sinful body in the traditional Judaic manner, Yitzhak takes on the persona of "the wanderer." Yet in contrast to Cain, who sought to atone for his sins and reintegrate himself in society, the film's protagonist seems more interested in fashioning himself as an individualistic figure of transgression. Thus, his stride boldly lacks the decisive animation of the self-aware Haredi movement, assuming instead the luxury of idleness. Fittingly, many of the public spaces which Yitzhak roams are liminal (abandoned city corridors, deserted back roads), thereby signaling his intent to escape Haredi regulation by slipping through the cracks of the contested ghetto environment.

Natan, the representative of patriarchal religious law, tries to circumscribe Yitzhak's transgression-via-mobility by disposing of the latter's "wandering apparel" and offering a pair of his own shoes as replacement. This is an act of obvious symbolic importance: the father not only forces the son to "walk in his shoes" but in the process also attempts to contain

the foot—which, as the lowest limb, is considered a site of great impurity. Yitzhak resists his father’s coercive measures by removing his shoes at different points during his wandering; and since “amongst the Israeli Orthodox, the extent to which the foot is covered up is an indicator of religiosity,”⁴⁹ this gesture can only be understood as an act of rebelliousness against Judaism itself. This trajectory of insubordination reaches its apex in a scene where—with an atypical display of vibrancy—Yitzhak throws his father’s shoes across his bedroom. The fact that this act is immediately followed by the scene in which he pours out the contents of his water bottle serves to emphasize the moment’s significance as a transition towards greater self-empowerment and corporeal release.

Yet, as much as Yitzhak’s wandering carries within it the potential for escape from restrictive bodily regimes, it is also unavoidably marked by failure. Thus, at one point in the film, he strikes a tenuous friendship with a group of Haredi “shabab”—delinquent youths “whose natural attributes and desires do not allow them to adapt and succeed in becoming proper yeshiva students.”⁵⁰ These teenagers’ nonconformist nature is signaled through their bodies, be it in their casual posture or in their carelessly worn attire; in addition, they also pursue unsanctioned physical activities such as sports and protected sex out of wedlock. Yitzhak tries to align his “deviancy” with theirs, as when he plays soccer with them or buys them condoms. Yet this gesture is later revealed as futile, when, after handing over some condoms to two of his newly acquired friends in broad daylight, he is chastised for performing this felonious act where “everybody can see.” Consequently, Yitzhak’s response to this rebuke is disappointment—not due to the breach of friendly etiquette but because he realizes that the “shabab” are not as rebellious of Haredi identity as he would have liked them to be.

The marginal passageways of solitary wandering do not provide Yitzhak with sanctuary either. He looks for a release within a landscape that is less controlled than the one he attempts to leave, but his expectations are thwarted: following a Foucauldian logic, the scenes outside of the ghetto are fashioned through the same style as the Haredi ghetto scenes, thereby suggesting that the two zones essentially share in a vacillation between regulation and transgression. Faced with a contested space reminiscent of Baudelaire’s metropolis, Yitzhak can potentially attain independence by assuming the flâneur’s fragmented epistemology. But he chooses not to: he is not playful in his wandering, with movements gradually acquiring automaton-like qualities; nor does he interact with the built environment on

the level of sight and touch (an impression further advanced by the mise-en-scène, which often separates him from the scenery or presses him onto the background so as to create an uncomfortable two-dimensional image). Accordingly, by not becoming a flâneur, Yitzhak is forced into the path of Ezekiel, Cordovero, and Lurya, enacting their melancholic disintegration of self while being implicated in their ambition to redeem the Judaic community he finds so abject. With wandering culminating in paradox, the problem of liberation then presents itself as a Gordian knot; as a result, a definite resolution in the form of a more decisive, violent act of bodily release must immediately follow.

