

Acknowledgments

I explore the intersection between pedigree and fiction, lineage and writing in Chapter 3; but a solitary signature on an academic book is also a kind of fiction, more so in this case than most. This book shifted in its configuration and even its authorship over the many years of its writing and has multiple origins and lines of descent. One way it began is through a 2006 grant from the Posen Foundation to develop a course on secular Jewish culture, “Secularization and Sexuality in Haskalah Literature,” that was certainly a major impetus for this book. I thank Felix Posen and the foundation for that encouragement and the students from the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) and University of California, Berkeley (UCB), who taught me so much in various iterations of that class. A 2009 conference on “Sex and the Shtetl” emerged from that course (ChaeRan Freeze generously allowed us to steal that title and gave a riveting talk). Zehavit Stern brought a Yiddish film series and live performance to Berkeley for the occasion, making this the best conference any of us had ever experienced.

If it were not already clear that this book has multiple “parents,” at one point it was a collaborative project: A Hadassah-Brandeis Institute grant in 2007 supported Zehavit Stern and me as we began research for the book, and Zehavit’s fingerprints (that is to say, her academic rigor, broad knowledge, and intellectual creativity) are throughout the finished product. While our work together did not outlive Zehavit’s graduation, our friendship did, and I was grateful to be invited last year to deliver the David Patterson lecture at Oxford University, “Tevye’s Dream,” and even more so, to spend time with Zehavit, her partner, Riki Ophir (another brilliant graduate of the Joint Doctoral Program at GTU and UCB), and their sweet family.

In 2008–9, I spent a sabbatical year working on the book with the generous support of an American Council of Learned Societies sabbatical grant.

Shaina Hammerman and I were awarded a Newhall Research Grant from the GTU in 2012 to work on the “aunt-niece” relationship within the fiction of Grace Paley. The resulting essay, published in *Prooftexts* in 2012, is now the third section of Chapter 5; I thank *Prooftexts* for the permission to republish and Shaina Hammerman for being my coauthor, friend, and, if not quite “niece,” so much more.

Several other parts of the book have already appeared in earlier versions. A section of the Introduction first appeared in *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Jewish Cultures*, edited by Laurence Roth and Nadia Valman (Routledge); a different section was part of an article that was published in a special issue on Jewish performance, edited by Jill Dolan and Stacy Wolf, of *TDR (The Drama Review)*. A section of Chapter 2 first appeared in *Queer Studies and the Jewish Question*, edited by Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini (Columbia University Press). A section of Chapter 6 appeared in an earlier version in *The Passionate Torah: Sex and Judaism*, edited by Danya Ruttenberg (New York University Press), and *Keep Your Wives Away from Them: Orthodox Women, Unorthodox Desires*, edited by Miryam Kabakov (North Atlantic). Another section of that chapter appeared in a special issue of *Journal of Jewish Identities* dedicated to Chana Kronfeld and “The Berkeley School of Jewish Literature,” edited by David Shneer and Robert Adler-Peckerar; a third section appeared in *Sholem Asch Reconsidered*, edited by Nanette Stahl (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library). A final section of Chapter 6 appeared in *The Shtetl: New Evaluations*, edited by Steven T. Katz (New York University Press). A section of the Afterword was part of my review of Josh Lambert’s *Unclean Lips: Obscenity, Jews, and American Culture* for the *Chronicle of Higher Education: Review*; another section appeared in *Dibur Literary Journal*, in the special issue edited by Vered Karti Shemtov, Anat Weisman, and Amir Eshel. I thank these editors, journals, and presses for permission to reprint this work.

