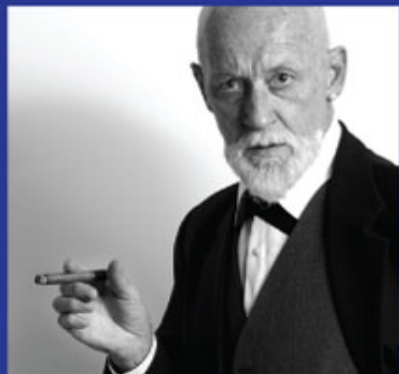


Herzl and Freud



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Preface

This volume consists of two independent reflections on Theodore Herzl and his relationship to Sigmund Freud.

HERZL, the first of the two examines the historical context that shaped both men. However, it is primarily a mini-biography of Herzl emphasizing the path that brought him to Zionism. I was particularly struck by the similarities in the character structures of Herzl and Freud and the ways their personalities enabled them to become founders and leaders of very different movements. I have tried to bring out both the parallels and divergencies in their careers. Although they lived in close proximity their

interactions were limited; nevertheless, they influenced each other in important ways.

In the second part HERZL'S ANALYSIS I have dramatized an imagined analysis of Herzl by Freud; an analysis that never took place, yet easily might have.

Either part can be read and (hopefully) enjoyed without knowledge of the other part. There is some inevitable overlap; yet the difference in tone and perspective argues for reading both.

Jerry Levin
March 2022

Herzl

Theodore Herzl didn't know the difference between a tallis and tefillin, nor would he have cared to learn what it was. Yet he, more than any other single person, was responsible for the creation of the State of Israel. This is just one of the many paradoxes, emotional and intellectual, that was Theodore Herzl. Brilliant, complex, charismatic, multi-faceted, conflicted both within and in his relationship with the world; he was the most unlikely of political leaders. But leader he became—and a spectacularly successful one at that. Insecure, often tormented, enormously ambitious, he is as difficult to understand as a man as he is as a

public figure. All of which makes him utterly fascinating. Among his many contradictions Herzl was simultaneously the most wild-eyed romantic dreamer and the most hard-headed realist. It was a mixing of opposites that, when it didn't work, resulted in neurotic torment, and when it did, made him the great Zionist leader that he became.

Herzl was born in Budapest in 1860 into a solidly upper-middle class, assimilated Jewish family. Although Bar Mitzva-ed in the Liberal (i.e., Reform) synagogue near their home and occasionally taken to services there by his father; his upbringing was essentially secular. The real religion in the Herzl household was high culture, particularly German culture. In this regard the Herzl family was much like many other

educated, upwardly mobile Jewish families in the Austrian-Hungarian empire in the late nineteenth century. Although his Jewishness lacked religious, as opposed to cultural, significance, his early experience in the Budapest synagogue must have been imprinted at a deep level, for many years later after his “conversion” to Zionism, he went to Sabbath services and was deeply moved by the ritual, the music, and the text—not that he became in any way observant.

In many ways he had a charmed childhood—adored by both parents, but more so by his mother to whom he remained exceptionally close to all his life. Interestingly, his family did not send him to the Gymnasium (the classical European high school) as was expected, instead he attended

a technical high school. Herzl did not do well there, eventually transferring to an Evangelical classical school with a predominately Jewish student body. But his years in the technical school may have left a lasting impression. When many years later Herzl wrote a novel “Old New Land” that described a Zionist utopia; it was technology that made that utopia possible. His earliest ambition was to become a Prussian aristocrat, a fantasy utterly incapable of realization.

The 1870’s and most of the 80’s were golden moments for the Empire and the Jews. The liberals were ascendant and classical liberalism with its beliefs in a free market economy, careers open to talent, an ethos of tolerance, belief in rationality, science and empirical verification of theory was an

apotheosis of enlightenment values. Liberals also espoused the rule of law, freedom of speech, separation of church and state and a laissez-faire economic policy. The Jews seized the opportunity liberalism gave them, becoming dominant in many aspects of the economy and major players in the cultural life of the Empire. Sigmund Freud remembered his father putting up a picture of the Bourgeois (i.e., middle class) cabinet that included several Jews in the 1870's. Theodore Herzl grew up in that golden moment—and it was a moment—lasting but a few decades. By 1890 it was over.

Loving family, the right school, the discovery of his talent as a writer—all was going well when tragedy struck. His only sibling, Paula, a year older, died of typhus.

Both parents as well as Theodore himself were devastated. In a sense Herzl never recovered from the loss of Paula to whom he was extraordinarily close. He named his first child Paula, and he never had a satisfactory relationship with another woman. His marriage was a horror. Shortly after Paula's death the Herzls moved to Vienna. Ostensibly because it offered more opportunities for a budding playwright; but actually to run away from their grief.

Already a published journalist Herzl studied law at the University of Vienna, and it was there that he first encountered an anti-Semitism that was a serious threat. An anti-Semitism that went beyond snobbery and deeply affected him personally. Still enthralled by the aristocracy (he continued to

hero worship the German chancellor Bismarck) Herzl joined a German Nationalist dueling fraternity that required fighting a duel and drawing blood as part of its rite of passage. Albia, his fraternity, supported the riots that followed the death of the notorious anti-Semite Richard Wagner. As a protest Herzl offered his resignation expecting it to be rejected. On the contrary, it was instantly accepted, and Herzl never again felt entirely at ease in Gentile society.

The rise in anti-Semitism coincided with the decline of liberalism. The liberals supported the multi-nationalism incarnated in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. They were the party of the educated, highly cultivated, heavily but by no means exclusively Jewish, upper middle class. Herzl's generation was

able to pursue “higher” activities because the previous (i.e., the father’s) generation provided a solid economic base from which such aspirations could be realized. The liberals maintained power by restricting the franchise. They, like Herzl (and the American founders) feared the masses. Like a slumbering beast awakening, the masses answered the call of “populist” demagogues who appealed to instinct, not reason.

Although the liberals controlled Parliament and appointed the Cabinet, they never won over the masses—the Viennese proletariat. Once the restrictions on the franchise were lifted, those masses lost no time in voting them out of power. Marxists and many Socialists believed that liberal ideology was a “mystification” that justified

their power and economic dominance. The economic disparities in Vienna and across the Empire were glaring. The upper aristocratic class had wealth difficult to imagine. The upper middle class, industrial and professional, had the resources to live “in style,” while the lower, mostly working class, lived in appalling conditions. Late into the 19th century and even into the 20th a large proportion of worker’s housing lacked running water, sanitation, and adequate means to heat their overcrowded quarters. Laissez-faire capitalism, a central pillar of classical liberalism, had nothing to offer most of the population. The new mass parties of the right and of the left offered, or pretended to offer, solutions to this radical economic disparity. Although their solutions were

bogus, they did recognize the plight of the masses and gave them voice. Unfortunately, the rage of the lower classes wasn't only fueled by social injustice. Both the leaders and followers of the mass movements were driven by destructive envy of the most vicious kind. That is, they didn't offer real solutions to real economic injustice; on the contrary they exacerbated it for all their talk of doing the opposite and fueled and encouraged the rage that was tearing the Austrian-Hungarian Empire apart. The Austrian (and other) masses were indeed seething with latent and sometimes not so latent violence, worshipped the irrational, the emotional, the parochial, and the demagogues who exploited them. Having plenty of historical and cultural antecedents,

it didn't take long for demonic leaders with widely disparate programs to embrace inchoate unfocused rage turning it into highly focused violent anti-Semitism.