THE HAREDI BODY IN SEXUAL CONTACT

While Jews have always been overwhelmingly conflicted as to the inherent value of their various corporeal ingredients, no bodily part has arguably prompted them to greater ambivalence than the genitals. The crux of this ambivalence, again, is the relationship between God's image and human physicality and continuity. As Howard Eilberg-Schwartz clarifies, in the context of the ancient priestly writings:

On the one hand, human embodiment and sexuality are considered good; but they are good because God said so (Gen. 1:31), and because they are products of God's creative activity. Yet at the same time they are the very symbols of human difference from God. That is, it is the nonsexual and nonembodied part of the human person that is made in God's image. For this reason, there is a tension between obeying God and being like God. A person who wishes to obey God should be fruitful and multiply. But in doing so, one engages precisely that dimension of human experience that denies one's similarity to God. In fact, sexual intercourse contaminates a couple, alienating them from the sacred and hence from God.⁵¹

This tension between obeying and being like God underlies subsequent considerations of intercourse within halakhic literature, which tended—as in Caro's foundational *Shulhan Arukh* (1563)—“to restrict (or at least, to regulate) a man's passions and their material expression”⁵² on the grounds that they carry with them the danger of impurity. This tendency in Judaic sexuality culminated, within the West at least, in the creation of a particular model of manhood that favored “a gentle, timid, and studious male.”⁵³ Named “Edelkayt” (“nobility”), this form epitomized the Judaic positioning of mind over matter, yet it did so without diminishing erotic

allure. “Unmanned’ but not de-sexualized,”⁵⁴ as Daniel Boyarin describes him, the “Edelkayt” male was thus set as a countertype to the gentile connotation of heterosexual masculinity with virility and violence, and by implication—as means of deconstructing the traditional Western dialectic of effeminate/castrated and hypersexual. (This position, however, did not prevent Jewish masculinity from being “marked by pervasive (though not ubiquitous) misogyny”⁵⁵: in fact, while enabling the legal prohibition against the corporeal chastising of women, it also encouraged the formulation of less physically violent modalities of patriarchal domination.)

Judging by its current discourse of masculinity, the Haredi community seems to have adopted the Edelkayt model while further reducing its physicality.⁵⁶ In doing so, it “move[s] back and forth between two polar options, both of them obsessive”: on the one hand, the Haredim strive to negate the sexual body by remaining silent about it; on the other hand, when they do acknowledge sexual activity, it is in “a coarse, technical, stringent, and particularly assertive way.” As part of this acknowledgement, the community produces different pamphlets, books, and newsletters on sexual matters which “eradicate any shred of mystique and deprive the body and sex of all connotations of the sublime.”⁵⁷ The regulations provided by these texts on the topic of sexual conduct are numerous and include, for example, gently patting the wife on her knees seven times and then waiting twelve minutes before commencing in the act itself, or remaining covered at all times during intercourse.⁵⁸

Concurrently, however, it would be incorrect to describe the operation of contemporary Haredi masculinity as monolithic. In the context of the Haredi community’s “Israelization,” which positions it somewhere between traditionalism and modernism, the new generation of yeshiva males has offered to replace “the traditional model of piety, especially the otherworldly orientation of their forefathers” with “a this-worldly orientation, more politically and physically active.”⁵⁹ This shift in gender performance has manifested itself in different ways: a greater number of Haredi males now satiate their adventurist thirst by joining the army,⁶⁰ others, possibly fearing the negative aura of military service, redefine male piety by evincing a rhetoric that “blends the charismatic features of yeshiva fundamentalism with various militaristic symbols and practices”;⁶¹ and still others, either through demonstrations against the infringement of religious rights or through internal policing via “modesty squads,” stabilize the boundaries of the community by violent “acts which are anti-Zionists, yet at the same

time arguably Zionists in their mode of execution.”⁶² In reference to masculine sexual behavior, we see within contemporary Haredi society a turn towards “using medical and scientific terms to explain how to fight the evil inclination and to employ medical strategies to cure the body and achieve male piety.”⁶³ As such, this community follows the modern praxis of “Scientia Sexualis,” which, according to Foucault, is founded on a “veritable explosion”⁶⁴ of medicalized sexual discourses “meant to evade the unbearable, too hazardous truth of sex”⁶⁵ while offering unusually extreme sublimated pleasures of “contacting bodies, caressing them with [one’s] eyes, intensifying areas, electrifying surfaces, dramatizing troubled moments.”⁶⁶ The transition from one system of sexual regulation to another, as previously argued, opens potential spaces for transgression. Nevertheless, this potential seems harder to realize at present since, “compared with other resources, abstinence from sex and control for the body still are basic categories of power and manhood in the yeshiva world.”⁶⁷