Many other lines and relationships extend from these pages: Ken Frieden and I spent two years in weekly SKYPE havruta, and these deadlines, along with his generous and astute comments, helped bring this book into the light of day. Rachel Biale and Marcia Freedman were my writing buddies for many years, heard much of the book spoken aloud, and shared their insights about how to improve it. The two years Yahil Zaban spent in Berkeley, during which he regularly fed me Haskalah sources, brilliant insights, and delicious food, were much too short. Alan Mintz, whose fascinating

work on Hebrew autobiography first got me hooked on Haskalah writing, read an early draft and said such nice things that they shot me to the finish line. Zohar Weiman-Kelman, whom I trust with my life, read through a draft in the last few months, saving me from some embarrassing blunders.

Invitations from Dartmouth College, Brandeis University, Carleton College, and Stanford University to lecture on the subject of secularization and sexuality were other jumping-off points of this book, and dear colleagues at these institutions—Susannah Heschel at Dartmouth; ChaeRan Freeze and Sylvia Fuks Fried at Brandeis; Shana Sippy at Carleton; Charlotte Fonrobert, Ari Kelman, Gabriella Safran, Vered Shemtov, and Steven Zipperstein at Stanford—make the academic world feel like home. My 2013 semester as the Shoshana Shier Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto gave me time to write and introduced me to such new friends and intellectual partners as Doris Bergen, Sol Goldberg, Jeffrey Kopstein, Andrea Most, Ato Quayson, and Karen Weisman, and an excellent research assistant, Noam Sienna. My office neighbor, writing buddy, and instant best friend, Anna Shternshis, who was working on a project about love and work among Soviet Jews, warmed my months in Toronto even as fall turned to winter. In Berkeley, it gives me particular pleasure that my first Hebrew and Yiddish teachers are now longtime colleagues and dear friends: Robert Alter, Bluma Goldstein, and Chana Kronfeld. I have been blessed with more exceptional students than I can count or name and other colleagues and friends, whose support I treasure and generosity and brilliance I rely on: Eliyahu Arnon, Daniel Boyarin, Nathaniel Deutsch, Ofer Dynes, Rena Fischer, Michael Gluzman, Erich Gruen, Paul Hamburg, Susannah Heschel, Laura Levitt, Anita Norich, Mantra Plonsey, Miryam Sas, Jeffrey Shandler, Eleanor Shapiro, Susan Shapiro, Vered Shemtov, Dina Stein, and Anat Weisman. On Holy Hill, I have the best colleague anyone can ask for, the amazing Deena Aranoff. At the GTU, along with Deena, Arthur Holder, Munir Jiwa, Christopher Moreland, and Shana Penn always have my back.

The comments of the anonymous readers of the manuscript for Stanford University Press filled in some gaps in my work; Kate Wahl at the press came up with the title in the eleventh hour (replacing my much drier, more academic one); Friederike Sundaram, Cynthia Lindlof, and Anne Fuzellier Jain ably prepared the manuscript for publication. David Biale, co-editor with Sarah Abrevaya Stein of the series in which this book appears, is the person who opened my eyes to the subject of “Eros and Enlightenment,” who

always tells it to me like it is, and whose unflagging support I regularly lean on. My sister-in-law Sara Brown created a writing colony in her Seattle home one summer just for me, and my father-in-law, Ernest Schott, plunged into Yiddish literature to see where I was spending my time. My mother, Sara Seidman, stuck by me with ferocious love through my own secularization; the solidity of our bond and my own love for and gratitude to her owe everything to her patience, openness, and generosity.

It has not escaped me that the acknowledgment page is perhaps the last refuge for the conventional and sentimental rhetoric of marriage and that even the overthrow of these conventions is by now itself conventional. But surely it must mean something good that my twenty-odd (some of them very odd) years with the estimable John Schott have produced not one but two books with the word *marriage* in the title (not to mention the recording he made with his band “Dream Kitchen”). The life we made together now includes not only our dear son, Ezra, but also two housemates who are much more than that, Krash (a.k.a. Scott Novins) and Driftwood (a.k.a. David Laskin). If modern marriage is in many regards a disaster, we have nevertheless managed to build something rather wonderful in the ruins. It is to John that I dedicate this book.

The Marriage Plot