Looking at the tri-partite structure of Sigmund Freud's mature model of the mind, one can see echoes of the political and cultural struggles of Austria-Hungary. The Id (or it) that is the repository of unbridled instinctual energy that is mostly unconscious; The Super Ego (or over-I), the stringent hyper-puritanical denier of instinctual gratification; and the Ego (the I) that has the task of mediating between the Id, the Super Ego and external reality. Freud's model was a reflection of—and internalization of—the situation of the Jewish middle class caught between a powerful, controlling (even into

the late 19th century), often decadent aristocracy; and a seething, increasingly violent proletariat. Freud's weak ego perfectly reflected the perilousness and vulnerability of the Jewish middle class that within a generation would be destroyed.

It is no accident that both Freud and Herzl quoted Virgil; Freud in the epigraph to his masterpiece "The Interpretation of Dreams"; Herzl twice in his writings to the effect "If I can't bend the higher powers, I shall stir up hell (the lower powers)." Freud had in mind the aggressive and libidinal forces in the unconscious. He was thinking of the intrapsychic not the political, yet those forces were to find expression all too soon in the external world culminating in the rise of fascism.

Herzl intended his quote of Virgil as a threat to the Western European “assimilated” Jews who rejected Zionism. Herzl thought he could unleash the repressed energy that laid beneath the misery of the impoverished Eastern European Jews and use it as a political weapon. He correctly predicted the destruction of the Jews of the West but misconstrued the agent of that destruction. Herzl initially underestimated the intensity of the hatred and destructive envy of the forces: intrapsychic, interpersonal, nationalistic and political that lived in Virgil’s hell.

Freud spoke of the corrupt alliance between the Id and the Super ego allied against the reasonableness of the ego. This intrapsychic drama was an accurate depiction, and internalization, of a political

reality. The demagogic leaders and exploiters of the rageful, erupting lower classes—racist, anti-Semitic, worshippers of the primitive and instinctual—did indeed form an alliance with the decadent aristocracy, all surface brilliance and refinement, yet terrified of losing its power as the center of Viennese life became more and more that of middle class professionals and industrialists. The squeeze was on.

Freud's super-ego was not primarily a representation of conscience. The psychoanalyst Eric Ericson made an insightful distinction between the moral and the ethical. The moral is strident, rigid, primitive—a raging horror at war with the ego; while the ethical is the rational embrace of decency and self-restraint in the interest of living

benevolently with our fellow creatures. The ethical is not the self-loathing of the super ego, rather it is the conscience that regulates our behavior in such a way as to make social life possible. Freud commented that the resistance of the super-ego, that tells the patient that he/she doesn't deserve to get well, is the hardest to overcome in psycho-analytic treatment.

Herzl didn't stay with the law long. He later blamed anti-Semitism for leaving his civil service job. But that may be only part of the reason he left the law; it certainly wasn't all of it. From an early age, Dori, as his family called him, wanted to be a writer and he had been writing—stories, profiles, essays, poetry and plays from the time he could hold a pen. His adoring mother supported and

encouraged his literary ambition. Theater was the great Viennese passion, the city itself being theatrical. Herzl had early success with light romantic comedies and bedroom farce having his plays played in the city's leading theaters, including the Imperial one. Although they have survived, his plays are no longer performed and are of slight literary value. At the same time, he made his mark as a journalist. He was instantly successful with his "Feuillitons" a uniquely Viennese genre. A feuilliton is a short, usually satirical piece intended for a newspaper that were wildly popular. Herzl's were prized and widely read. His paper the Neue Freie Presse was the New York Times of the Empire. Its editors were secular Jews. Herzl was good for circulation both as a straight reporter and as what we

would call a columnist, i.e. a writer of feuilletons. The paper sent him to Paris, one of the most prized assignments in European journalism. Herzl, perhaps grandiosely, expected to be treated like an ambassador in Paris, and he actually was.

Herzl, for all his career as a public figure, was the most closed of men. Aside from his parents and Paula the only close and open relationship in his entire life was with a fellow student at the university Heinrich Kana. It was not unusual at the time for there to be an erotic tinge to passionate relationships between young men. There are no allusions to homosexual urges in Herzl's voluminous diaries, on the contrary, he was fascinated by pubescent girls and both he and Hans patronized prostitutes. Both contracted

gonorrhea. Herzl also had some not very serious affairs. Herzl was devastated when Heinrich killed himself several years later after moving to Berlin and failing as a writer. He sent Herzl a suicide note that ended with a kiss. At the same time, Oswalt Boxer, the third member of their circle, who had traveled to Brazil to scout locations for Jewish settlements, a trip that he had asked Herzl to go on, suddenly died of yellow fever. One unexpected loss after another. Paula, Heinrich and now this.

Freud's and Herzl's lives were strangely intertwined. Freud grew up in the Leopoldstadt, the neighborhood that Herzl and his family moved into when they left Budapest. As adults both Freud and Herzl lived on Vienna's Berggasse. Freud at

number 19, Herzl at number 6. Freud for most of his adult life. Herzl for a few years. If they ever met and chatted, as is probable, neither left a record of it. Herzl now the Neue Freie Presse's "ambassador" in Paris was shocked, disillusioned and frightened to discover that a hundred years after "The Declaration of The Rights of Man", France, including Paris the cultural capital of the Western world, supposedly the incarnation of enlightenment values, was viciously anti-Semitic. Edouard Drumont's 1885 book "Judaized France" was a runaway best seller. In it Drumont blamed all of France's problems on the Jews and called for retraction of their emancipation and expropriation of Jewish capital. And there were many other evidences of resurgent anti-

Semitism culminating in the Dreyfus affair. Captain Dreyfus was a Jewish member of the French Army General Staff who was framed as a spy and sent to Devil's Island.

Herzl's response was to write a serious play, "The New Ghetto." The new ghetto wasn't a physical one (not yet), but a social and economic one. A devaluing and demeaning one characterized by scorn and disdain. Herzl also dramatized the emotional cost, even internalization of, the attitude of the surrounding culture. It wasn't produced in Vienna until 1898 when Sigmund Freud was in the audience. That night Freud had a dream about the "Jewish problem." His associations to the dream were primarily "concern about the future of one's children, to whom one cannot give a country of their

own; concern about educating them in such a way that they can move freely across frontiers”. It is worth noting that Freud writes “one’s children”, not “my children”, an indication of how much anxiety seeing Herzl’s play stirred up in him.

Freud and Herzl shared many traits; and their achievements are strikingly similar. Both developed finely honed political skills; each founded movements and lead them in an autocratic manner; both had to deal with powerful dissenters within their movements; both had a therapeutic purpose that depended on internal transformation and in Herzl’s case alteration of the external world; each challenged existing power structures; both were intolerant of dissent; neither wanted their movements to be “too” Jewish—Freud

grooming the gentile Jung to be his successor and Herzl envisioning a Jewish state that had very little Jewish about it. Both would have been considered grandiose, if their achievements hadn't justified their grandiosity. Ambition that would have been considered pathological in lesser men drove them to work compulsively. They used work as a drug to stave off depression and anxiety to which both were prone. Freud and Herzl lived at the very edge of the black pit of depression, yet neither succumbed to it, nor let it lessen their productivity. There is an old adage, "the best treatment for depression is action". In their very different ways Freud and Herzl took the "action cure," and in both cases it worked. Both Herzl and Freud wrote about "conversion." In Herzl's case religious

conversion; in Freud's somatic conversion where a psychic conflict gets expressed physically, e.g., a person struggling with a murderous impulse develops a "hysterical" paralysis of his trigger finger.

Freud was to analyze Herzl's son Hans. Freud's diagnosis was severe Oedipal conflict. Hans, who rejected his father's Zionism, successively became a Baptist, a member of various other Christian denominations and finally a Catholic. He also had himself circumcised (something his father had refused to do) so in a way returning to Judaism. Clearly Hans had severely conflicted feelings toward his father. Freud's diagnosis of the centrality of Oedipal issues seems to be on target. Unfortunately, Freud's analysis was not a success. Hans

killed himself in 1930. Freud might have had Herzl in mind when he wrote “the wildest revolutionaries and the most entrenched reactionaries all want the same thing “consolation” and I have none to give.”