The two central male figures in *The Wanderer* embody disparate approaches to Edelkayt masculinity. Physically, the father is unlike the Edelkayt model: his skin is olive-colored, his body is bulky and forceful. Yet he clearly attempts to follow the ascetic standards of traditional Haredi masculinity and reduce to a minimum his physical intimacy with others. Yitzhak, on the other hand, accurately captures the visible characteristics of the Edelkayt male ideal: he is pale, gaunt, and soulful. Underneath this delicate exterior, however, the protagonist is harboring deep-seated angst, which he seeks to liberate in acts of violent sexual congress. Based on this difference, it may be said then that Yitzhak’s trajectory in *The Wanderer*—his “Israelization”—moves towards greater embodiment and libidinal release, read as heterosexualization, along the dominant secular-Western discourses on gender and sexuality.⁶⁸ Concomitantly, it also complicates Eurocentric orientalist categories by associating the “Western-looking” body of Jewish actor/filmmaker Omri Fuhrer (Yitzhak)—and not the “Eastern-looking” body of Arab actor/filmmaker Ali Nassar (Natan)—with the strongest sexual appetite.⁶⁹

Yitzhak’s sexual journey is not undertaken wholeheartedly, however. When told of his testicular problem during an early hospital scene, Yitzhak becomes agitated, his anxiety focusing on the question of whether this condition will affect his fertility. This concern can be justified not only for health reasons, but, more significantly, on the grounds of religious faith. Of the many duties performed in God’s name, procreation is certainly one of if not the most important. The covenant which God made with Abraham,

and which was sealed by the ritual of circumcision, promised that from his seed a great people will grow; accordingly, to be a childless Jew is to betray this covenant—to be “cut off not just from the past and present but from the future of his people.”⁷⁰ Yitzhak’s persistent demands for corrective surgery, at this point, seem less to do with pleasure or general physical functioning, and more with fear of being denied the preeminent sexual responsibility authorized by Judaism.

Yet the hospital setting not only evokes a desire for sexual conformity in Yitzhak, but also caters to transgressive pleasures. Foucault imagined the hospital as “an architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them”;⁷¹ for the religious Jew, however, hospitals could equally function as outlets for non-normative physical behavior. Yitzhak’s visit to a fertility clinic, for one, affords the opportunity to masturbate to pornography—an act strictly prohibited by religious law and regulated to varying degrees by the Haredi communities.⁷² Later, Yitzhak also gives blood to the nurse Dafna, a local Haredi girl, and in the process enjoys more physical contact than would be permitted between unmarried Jews who are “observers of the touch” (“shomer negia’a”).

Following his first hospital visits, sex turns into an obsession for Yitzhak: in one scene, for example, he is seen at a bus stop, gradually becoming aware of a crowd of female passengers that surrounds him; then, during his first encounter with the “shabab,” he passionately gazes at a young Haredi girl’s face; and after that, we find him looking down towards his penis during urination, which is a direct violation of the prohibition against examining the exposed body.⁷³ In an attempt to curb his hyperactive libido, Yitzhak ultimately agrees to go on an arranged date. The night ends unsuccessfully, however, since this sanctioned erotic interaction was characteristically absent of a physical connection. A frustrated Yitzhak subsequently meets Dafna by happenstance outside of her building; unable to restrain himself, he forcefully kisses her, but she escapes his grasp. In the aftermath, Yitzhak attempts to return to the fold by asking his parents to carry out the match (“shidduch”).