Freud’s and Herzl’s lives had two other resonances: both their lives were transformed by stays in Paris and dreams were central to the thoughts of each. Freud attended Charcot’s (the leading neurologist of his time) lectures on, or better demonstrations of, the treatment of hysteria with hypnosis in Paris; an experience that convinced him of the power of the unconscious. While Herzl, disillusioned by the failure of liberalism to contain anti-Semitism had the “conversion” experience that brought him to Zionism after attending the Paris Opera.

And dreams were of enormous significance to both men. Freud's masterpiece is "The Interpretation of Dreams"; and he made dream analysis the core of this therapy; while Herzl, the dreamer, declared that, "If you will (i.e. dream) it; it is no fairy tale." He also wrote, "All activity of men begins in a dream and later becomes a dream again. Herzl paid close attention to dreams and recorded many of them in his diaries. More importantly, he learned the emotive and transformational power of symbols from them. He later wrote in support of his Zionist dream that Bismarck had created the German Empire out of pieces of cloth-flags, and the passion they elicit. For Herzl, fantasy—dreaming or waking—was the first step to realization.

Herzl experienced a series of disillusionments with supposedly liberal, enlightened Paris. The first was the failure for a Paris court to impose the death penalty on the murderous anarchist Ravachol which Herzl saw as evidence of the spinelessness of the liberals. Herzl as much as he thought the state had to destroy this rebel with a long history of criminality was also impressed, even fascinated, with him and appropriated a phrase the “voluptuousness of ideas” used by his defense. A higher court later condemned Ravachol.

Then came the Dreyfus case. Like almost everybody else Herzl initially believed Dreyfus guilty, then realized that “A Jew who became a member of the French General Staff would be incapable of treason. It was a

psychological impossibility.” After Emil Zola published *J’Accuse* in defense of Dreyfus, Herzl came to believe that Dreyfus had been framed because he was a Jew. Freud too was shook by the Dreyfus case. When the Prussian government protested the French treatment of Dreyfus, he wrote to his Berlin friend, Wilhelm Fliess, extolling German enlightenment. Given what was to happen a few short years later, that could not be more ironic.

Beyond the issue of Dreyfus’ guilt or innocence and the question of who if anyone had framed him, France was torn apart by this cause celebre and the most virulent, racist, potentially existential wave of anti-Semitism was unleashed in all strata of French society. Herzl biographers disagree on

the impact of the Dreyfus affair on Herzl's conversion from assimilationist to Zionist. It seems to me that it would have had to have been a major factor.

Be that as it may, the election of the rabid anti-Semitic Karl Lueger as mayor of Vienna—that supposed bastion of tolerance and liberalism—sealed the deal. The Emperor twice refused to certify Lueger's election to the post, a refusal Sigmund Freud celebrated by smoking a cigar, but this time the vote was lopsidedly in Lueger's favor and the Emperor gave in.

Herzl was thrown into a sleepless emotional crisis. He later described his mental state as near madness. The only peace he could find was to listen to Wagner's Tannhauser at the Paris Opera. It was the

deepest of ironies that the virulently anti-Semitic Wagner played a key role in Herzl's creation of a new Zionist vision. Deepening the irony is the fact that Herzl's first shattering encounter with anti-Semitism occurred after the student demonstrations that marked Wagner's death.

Zionism itself was not invented by Herzl. Fifty years earlier Marx's rival, Moses Hess, had written "Rome and Jerusalem" that put forth a Zionist program. In Eastern Europe there were "Lovers of Zion" groups that had been started by a Jewish doctor from Odessa, Lev Pinkser; Pinkser had also anticipated Herzl in a pamphlet he wrote that was strikingly similar to Herzl's "The Jewish State." And George Elliot had published a novel, "Daniel Derona", with a Zionist

protagonist. Asher Ginsberg, another Russian Jew, who wrote in Hebrew, under the pen name Ahad Ha Am (One of the People) was the founder of Cultural Zionism. Additionally, Barons Rothschild and Hirsch supported small Jewish settlements in Palestine that were equally distant in ideology from Herzl's technologically advance Jewish state as from Ha Am's apotheosis of Yiddish culture, albeit expressed in Hebrew.

What was it about Tannhauser that drove Herzl into the ecstasy that produced his masterwork, "The Jewish State." Tannhauser was a medieval minstrel who was bewitched by Venus who kept him prisoner in a grotto in Venusberg. He escapes with the aid of Elizabeth who represents pure love. But then

he returns to the grotto, before finally escaping Venus and re-uniting with the now dead Elizabeth. Some writers have suggested that Herzl read Tannhauser's return to the grotto as a return to the ghetto, or if not literally to the ghetto, at least an emotional return to his roots. Other critics believe that Tannhauser's redemption brought about by the pure love of Elizabeth was what moved Herzl so deeply. After all the vision that came out of his near psychotic break was one of redemption, not of himself individually, but of an entire people.

A more plausible understanding of Herzl's obsession with Tannhauser is to see Venus and her Venusberg as a representation—a symbol for—the seductive lure of assimilation. While the pure Elizabeth, who

brings about Tannhauser's redemption, is a symbolic representation of the redemption of a whole people via the Zionist vision about to pour forth from Herzl's brain. The "voluptuousness of an idea" becomes the force that moves Zionism from abstract idea to a mass movement. It is the erotic energy present not only in Venus, but in a sublimated form in Elizabeth. Tannhauser offered Herzl an insight, as yet inchoate, of the path he must take. And all of it is in Wagner's music; erotic, libidinous, even orgasmic, generating and representing a passion which paradoxically leads to redemption. In any case, Herzl returned to the Opera time and time again and had its overture played at the Second Zionist convention.

Written at white heat, tightly, clearly and forcefully argued, little embellished by literary touches, “The Jewish State” has been compared as a political pamphlet with Tom Paine’s “Common Sense” and Engels’ and Marx’s “Communist Manifesto” in its historical impact. That’s hyperbolic, yet Herzl’s pamphlet majorly contributed to the Zionist struggle and to the eventual founding of the State of Israel with all that has meant and all the conflict that has engendered.

Herzl had been searching for an answer to the “Jewish Problem” for quite some time. At first he grasped onto the hope that liberalism would yet solve the “social problem,” i.e. the economic oppression and resulting misery of the lower classes, and thereby undercut the anti-Semitism that fed

on that misery. That proved to be a futile hope as Herzl discovered that there was as much anti-Semitism on the left as on the right (sound familiar?—“The more things change, the more they stay the same”).)

As he realized that assimilation would never work, and that the answers offered to the “social problem” would do nothing to help the Jews, he turned to an emotional answer, “the voluptuousness of the idea”. The sheer emotional power, which Herzl took to be erotic in nature, of the murderous defendant made a permanent impression on him. He wanted to capture some of that energy for his movement.

I’m sure Marcus Garvey, credited with coining the phrase “Black is beautiful” never heard of Theodore Herzl, yet the two men

were on the same wavelength. Herzl realized that political action presupposes an internal transformation that raises self-esteem and undercuts “identification with the aggressor.” Herzl himself wasn’t free of anti-Semitic feelings (particularly toward Eastern European Jews) writing about the “kikes” whose appearance and behavior justified—or at least gave fuel to—anti-Semitism.

Here was a dilemma. Without external change, self-hatred was hard to overcome, and without belief that you deserved better, action to improve your lot was unlikely. Herzl knew this and he used every tool: verbal, esthetic, ideological and symbolic that was available to overcome it. He insisted on formal dress at Zionist congresses; designed a Zionist flag; moved the first

Zionist congress to a more impressive setting; and told the Jews over and over again that if they willed it—if they believed they deserved it—self-determination and freedom from oppression was possible.

Herzl dealt with this circularity by making his politics psychotherapeutic and his “psychotherapy” political, thereby transcending the dilemma. His audacity in doing so is breathtaking. He opened the First Zionist Congress in Basle with the words, “We are here to lay the foundation stone of the house which is to shelter the Jewish Nation.” Delivered with absolute certainty to the no more than 197 delegates that speech did indeed launch the movement that eventuated in the State of Israel. And he

knew it, writing “In Basle I created the Jewish State.”

Sixty years later, the psychiatrist Frantz Fanon went further than Herzl. After becoming involved in the Algerian struggle for independence from France, he taught that the only cure for his patient’s psychopathology was action. In his case violent, revolutionary action. Herzl believed that his aims could be achieved peacefully. Given subsequent history, it is thoroughly possible that Herzl would have come to agree with Fanon.

But I’m getting ahead of the story. Since individual conversion was shameful; Herzl had proposed a mass conversion of the Jews of Vienna in St. Stephen’s Cathedral; a mass conversion endorsed by the Pope and

presided over by the resident Cardinal. Needless to say, that never happened. And conversion wouldn't have saved the Jews anyway. The Spanish, during the Inquisition, had transformed religious anti-Semitism into racial anti-Semitism demanding "purity of the blood." And the Nazis were to murder converts along with the most Orthodox. Herzl ran out of options until the emotion released by Tannhauser led him to propose, not the mass conversion, but the mass exodus of the Jews from Europe. Herzl didn't necessarily have them move to Palestine, any autonomous refuge would do. "The Jewish State" was his exposition of the how and why of that exodus along with a description of the New Zion. Herzl, who was obsessed with honor and its shadow shame, had at one point

decided to challenge Karl Lueger or another prominent anti-Semite to a duel. He also suggested that a half dozen duels resulting from Jewish challenges would vastly improve the position of the Jews in the Austrian-Hungarian empire. That idea too he dropped as impractical.

Now comes the most fantastic series of episodes in Herzl's already hard to believe career. From the man about town, elegant playwright to the phenomenally successful journalist, Herzl underwent yet another metamorphosis from which he emerged a political genius who worked everyone from the impoverished Jewish masses to Germany's Kaiser, to the Ottoman Court, the Pope and the virulently anti-Semitic Russian Interior Minister. "The Jewish State" brought

him fame; the status, or at least a convincing claim to it, to enable him to open doors no other Jewish leader had been able to open.

Forever the man of the theater, Herzl now had a world stage to play on and the power to cast himself as the leading man—and he did. He also wrote and directed the drama. In “The Jewish State” Herzl debunks the myth that the Jews of the West, at least, could be and would be treated just as any other citizen. Herzl had become convinced, by the series of anti-Semitic events delineated above, that assimilation is an illusion; the old hatred will never die. Convincing the Jews of the West that this was the case was a necessary first step. But that was not enough. For it to be effective Herzl’s black enlightenment had to lead to political action to gain a safe haven—

if not an independent Jewish state, then a secure autonomous region within an existing state. Herzl first tried to secure backing financial and otherwise of such Jewish magnates as Baron Rothschild. He failed. He then unbelievably gained interviews with the heads of several European states meeting with the German Kaiser in Palestine, the Ottoman Sultan several times in Istanbul and the anti-Semitic Russian Interior Minister Plehve in Moscow. They all listened, but none offered anything concrete. Plehve's secret police had instigated pogroms and Herzl almost certainly knew it; yet he was so focused on his goal that he choose to deal with the devil himself. In a sense they shared a common goal, to rid Russia of its Jews. Herzl's trysts with royalty reads like a fairy

tale, but it wasn't; nevertheless, none of these attempts to gain a territory led to anything.

Frustrated by his failure to get anything substantial from the men of power he had pursued, he turned to the impoverished Jews in London's East End who received him rapturously. He went from there to Bulgaria. In a synagogue in Sofia he made the mistake of preceding instead of following the Torah into the Ark—a major sacrilegious gaff, yet someone in the shul called out, “See he is more holy than the Torah” and the crowd hushed wondering if they were in the presence of the Messiah. Herzl now had his mass movement. Using his newfound political strength, he organized Zionist conventions and used his theatrical skills to orchestrate them.

The bloody Kishinev pogrom (it was the worst, but far from the only pogrom in Eastern Europe) convinced Herzl that the situation of the Jews was deteriorating and that immediate action was imperative. Even as the Sultan and the Kaiser waltzed him in and out, the English government (Herzl was a great admirer of the England that Freud called the home of rational liberty) offered Herzl Uganda, actually a slice of present-day Kenya, as a refuge for the Jews.

Herzl that most romantic of dreamers, was simultaneously the most realistic of politicians. Foreseeing the destruction of European Jews forty years later; he wanted to accept the English proposition. Unfortunately, this was one time Herzl could not bring his followers onboard. Herzl had no

sentimental attachment to “the land of his ancestors.” On his one visit there, he was appalled at by the filth, poverty, and fanaticism he found. (Mark Twain, who visited Palestine at about the same time as Herzl described the “Holy Land” in The Innocents Abroad in even more negative terms.) His followers felt otherwise, and a temporary refuge that might have saved millions of Jews was never pursued.

How a middle-class journalist was able to not only gain entrance to the highest circles of government, but to feel utterly at ease there is a mystery. Charisma cannot be explained and neither can creativity. Herzl the playwright created his most audacious character, Theodore the Zionist, out of whole cloth.

Herzl's pamphlet, "The Jewish State" is a blueprint for creating it. The utopian novel "Old-New Land," he wrote at the end of his life, details the nature of that state. There was very little explicitly Jewish about it. Rather it is a vision of a liberal paradise where there is no prejudice against anyone Jewish or not, tolerance of all religions, but no role for religion in the state; rule of law, solution of the "social problem," i.e. exploitation by the very wealthy of an impoverished underclass, through a system of cooperatives described as a middle ground between socialism and capitalism; the elimination of want through the development of science and technology; and multilingualism (neither Hebrew nor Yiddish are state languages; rather they are just one of the many tongues in use in the

new state); cultural institutions and sport are encouraged and sponsored by the state; agriculture is also cooperative; and education at all levels is excellent and free. Herzl's Old-New Land is more like an idealized England that plays rugby and football and goes to the theater than anything explicitly Jewish. However, the liberal values incarnated in it are implicitly Jewish. In an era before the rise of Arab Nationalism, Herzl foresaw a nation at peace, and the absence of conflict between Arab and Jew.

Herzl's exposition of Zionist ideology was not without its problems. Herzl was a 19th century European not free of the prejudices of his time and place (as is true of Freud as well). He saw Europeans including Jews as a civilizing force, and believed that a

Zionist state, wherever it was located, would be of benefit to any population resident there (he did consistently seek sparsely populated areas for potential Jewish settlements.) To be fair to Herzl, he also believed that a Zionist state would benefit the European powers.

Herzl's explanation of the causes of anti-Semitism is unconvincing. He thought that modern anti-Semitism had almost no relationship to medieval "religious" anti-Semitism; believing that the modern form resulted from the emancipation of the Jews whose centuries old experience of being ghetto-ized had both formed and deformed them. The result being gentile resentment of their entry into professional and commercial competition with those gentiles and the generation of an "overeducated intellectual

proletariat.” Herzl envisioned most Jews immigrating to the Zionist state, so there would be no reason for anti-Semitism, and it would simply disappear. Thereby, liberating those Jews who choose to stay where they were from prejudice and social-political disability. This comes dangerously close to blaming the victim—he didn’t say it, but he intimates that if the Jews changed all would be well. Clearly this never happened—neither the establishment of the State of Israel nor the de-ghetto-ization of the Jews reduced anti-Semitism in the least. Leo Pinsker, who founded the Lovers of Zion movement, was much closer to the mark when he characterized anti-Semitism as an “incurable psychosis.”