At the hospital again, Yitzhak’s surgery gives us our first glimpses of his exposed body. The appearance of his semiclothed torso is unsettling, particularly in light of the prevention of bodily exposure within Yitzhak’s household. Nakedness, it should be emphasized, is no trivial matter for religious Jews: in the halakha, to reveal one’s body before God is inappropriate,

even when alone;⁷⁴ consequently, as Aran reports, “many Haredim assert that they would never undress in front of their spouse, even after many years of marriage.”⁷⁵ In light of this, Yitzhak’s stripped body strikes an ambivalent cord. Peter Lehman and Susan Hunt have argued that unclothed Jewish bodies are often considered as “naked” (or desexualized) rather than “nude” (or sexualized), using the notorious images of concentration camp corpses as a paradigmatic example. In contrast to this popular view, they argue nevertheless that “a naked body is seldom just a naked body—it also contains an element of display and invokes a voyeuristic, even sexual, gaze.”⁷⁶ In the case of Yitzhak’s unclothed body, his feeble chest, metonymically evoking the image of a flaccid penis, seems to resonate with the widespread perception of Jewish nakedness as “a sign of powerlessness and humiliation.”⁷⁷ Yet the revelation of the Judaic body in its nakedness imbues it with the erotic valences of the “nude,” since the procedure involves a spectacular breach of taboo. Therefore, although “castrated,” Yitzhak’s naked body also acquires sexual potency through its association with religious transgression.

Prompted by the success of his surgery, Yitzhak eventually decides to conclude his process of embodiment and realize his sexual fantasies. He begins by a “rite of passage,” changing into secular clothes on the side of a freeway, while exposing his body to bystanders. Then he proceeds to solicit a prostitute, but is rejected due to his demand that they not use a condom. Finally, following a chance meeting, he rapes an unknown inebriated woman. In these latter acts, Yitzhak violates the Judaic prohibitions against having intercourse out of wedlock and against committing forced sex,⁷⁸ and is subsequently aligned with Western secular “fantasies of women ripe and available for rape at any time.”⁷⁹ Nevertheless, Yitzhak’s alienation from Judaic traditions stops short on two counts: first, he desires to not use contraceptives, thereby asserting the procreative goal of the intercourse; and second, his upper body is clothed during the rape, thereby simulating ultra-Orthodox sexual practices. Accordingly, this climactic sequence serves to concretize the film’s argument regarding the Haredi regulation of the (sexual) body, namely, that its nature is fundamentally repressive, and hence any resistance to it must be pathological and destructive; and that it is so totalizing that no transgression can completely shed its traces.

With this alarming insight in mind, the protagonist ultimately chooses to obey Judaic protocol and seek atonement for his sins. He goes to a police station, but quickly decides to leave, perhaps feeling that absolution must come from a higher order. Shortly after, he returns to the ghetto,

dons his skullcap, and enters his parents' apartment. Much like in the emblematic examples of the bildungsroman, this conclusion marks a cyclical return with a difference. Yet unlike those narratives, the return does not involve progress. In his attempt to revolt against the religious laws which constrain his bodily behavior, Yitzhak has moved through pain, wandering, and sexual violence. In the end, however, this path does not produce the desired deliverance. Rather than experience a liberatory l'amour fou, he only encounters his own solitude, and thus seeks re-admittance into his social milieu—a process that may entail the future silencing of sexual desire or its displacement onto medicalized discourses. Whether Yitzhak's wish would be granted remains a moot point. Either way, we are left with lingering questions in relation to the Judaic body: can desire be fully repressed once release is experienced? And can repression be fully surpassed without bringing forth one's undoing?

CONCLUSION: HAREDI AND ZIONIST—EROTIC REVOLUTIONS

The Wanderer's interrogation of the male body is, in many ways, representative of a growing tendency in mainstream contemporary Israeli cinema to explore infractions of Judaism's avowed corporeal norms.⁸⁰ In such films, bodily transgression is not uniformly presented: it can be internally or externally motivated; it may appear as redemptive or destructive. Where these representations are largely united, however, is in their fundamental objection to Israeli-Judaic culture as an oppressive structure. In this, they are seldom interested in searching beyond bodily oppression for this culture's potentially admirable qualities; nor do they acknowledge that in addition to being means of subjugation, corporeal regulation also benefits observant Jews by "allowing them to order the spaces of which they fear."⁸¹ Accordingly, their criticism, while warranted, seems to often mirror a reductive stance of anxiety and fascination, shared by their predominantly secular audiences, toward an exotic religious Other.