Herzl was also a failed prophet when he saw his Zion as having a rigid separation of church (i.e. synagogue) and state, with religion being a purely private matter. He was equally and tragically wrong in envisioning peace between Jews and Arabs. But he was right in the essential thing—Jews in both Eastern and Western Europe were (and are) not safe—so it is imperative that they have their own state.

Herzl was not a democrat; he was too fearful of the latent fury of the lower classes including the Jewish one and he was instinctively aristocratic. However, in Herzl's utopia, class war is eliminated through the cooperatives. The culture it supported is not exclusively Jewish. In many ways it is a realization of the European enlightenment.

One would have thought that it would have been Ahad Ha-Am, with his cultural Zionism, who would have led a mass movement of Jews, but it wasn't it. It was Herzl who knew the right buttons to push. However, many then and now have criticized Herzl for his vision of a state that gave no recognition or support to the heritage of thousands of years of Jewish experience. It is interesting that the one mention of a play being performed in "Old-New Land" is an opera about Sabbati Zvi, the most notorious of the false messiahs that reoccur in Jewish history. Could it be, at some unconscious level, Herzl who played so well a Messianic role, considered himself a false Messiah who strove to save the Jews physically, but not spiritually?

Herzl's masterpiece, The Jewish State, is short on rhetoric and even shorter on emotional exhortation, while long on spelling out both the route to establishing it, as well as its structure and functioning. Herzl is clear on the path; step one—convince both the assimilated Western European Jews and the impoverished repressed Eastern European Jews of the necessity of having their own home; (2) persuade a great power to sponsor that state, not out of benevolence, but out of self-interest. For example, persuading the rulers of the Ottoman Empire that the Jews would rescue it from economic disaster and insurmountable debt in exchange for a territory where the Jews would be essentially independent while loyal to the Ottoman Empire; (3) raise the funds needed both by

appeal to mega-wealthy Jews, e.g. the Rothschilds and small subscriptions from most of the Jewish population. Herzl even details the banking system that would administer the funds; and (4) he describes the actual transport to the New Land and the establishment of communities there.

Freud and Herzl had other commonalities. Freud founded his own press and Herzl his own newspaper. More importantly, they each had fraught relationships with Judaism. Freud describes himself as a Godless Jew and Herzl, although he had isolated strongly emotional responses to Jewish ritual, clearly cared for more for Jews than for Judaism. He never expressed his actual beliefs, nor more likely the lack of them and he was emphatic that Judaism

would not be a state religion in the Jewish State.

It is interesting to speculate whether Herzl could have had a political career as a mainstream politician, perhaps as a member of the Austrian parliament. There were precedents. In another of those “coincidental” crossings of Herzl’s and Freud’s lives; the tenant who preceded Freud in his Berggasse apartment was Victor Adler, a physician and successful Jewish politician, who was the leader of the Austrian Social Democratic Party. After the fall of the Hapsburgs in 1917, he became Foreign Minister. And another Jewish doctor, Adolf Fischhof, was a leader of the revolution of 1848. Then there was Ferdinand Lassalle, another successful Jewish politician, who actually makes an

appearance in one of the dreams Freud reported in “The Interpretation of Dreams”. Lassalle’s career came to an end as the result of a sex scandal.

A quite different possible model was Benjamin Disraeli, who struggled with his Jewish identity, in spite of having been baptized at age 12, all his life. Disraeli wrote a novel, *Alroy*, that had a proto-Zionist protagonist, with whom its author strongly identified. But Disraeli became a Zionist leader, so to speak, only in fictionalized fantasy. In reality, Disraeli foreswore his chance to be the Messiah in order to become Prime Minister of England.

We cannot know if a conventional political career would have satisfied Herzl’s ambition. In any case, Austria wasn’t

England, and 1890 wasn't 1850. So even if he would have considered it, a mainstream political career wasn't a possibility for Herzl. By the time he considered being anything but a writer, rising anti-Semitism had closed that door. And even if Herzl had somehow become Prime Minister of Austria, it would not have saved the Jews. Leon Blum, a French Jew was twice Prime Minister of France in the 1930s, but that didn't stop the French from rounding up the Jews and putting them in Drancy, a French concentration camp, in route to Auschwitz.

In another resonance with Herzl, Sigmund Freud had political aspirations as a young man. When a child, a fortune teller in Vienna's amusement park, The Prater, predicted that Freud would grow up to be a

great man. His parents took this prediction in a political sense—their son would become a cabinet member. In fact, Freud seriously considered going to law school before deciding on medicine. Even so, he was to use political metaphors and examples in many of his writings.

One of the first illustrations of a “Freudian slip” in his *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* was the story of The Speaker welcoming the new parliament by saying, “I thereby close the session,” his true wish instead of reading the text, “I hereby open the session.” This is not only funny, it is illustrative of the dysfunction of the Austrian parliament that helped bring down the liberals and indirectly fueled anti-Semitism. And when he wanted to illustrate how

psychological repression censures our thoughts, he analogized the process to the censorship at the Russian border that deleted whole pages of correspondence.

Both Herzl and Freud treasured their Jewish identities, even if they didn't understand or know how to define it, nor know its nature. Freud wrote that he could not subscribe to Jewish, any more than any other religious belief, nor share in Jewish national sentiment, yet there was something that he could not define that was central to his being and his identity. Freud, the rationalist per excellence, subscribed to a sort of mysticism to account for the centrality of Jewishness in his experience of self. He did credit his Jewishness with his capacity to go

against the “compact majority,” a phase he took from Ibsen’s “An Enemy of the People.”

Freud’s attitude toward Zionism isn’t clear. He followed the development of Zionism closely, but never joined the movement. And when Einstein asked him to sign a letter supporting Zionist aspirations, he declined.

Both Freud and Herzl were about empowerment. As Freud put it, the goal of his therapy was expressed in the phrase, “where It was; I shall be.” And Herzl stated, “when you believe in yourself; your misery will end.” It is worth noting that both Anna O. (Bertha Pappenheim), the Ur-patient of psychoanalysis, and Theodore Herzl were “cured” of hysteria and depression, respectively by passionate commitment to a

cause. In Anna's case the welfare of abused women and children. In Theodore's finding a Jewish national home.

Herzl's ability to reinvent himself amazes. His successive states of being are reflected in his works. The dandified esthete in his witty early plays; the realist in his journalism; the disillusioned liberal in "The New Ghetto"; the visionary in "The Jewish State"; and finally the political craftsman in "Old-New Land".

Herzl, who was absolutely terrified of death, knew that he wouldn't live long. Zionism became his immortality project. It is almost as if knowing he could not save himself, he threw all of his manic energy into saving his people. In spite of his rapidly declining health, there was a bright note in

Herzl's last year. After a stormy and often bitter marriage Theodore and his wife Julie were reconciled. Julie, who would probably now be diagnosed as a borderline personality was difficult, and Theodore was an often-absent husband and father who was far too close to his mother. It is no accident that the reconciliation took place after Herzl, apparently for the first time, took his wife's side during the latest of the endless quarrels between mother and wife.

Julie's life was sad. Coming from wealth she had very different values than her husband and little interest in his literary career. She dealt with her frustration with suicidal threats and rageful outbursts. For her, Zionism was a rival for her husband's attention not a noble cause. His letters to her

during their frequent separations grew more caring, but never really loving. She died three years after him at age 39 from ovarian cancer.

When he died at the age of forty-four of heart disease, Herzl was grieved across Europe. His funeral in Vienna was attended by thousands. The rest of his story is tragic. His son Hans rejected Zionism, experimented with a variety of religious identities and found fulfillment in none and either lost all belief or believed that God had deserted him when he put a bullet in his head the same day his sister Paula died of a drug overdose after a life of addiction and mental illness. His younger daughter Trudy spent most of her adult life in and out of mental institutions and was then murdered along with her husband in

the German concentration camp Theresienstadt. Their only son Stephen Theodore, who they had sent to England to escape the Nazis, graduated from Cambridge, served as a captain in the British Army in WWII and was working for the British Embassy in Washington when he learned the fate of his parents. Despondent, he jumped off the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge over the Potomac River killing himself. Herzl has no surviving family.

Although Herzl didn't directly predict the Holocaust, his analysis of the untenable position of European Jews foreshadowed Freud's fate. If it weren't for the interference of William Bullitt, the American ambassador to France, with whom Freud had written a scathing psychobiography of Woodrow

Wilson, and his disciple Maria Bonaparte, who was a princess of Greece; Freud probably would have died in a Nazi death camp. As it was, Freud barely escaped the Nazi's, going into exile in England. His four sisters were not so fortunate. All were murdered in Auschwitz.

Herzl didn't create the State of Israel alone; it took the political genius of Ben Gurion, the diplomatic genius of Aha Eben, and the military genius of Moshe Dylan, along with the sacrifice of tens of thousands. Nevertheless, there would never have been an Israel without Theodore Herzl.

Herzl's Analysis

Characters

Prologue/Postlogue

Theodore Herzl

Sigmund Freud

Ahad Ha Am

Emperor Franz Joseph

*(As the audience walks in,
the Overture to Wagner's
Tannhauser is playing—3-5
minutes; images of Herzl,
Freud and Freud's
consultation room are
projected on a loop as the
music plays)*

(Prologue walks onto a bare stage)

Prologue: Vienna—who can understand it? In the years leading up to the first world war—and even after it—Vienna produced one genius after another. Its culture rich and deep—masterpieces of art, literature, architecture, and music followed each other in rapid succession and their range in music alone—pop hits and compelling waltzes that quickly transversed the world along with the most profound symphonies astounds. Its contributions to science, especially medical science, were equally breathtaking. Yet, Vienna, the wonderful, transcendently beautiful was simultaneously the most deadly of cities. Imperial capital of a decadent, disintegrating empire with a

violently anti-Semitic mayor. It hosted at one time or another Hitler and Mahler; Lenin and Strauss; Trotsky and Stalin; and not incidentally Sigmund Freud and Theodore Herzl.

Herzl and Freud lived on the same street, the Berggasse, yet they barely knew each other. But I'm not going to let literalism or strict chronology interfere with the tale I want to tell you. And oh, it was the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, its leaders housed in Baroque splendor that plunged Europe into a war so destructive that its horrors could not be imagined.

*(Stage goes dark—when
lights come up, we are in
Freud's consulting room.
Herzl and Freud are
standing in front of the*

*famous analytic couch
intensely confronting each
other.)*

*(Herzl is tall, commanding,
overdressed in the manner of
a dandy. He is boulevardier.
Freud is not quite as tall,
dressed in a conservative,
professional suit. Both have
piercing stares.)*

Herzl: Herr doctor, every time I passed you on the street, I wanted to ask you how my son Hans is progressing in his analysis. I am not a shy man, yet I never did.

Freud: You are consulting me to find out about Hans?

Herzl: I worry about him—one day a Baptist, the next a Catholic, having himself circumcised. I didn't have him circumcised, not

wanting him marked on his flesh
as a Jew. Poor Hans, he seems
lost, turning this way and that
way, landing nowhere. With a
meshugge mother what else
could I expect.

*(Stage left goes dark, stage
right is light. Julie Herzl
appears)*

Freud: You look distressed. Your name
has been on every theater
marquee in Vienna. You
generally get good reviews
despite one of your plays closing
on opening night. But none of it
seems to give you any
satisfaction. Is it only your home
life that makes you so unhappy?

Herzl: Damn, you're right, I'm
depressed. Even in the happy
days in Budapest, I fell into
periods of blackness.

Freud: Please lay down on my couch.

Herzl: Herr doctor, I'm not going to lay down at your feet.

Freud: My feet? I'll be seating behind the couch on which you will be laying. (*Aside: I can't stand being stared at for 8 hours in a row*). Not seeing me will make it easier for you to say what you need to say without focusing on me. I want you to say whatever comes to mind. Absolutely anything.

Herzl: I'm not going to lay down on your couch. Do you know when I was younger I wanted to be a Prussian Aristocrat and I continue to uphold Aristocratic values. Aristocrats don't lie down before anyone.

Freud: You don't understand how analysis works. The couch is merely a tool. It will help you relax and say anything that comes to mind, no matter how embarrassing, painful or, unacceptable it may be. It has nothing to do with dominance. The only other requirement for being an analytic patient is to pay my fee. Since you are renting my time, you are responsible for any sessions you miss.

Do you think you can do that Herr Herzl? If you do, perhaps we can find out why you take so little satisfaction in your accomplishments. Not only do I see your name on theater marquees everywhere, I read your articles in the Neu Frei Presse almost every night, yet none of it seems to give you whatever it is you seek. Perhaps

we can alter that, but I need to warn you, Herr Herzl, if you continue with analysis, I can promise you nothing but self-knowledge.

Herzl: I'm not going to lie down on your couch

Freud: Aristocrat or not, if I'm going to analyze you, you are going to have to follow the analytical rules.

Herzl: I just can't do it. I bow before no one.

Freud: Are you afraid I will attack you —sexually perhaps?

Herzl: I'm used to being obeyed.

Freud: (*annoyed*) Stop this nonsense. Why did you come here? Surely

not for Hans' sake. What do you want from an analysis?

Herzl: (*Hesitates, then finally lays down on couch. Shuts his eyes, remains silent for several minutes*) Yes, you're right, I don't understand it either Herr Doctor. I'm successful. At least successful most of the time as a playwright. The public likes what I do, I make them laugh. But the critics, the savage bastards, say I am superficial. That my characters have no feelings, lack interiority. They imply I have no heart, that I am cold. Unfeeling. So that's the only thing I can put on the stage. (*falls into silence*) That's a terrible thing to ascribe to anyone. And it's not true. Every time I think of Paula's death, and I do often, the pain is intolerable. I go off by myself and weep.

Freud: Paula?

Herzl: My younger sister, I loved so much. Dead in her teens. Strong, beautiful—typhus killed her in just a few days.

Freud: We'll have to stop for now.

(Herzl jumps off the couch and runs out; Freud puffs on a cigar)

Freud: A Prussian aristocrat! He's really Meshuga. *(Pause)* Well maybe not so Meshuga. I myself think of myself as someone I cannot be, a “Conquistador,” as an adventurer of the mind—I even acquired some Spanish to better understand the role as one who acquires new territory, that is new knowledge for mankind. This Herzl confuses me, for a Jewish playwright from Budapest

to want to be a Prussian Aristocrat, to actually think of himself as one, it's crazy. And me? For a Jewish Doctor from Vienna to think of himself as a conquistador? Equally crazy? Of course not, for me it is merely a metaphor, for him an aspiration.

(Lights go down, then come up again. Herzl enters, Freud points to couch, Herzl lays down)

Herzl: This is ridiculous. What should I say?

Freud: As I told you, just say whatever comes to mind.

Herzl: My wife is impossible.

Freud: Impossible?