Of these texts, *The Wanderer* is most extensive in its indictment of Judaic society: through Yitzhak's trials and tribulations, it not only presents Haredi regulation as fundamentally tyrannical, but also negates the efforts of those who willfully try to go outside this disciplinary regime and become "Israelized." Furthermore, and in contradistinction to many other like-minded films, *The Wanderer* does not implicitly or explicitly posit Israel's nonobservant culture as a positive alternative to Judaic oppression. Rather, by expressing fears of Haredi "Israelization," the film's ideological stance

seems to obliquely gesture toward a broader condemnation that includes not only the ultra-Orthodox, but also secular Zionism.

While the specifics of this overarching criticism often remain obscure, one sequence, taking place in the middle of the film, provides us with a key to their understanding. In this brief, remarkable moment, the filmmaker juxtaposes two wide shots: the first showing Yitzhak walking along Jerusalem's Old City walls, and the second showing him walking along the Separation Wall. The effect of this juxtaposition is startling, not only on account of the sheer elegance of the graphic match, but due to its indication of a meaningful relationship between Judaism, Zionism, territorial occupation, and libidinous liberation. Underscoring this relationship, I would argue, is the notion of erotic revolution. Thus, the Zionist model of muscular Judaism, as mentioned earlier, was used to align the Jewish man with secular heteronormative definitions of masculinity. This process not only entailed a transformation of the Jewish physique, but also specifically of Jewish sexuality. As David Biale explains, the first waves of Zionist immigration to Palestine consciously attempted to instigate an erotic revolution—to enact “a new sexual ethic [that] opposed bourgeois marriage and affirmed a healthy sensuality.”⁸² The radical nature of this sexual experiment was nevertheless curbed by the immigrants' fanatical Puritanism and implicit affirmation of bourgeois family values. As a result of these “tensions between sexual liberation and asceticism,” Biale argues, erotic energies were ultimately channeled “into the tasks of nation building, a form of sublimation reminiscent of traditional Jewish culture.”⁸³ The principal destination for these sublimated energies was the “Land.” As Boaz Neumann argues, “the Zionist narrative of many pioneers is in fact a story of romantic, and even erotic and sexual infatuation with the Land of Israel.”⁸⁴ This infatuation was extensive, since

all senses participate in the fusion of pioneers with the Land of Israel. The pioneers do not only “see” the land. Their eyes “cling to” and “caress” it. They yearn to feast their eyes on the landscape. Their gaze is “enslaved” to nature and seeks to be “absorbed in” and “penetrate” it. The pioneer viewpoint did not only look upon the Land of Israel but turned the onlooker into a part of this land and the land into a part of him.⁸⁵

Understanding the Zionist narrative as caught within an erotic crisis allows us to better discern its similarities to the narrative of contemporary “Israelized” Haredi culture: thus, in both cases, it seems that an effort has

been made to achieve some measure of erotic liberation (read as heterosexualization) from a system that regulated and, to an extent, disavowed the desirous body. Transposed onto the aforementioned sequence, the correlation between the Jerusalem and the Separation Walls then indicates that Haredim, like early Zionists, have failed in their erotic revolution, and consequently sublimate their passions into a “suitable” objective: the consecration of the (Holy) Land. Furthermore, this juxtaposition also possibly suggests that the dynamic of erotic impulse and sublimation that typified early Zionism still operates within contemporary secular attitudes towards the land and its occupation.⁸⁶

As astonishing as this critique may be, what seems even more astonishing, however, is the way in which it is articulated. For it seems that in order to question Zionists and Haredim alike, Sivan found it necessary to return to the gentile stereotypes of deviant Jewish bodies that both Zionist and Haredi cultures had historically endeavored to subvert. Broadly speaking, this return is manifested through the incorporation of two antisemitic images—the Jew-as-castrated and the Jew-as-hypersexual—into the figure of Yitzhak. More specifically, however, *The Wanderer*'s depiction of its protagonist references certain antisemitic discourses within nineteenth-century psychiatry that associated wandering Jews with mental illness.⁸⁷ Henry Meige's *Le Juif-errant à la Salpêtrière* (1893) may serve as a prime example of these discourses; its description of the Wandering Jew seems to eerily parallel Sivan's:

Almost all the Israelites are chronic neurotics, enumerating their pains and dwelling obsessively on the reading of notes about sensations which they have carefully analyzed and recorded: tenacious headaches, digestive problems, persistent insomnia, erratic aches of the limbs or back, etc. . . . In addition, all show signs of a special mental state. They are constantly obsessed by the need to travel, to go from city to city, from hospital to hospital, in search of a new treatment, an unfindable remedy. They all try the recommended medications, avid for novelty, but they soon reject them, inventing a frivolous pretext for not continuing, and, with the reappearing impulse, they flee one fine day, drawn by a new mirage of a distant cure.⁸⁸

The Wanderer can thus be read as equivalent to those nonreligiously themed Israeli films that, as mentioned above, embrace the repressed images of Old World Jewry as a critical tool. Yet in contrast to these texts, which cinema scholars have understood to be using antisemitic stereotypes to chal-

lenge Zionism, this film not only challenges Zionism but orchestrates the specifics of religious life to support an “antisemitic critique” of the world of Israeli Judaism itself. The resulting vision seems particularly powerful as it offers no lines of flight from the dire circumstances of Israeli existence. Yet *The Wanderer’s* anachronism—defiantly projecting past images into a contemporary context—also raises doubts as to the radicalness of its criticism, since it remains locked into the terms which initially constituted Israeli Zionist and Judaic discursive regimes. Like Yitzhak, then, this critique set out on a journey whose destination could have been an Archimedean point; and like Yitzhak, it ultimately ends up right where it started.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this essay was presented at the 2011 SCMS conference. My thanks to Lucy Fischer, Ali Patterson, Yakir Englander, Nurit Stadler, Adam Lowenstein, Neepa Majumdar, and Adam Shear for their valuable help at various stages of the writing process.
2. Meredith B. McGuire, “Religion and the Body: Rematerializing the Human Body in the Social Sciences of Religion,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29, no.3 (1990): 284.
3. Nathan Abrams, “From Jesus to Jeremy: The Jewish Male Body on Film, 1990 to Present,” in *Mysterious Skin: Male Bodies in Contemporary Cinema*, ed. Santiago Fouz-Hernández (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 22.
4. *Ibid.*, 26.
5. Though this trend includes documentaries, this essay’s primary concern is with narrative film.
6. See for example: Nurit Gertz, *Holocaust Survivors, Aliens, and Others in Israeli Cinema and Literature* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2004).
7. See for example: Nir Cohen, *Soldiers, Rebels, and Drifters: Gay Representation in Israeli Cinema* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 2011), 189-97; Yaron Peleg, “Ecce Homo: The Transfiguration of Israeli Manhood in Israeli Films,” in *Israeli Cinema: Identities in Motion*, ed. Yaron Peleg and Miri Talmon (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 35-38; Jyoti Sarah Daniels, “Scripting the Jewish Body: The Sexualized Female Jewish Body in Amos Gitai’s *Kadosh*,” in *Jews and Sex*, ed. Nathan Abrams (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2008), 77-87.
8. It should be noted that Haredi corporeality is not homogeneous but diversified, with variation existing, first and foremost, between Haredi society’s main communities: the Lithuanians, the Hassidim, and the Mizrahim. The term “Haredi male body” should thus be treated only as a heuristic meant to describe those general patterns of corporeal behavior which all self-avowed Haredi men aspire to occupy, and which originated from the traditions of Haredi society’s founding Ashkenazi members (especially the Lithuanians). See: Yohai Hakak, “Haredi Male Bodies in the Public Sphere: Negotiating with the Religious Text and Secular Israeli Men,”

Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality 3, no.2 (2009): 101-02; Yakir Englander, "Images of the Male Body in Lithuanian Ultra-Orthodox Judaism as Reflected in Musar Movement Sources and 'HaGedolim' Hagiographies (1945-2010)" (PhD diss., Hebrew University, 2011), 8-9.