Herzl: Screaming, hysterical weeping, the children are terrified. Cries all the time, threatens to kill herself. I knew almost as soon as I married her—it was a mistake. Her high and mighty family hid the fact that she had been in and out of sanatoria before she was 20; I thought of divorce, I still do. But I don't go through with it, I'm frightened it would hurt the children.

(Pause)

Herzl: And to be honest, I fear a divorce would damage my prospects—instead I write plays about horrible marriages and even worse wives. Plays that turn pain into humor using my gift of wit to make people laugh instead of feeling the pain of being trapped with a *(raises voice)* crazy, greedy, demanding woman. Julie

is like two people - the elegant, refined lady, then when she's in one of her states, a mad woman with a mouth like a sewer. In her rages she blames me, accusing me of blaming her while I'm the deserting husband, the absent father only involved in what she calls my "current passion" – no Doctor, not a woman – she means my plays, my articles. And she hates my mother. Last night she screamed, "The queen's slightest whim and you jump through hoops; me you ignore." When I protested she used a Yiddish obscenity to characterize my relationship with my mother.

Freud: A Yiddish obscenity?

Herzl: Yes, when Julie is in a rage, she forgets that she doesn't know a word of Yiddish.

Freud: I see.

Herzl: I got just as crazy, screaming so loud the servants must have heard, I was so angry I was afraid of what I might do.

Freud: Great anger presents us with a dilemma. If we repress it, we get depressed; if it overcomes us, the consequences may be dire.

Herzl: That's really helpful! (*Slams door as he leaves*)

(Stage goes dark, when lights come back up we are back in Freud's consulting room)

Freud: You say you came to me to ask about Hans. I don't think so. You really came here for yourself. Clearly your marriage causes you pain. Yet I sense that's not your

core issue. (*Pause*) Analysis requires commitment to ruthless self-examination, I don't hear that commitment.

Herzl: Let me think about it, but for now, Hans, how is he doing?

Freud: I can't say much except to tell you he has many problems. He's deeply unhappy and hopelessly conflicted about you. Loves you and hates you.

Herzl: Oy vey worse than I thought.

Freud: You can't help Hans until you help yourself.

Herzl: Don't preach to me.

Freud: I concede, that was not one of my better moments. Let me teach you how to be an analytic patient. We've gone over some of this,

but it doesn't seem to have sunk in. All you have to do is lay down on the couch and say whatever comes to mind. Keep voicing your thoughts, no matter how frightening, distasteful, or embarrassing. Can you commit to that?

Herzl: I'm not sure, I'm a proud man.

Freud: The underside of pride is shame. Have you ever been shamed? Felt it, felt shame?

Herzl: Never! Well perhaps when Alba, my dueling fraternity, was all too ready to accept my resignation when they supported the anti-Semitic riots that followed Wagner's death. I never thought they would accept it. Did I feel ashamed? No! No! No! They tried to shame me and failed, what I felt was rage.

Freud: What else does shame bring up?

Herzl: For me?

Freud: We're not talking about anyone else.

(Silence)

Herzl: I've long thought of the plight of the European Jews. Ever since I graduated law school, I hoped to solve the "Jewish problem." For a very long time, I thought the answer was assimilation—being less Jewish, less vulgar, less money grabbing, less of everything the gentiles despise us for. Rightly. *(Catches himself)* You know what I mean, less like the worst Jews. Just become more like them, more like the goyim—assimilate. After Alba and the Wagnerian riots, I stopped thinking that. The

gentiles will never accept us.
Never treat us with dignity like
any other citizen.

Freud: I hear self-hatred in your voice.
It permeates all your thoughts.
Your obsession with pride
distances yourself from your self-
loathing.

Herzl: (*angrily*) You have it all wrong. I
thought of a way Jews could
assimilate without shame. Mass
conversion. There is shame when
an individual Jew converts,
everyone says he did it hoping to
get some economic advantage
rather than from conviction. But
if the Jews en masse march to St.
Stephens Cathedral—with the
Pope's endorsement, an
endorsement I will obtain—our
Cardinal presiding over a
glorious ceremony, the Jews
would, without shame or

suspicion of base motive, be welcomed and embraced by their Christian fellow citizens. Mass conversion, not social assimilation solves the "Jewish problem."

(Herzl gets up and leaves)

Freud: His meshuga fantasies are not without their power. I need to know the man better. I'll continue the analysis.

(Stage lights go down, when they come up Herzl is on the couch)

Herzl: Doctor, I want to know more about Hans.

Freud: Herr Herzl, I have several thoughts. First you bring up Hans to avoid the issue of shame which we were discussing in our

last session. And you put me in a difficult situation. I would like to alleviate a father's concern, but I owe Hans confidentiality.

Herzl: Doctor, everyone knows you do not follow your own rules. Is it true that you are analyzing your own daughter? At least tell me if you can help Hans.

Freud: Tell me more about your decision not to have him circumcised.

Herzl: Damn! You're stuck on a tiny bit of skin. There's nothing more to say. I just want him to have a choice if he chooses not to suffer the disabilities of being a Jew.

Freud: I'm afraid being uncircumcised will spare him nothing. I wouldn't have guessed you could be so naive.

Herzl: (*angrily*) You accuse me of changing the subject to avoid anxiety laden topics. Now you are changing the subject so you won't have to answer my questions. I've heard enough about your work to know more about you than you know about me.

Freud: That doesn't auger well for our work together. I insist you need to be angry at me so you don't have to respond to my inquiries. Your decision not to have your son circumcised has many meanings and just as many consequences. The social reason you give is undoubtedly true—but there are deeper reasons.

Herzl: Damn! You really are stuck. (*shouting*) There is NO deeper reason! The whole issue is more important to you than to me.

(Forcefully) It's no accident that the Jewish Doctor Freud, not a gentile thinker, came up with the castration complex—every Jew boy is traumatized on the eighth day by having part of his dick snipped off—how could he not have castration anxiety?

Freud: If all you want from your analysis is to fight with me, you won't get very far. Perhaps you are acting out your unexpressed, unconscious anger at the father you say you adore. I don't deny that you adore him. Your adoration being one, among many other feelings, most of which are out of your awareness.

Herzl: Wrong again.

Freud: Your decision not to have your son circumcised brings to mind your declaration that you would

never convert, yet you have no objection to your children converting. We need to explore that next time.

(Herzl slams his fist on Freud's couch, slams door on way out)

(Lights go down, when they come back up, Herzl is back on the couch)

Herzl: Even if the whole world hates me because I am a Jew, I would never give the bastards the satisfaction of renouncing Judaism. Not that the religion means much to me. Ironically, the part of me that wanted to be a gentile aristocrat is the same part of me that would never convert. If conversion would make life easier for my children, I do not

wish to put up any barrier in the way.

Freud: You treasure your pride, yet you don't want your children to share it.

Herzl: Their lives are their own. You call yourself an infidel Jew, an oxymoron.

Freud: I too have conflicted feelings about Judaism. I've always gladly and proudly acknowledged my Jewishness, though my attitude to any religion, including ours, is critically negative.

(Freud grows pensive, then continues speaking)

My father remembered being pushed off a sidewalk and having his hat thrown into the gutter by an anti-Semite. When he told me

that he said nothing, just stepped into the street and picked up his hat, I cringed.

Herzl: So you too struggle with shame and attempt to erase it through being proud.

Freud: I suppose so. We Jews have always known how to respect spiritual values. We preserved our unity through ideas, and because of them we have survived to this day. (*catches himself*) I have said too much. (*halts, then goes on*) I was always an unbeliever. But enough else remained to make the attraction of Judaism and of Jews irresistible, many dark emotional powers, all the mightier the less they allow themselves to be grasped in words, as well as the “clear consciousness” of inner

identity, the secrecy of some mental construction.

Herzl: I'm afraid we have to stop for today.