9. Melvin Konner, *The Jewish Body* (New York: Schocken Books, 2009), 19.

10. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, "The Problem of the Body for the People of the Book," in *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*, ed. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 17.

11. *Ibid.*, 38.

12. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 140.

13. *Ibid.*, 137.

14. *Ibid.*, 140.

15. Samuel Heilman, *Defenders of the Faith: Inside Ultra-Orthodox Jewry* (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), 19-20.

16. On the assimilation of Mizrahim into Ashkenazi Haredi society, and its resulting tensions, see Nissim Leon, *Gentle Ultra-Orthodoxy: Religious Renewal in Oriental Jewry in Israel* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2010), 11-54.

17. Heilman, *Defenders*, 35.

18. Gideon Aran, "Denial Does Not Make the Haredi Body Go Away: Ethnography of a Disappearing (?) Jewish Phenomenon," *Contemporary Jewry* 26, no.1 (2006): 90.

19. Englander, "Images," 78.

20. Hakak, "Haredi"; Nurit Stadler, *Yeshiva Fundamentalism: Piety, Gender, and Resistance in the Ultra-Orthodox World* (New York: New York University Press, 2009); Gideon Aran, Nurit Stadler, and Eyal Ben-Ari, "Fundamentalism and the Masculine Body: The Case of Jewish Ultra-Orthodox Men in Israel," *Religion* 38 (2008): 25-53.

21. Eliezer Ben-Refael and Lior Ben-Chaim, *Jewish Identities in an Era of Multiple Modernities* (Tel Aviv: Open University, 2006), 205-12.

22. Foucault, *Discipline*, 139.

23. *Ibid.*, 209.

24. By recognizing the possibility of transgression, I join those critiques which define Foucault's vision of an oppressive "disciplinary society" in *Discipline and Punish* as unaccountably totalizing. See: David Garland, "Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*: An Exposition and Critique," *American Bar Foundation Research Journal* 11, no. 4 (1986): 872-80.

25. Aran, "Denial," 96.

26. *Ibid.*, 81. See also Englander, "Images," 123-25.

27. Menachem Friedman, *The Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) Society: Sources, Trends and Processes* (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 1991), 126.

28. Aran, "Denial," 103.

29. *Ibid.*, 86.

30. *Ibid.*, 86-87.

31. *Ibid.*, 90.

32. Jeffery R. Woolf, “‘La’avodat Bor’o’: The Body in the *Shulhan Arukh* by R. Joseph Caro,” in *The Jewish Body: Corporeality, Society, and Identity in the Renaissance and Early Modern Period*, ed. Maria Diemling and Giuseppe Veltri (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 169.
33. Aran, “Denial,” 86.
34. See for example, God’s proclamation in Isaiah 44.4-5: “I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour My Spirit upon your children, and My blessing upon your offspring.”
35. Haviva Pedaya, *Walking Through Trauma: Rituals of Movement in Jewish Myth, Mysticism, and History* (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2011), 117.
36. Galit Hasan-Rokem, “Jews as Postcards, or Postcards as Jews: Mobility in a Modern Genre,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99, no.4 (2009): 508.
37. *Ibid.*, 505-06.
38. Todd Samuel Presner, *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 91.
39. Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 41.
40. Presner, *Mobile Modernity*, 95.
41. Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 78.
42. *Ibid.*, 84.
43. Walter Benjamin, “The Return of the Flâneur,” in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 2 1927-1934*, ed. Michael W. Jennings et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 263.
44. Pedaya, *Walking*, 231.
45. Foucault, *Discipline*, 141.
46. *Ibid.*, 143.
47. Aran, “Denial,” 97.
48. Tamar El-Or and Eran Neria, “The Ultraorthodox Flâneur: Toward the Pleasure Principle. Consuming Time and Space in Contemporary Haredi Population of Jerusalem,” in *Consumption and Market Society in Israel*, ed. Yoram S. Carmeli and Kalman Applbaum (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 90.
49. Aran, “Denial,” 88.
50. *Ibid.*, 110
51. Eilberg-Schwartz, “Problem,” 29-30.
52. Woolf, “‘La’avodat Bor’o,’” 176.
53. Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 2.
54. *Ibid.*, 2.
55. *Ibid.*, 13.
56. Hakak, “Haredi,” 104.
57. Aran, “Denial,” 93.
58. *Ibid.*, 94.
59. Stadler, *Yeshiva Fundamentalism*, 5.
60. Aran et al., “Fundamentalism,” 44-48; Hakak, “Haredi,” 112-14.

61. Stadler, *Yeshiva Fundamentalism*, 108.
62. Aran et al., "Fundamentalism," 35.
63. Stadler, *Yeshiva Fundamentalism*, 66.
64. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 17.
65. *Ibid.*, 53.
66. *Ibid.*, 44.
67. Stadler, *Yeshiva Fundamentalism*, 73.
68. A similar trajectory also appears in Zionist propaganda films about Israel/Palestine from the pre- and early statehood periods, which focused on the transformation of effeminate diasporic Jews into virile Sabras. See: Raz Yosef, *Beyond Flesh: Queer Masculinities and Nationalism in Israeli Cinema* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 16-31.
69. The casting may also serve as commentary on the ethnic conflicts existing between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Haredim and between Haredi Jews and the Arab world. Though a postcolonial approach could potentially tease out this commentary, I chose, for reasons of space, to rarely employ it, since the aforementioned tensions are not central to the film's critical agenda.
70. Konner, *Jewish Body*, 33.
71. Foucault, *Discipline*, 172.
72. Aran, "Denial," 89-90. See also Englander, "Images," 113-21.
73. Aran, "Denial," 83.
74. Woolf, "'La'avodat Bor'o,'" 163-64.
75. Aran, "Denial," 82.
76. Peter Lehman and Susan Hunt, "The Naked and the Dead: The Jewish Male Body and Masculinity in *Sunshine and Enemy at the Gate*," in *The Persistence of Whiteness: Race and Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*, ed. Daniel Bernardi (London: Routledge, 2008), 159. Note that Lehman and Hunt's sweeping claim regarding the naked-nude division should be qualified in light of many instances in which Jewish bodies have been filmed as objects of erotic display. For a critique of their position, see Abrams, "Jesus to Jeremy," 23-24.
77. Lehman and Hunt, "The Naked," 159.
78. Konner, *Jewish Body*, 49-52.
79. Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 46. My point here is not to deny the existence of Haredi physical abuse—which, based on existing information, seems as prevalent as it is in Israel's secular precincts—but to emphasize that this form of violence is less at home in the avowed conceptual framework through which Haredim describe their masculinity than it is within secular/Western gender definitions. See also: Simona Steinmetz and Muhammad M. Haj-Yahia, "Definitions of and Beliefs about Wife Abuse among Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Men from Israel," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 21, no.4 (2006): 525-54.
80. See, for example, the treatment of physical abuse within the Haredi family in Amos Gitai's *Kadosh* (1999) and of Haredi homosexuality in Avi Nesher's *The Secrets* (2007) and Haim Tabakman's *Eyes Wide Open* (2009).
81. Englander, "Images," 20.

82. David Biale, "Zionism as an Erotic Revolution," in *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*, ed. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 284.

83. *Ibid.*, 284.

84. Boaz Neumann, *Land and Desire in Early Zionism* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2009), 34.

85. *Ibid.*, 48.

86. As Neumann explains: "when we, Israeli Jews, look at Israel, we gaze upon it through the eyes of the early pioneers. When we sense it with our body and our spirit, we sense it to the same extent through their sensations. . . . The pioneers' desire for the Land of Israel is the 'archeological' layer of our own desire for it" (19).

87. Jan Goldstein, "The Wandering Jew and the Problem of Psychiatric Anti-Semitism in Fin-de-Siècle," *Journal of Contemporary History* 20, no. 4 (1985): 521-52.

88. Henry Meige, "The Wandering Jew in the Clinic: A Study in Neurotic Pathology," in *The Wandering Jew: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend*, ed. Galit Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 192.