(Freud Laughs)

(Lights dim, when lights come back up, Herzl is on Freud's couch)

Herzl: I'm glad you forgot the analytic rules yesterday, I feel safer, more comfortable revealing myself to you.

Freud: How much, if anything, the analyst should reveal of himself has been a vexed question. I myself recommend that the analyst should be a polished mirror reflecting back the patient's projections and nothing else.

Herzl: Thank God you ignore your own recommendations.

(Both laugh)

Herzl: Dr. Freud, you think you owe nothing to Judaism. It's not true you must know that we are enjoined, enjoined over and over again to remember a traumatic event, that we were slaves in Egypt. And your analytic therapy enjoins patients to remember their traumatic pasts. That can't be an accident.

Freud: *(aside)* Now he's a rabbi, quite a come down from being the messiah.

Freud: Dr. Herzl, you have a genius for false equivalencies. The techniques and goals of analytic therapy come from clinical experience, they had nothing to

do with whatever is taught in a prayer book.

Herzl: Perhaps.

Freud: (*aside*) What is it about this Herzl that gets to me. Who knows what emerges from the depths of the unconscious. He could be right. NO! My hard-won knowledge of the efficacy of recovering repressed memory is validated by experience.

Freud: (*to Herzl*) I spend half my time adjudicating disputes about priority among my disciples. I'm not going to do that with you. The purpose behind your clever observation is to diminish me. You do something similar in every session. I wonder why?

Herzl: I'll tell you why to use one of your Yiddish expressions, you're

a dreykop, one who makes your head spin, you make my head spin. I hate it, so I fight back.

Freud: In that case, let's stop before you get too dizzy.

Herzl: (*Sighs, seems deflated*) This is a stupid argument. The point is not to remember that we were slaves, but to avoid re-enslavement.

Freud: On that, Herr Herzl, we can agree. We need to stop

(Herzl stands up, starts to leave, then turns to Freud)

Herzl: I've been appointed Paris correspondent for the Neu Frei Presse.

Freud: Mazel tov. That puts you at the top of your profession. Come to

see me when you're back in
Vienna

*(Some months later, Herzl
enters Freud's counseling
room. He is not his usual
impeccably dressed self.
Rather, he is almost
disheveled. His self-
possession is nowhere in
evidence. He is visibly
shaken as he lays down on
couch)*

Freud: Paris?

Herzl: It was horrific

Freud: Horrific?

Herzl: I almost lost my mind. *(Herzl
Jumps Up)* Night after night, I
couldn't sleep. It was torment!
Torment! I would jump out of
bed, run out and wander

aimlessly feeling crushed and
literally falling apart.

Freud: Please resume your position on
the couch

Herzl: Fuck the couch. You're not
listening. All my life, I was sure I
could be a citizen like any other.
That my Jewishness was
personal, that it didn't matter in
public, in professional, in social
life.

Freud: Surely you knew better after
Alba.

Herzl: Not really.

Freud: You wanted to assimilate to be,
so to speak, a goy among the
goyim, while somehow
remaining Jewish.

Herzl: (*Starts weeping*) Assimilate!

That's the right word, not only for me, for all the Jews of Western Europe. After that business in Alba when my fraternity brothers supported the anti-Semitic riots that followed Wagner's death and accepted the resignation that I offered as a protest—I didn't expect that—I could no longer believe in the possibility of just being an Austrian citizen. Nevertheless, I continue to believe assimilation was the solution—a solution I had long sought—to the Jewish problem.

Freud: First it was mass conversions, now universal assimilation?

Herzl: You don't understand. I desperately needed to solve the Jewish problem, for Jews and for myself.

Freud: Why you?

Herzl: (*Taken aback*) Why not me?

There's nothing I cannot do. The more I thought about it, the more certain I became that the answer was within me.

Freud: (*aside*) Such grandiosity! (*to himself*) I was just as sure that I had discovered the secret of the sphynx, the riddle of human personality when I discovered the centrality of the Oedipus complex. As an analyst, I should be unearthing and reflecting Herzl's innermost self, not seeing myself in him. There are similarities yes—but differences too—my discoveries are rooted in reality, not his. Still (*pause*) I too was obsessed with conversion. Conversion of a different kind, conversion of emotional conflict into somatic

symptoms. I wonder, was that connected with unconscious thoughts about the conversion of the Jews? That's nonsense. I'm losing myself in his craziness.

(Freud comes out of his self-absorption and addresses Herzl)

Freud: Please continue.

Herzl: When I arrived in Paris, I was dazzled by its beauty, its cultural richness, its vitality. As representative of the Neu Frei Presse I was treated like an ambassador. The honeymoon didn't last long. Julie picked one fight after another, spent money like a drunken sailor and tormented my mother. Worse still than my personal life was my disillusionment. I soon realized the Paris I loved was an illusion.

A hundred years after the Declaration of the Rights of Man, Paris—all of France—was seething with hatred of the Jews. "Judized France" sold over a million copies. All my dreams were shattered. (*screaming*) I couldn't stand it. Mass conversion was impossible; assimilation an illusion. The Liberals I put such faith in, turned out to be balless. My whole world collapsed. (*sobs*) (*shakes*) I just couldn't stand the pain, so I wandered the streets of Paris in a frenzy.

Freud: Take a deep breath—try to continue.

Herzl: All I could think of was death. Paula's; my dear friend Heinrich—killed himself. His suicide note ended with "I send you a kiss." He was the only person in the

world I trusted. I envied him his death. We had another friend at the University who went off to Brazil looking for a place for Jewish settlement. He died of yellow fever. Loss! Loss! Loss! Of people, of possibility, of hope. I couldn't stand it.

Freud: We have to stop.

Herzl: (*angrily*) You're inhumane! How can you send me away in this state?

Freud: Tomorrow.

(Lights go down, when they come back up, Herzl is back on Freud's couch)

Herzl: Then they arrested Dreyfus for treason and all of France exploded into anti-Semitic vitriol. Dreyfus, a Jew who was a

member of the French General Staff. It is a psychological impossibility that such a person could commit treason.

Freud: Completely impossible.

Herzl: None of that mattered. Only hatred did.

Freud: Civilization is the thinnest of veneers. Underneath is pure irrationality, murderous hatred, primeval lust.

Herzl: (*interrupting*) Shut up! I can't stand anymore.

Freud: You're just like all the rest—the wildest revolutionaries and most hide bound reactionaries want the same thing—consolation. I have none to give.

Herzl: You sure don't (*leaves*)

*(Herzl returns, doesn't lie
down on the couch; paces in
great agitation)*

*(Freud points at couch,
Herzl continues to pace and
shakes his head)*

Freud: Alright, we'll dispense with the
couch for today.

Herzl: Not only am I going mad, the
whole world is. Did you hear the
news?

Freud: News?

Herzl: Not only Paris, the capital of the
civilized world, turns out to be an
illusion. Vienna too. The emperor
ratified the election of Karl
Lueger as mayor.

Freud: It can't be. Lueger is the worst of
Jew haters and Franz Joseph has

refused to certify his election twice. The last time I smoked a cigar to celebrate.

Herzl: In my frenzy, wandering about Paris, I decided to challenge Lueger to a duel. In the morning it seemed foolish, so I never sent a challenge. But I still believe that a few challenges from Viennese Jews would raise the position of Jews throughout empire.

Freud: Duels?

Herzl: Yes, duels! (*pause*) You were right. You have no consolation to give. I no longer need it.

Freud: That's fortunate.

Herzl: I was frantic—totally out of my mind, drowning in the deepest

despair—not knowing where to turn, I went to the opera.

Freud: Opera?

Herzl: Yes and I found solace there listening to Wagner's Tannhauser.

Herzl: (*Back on couch*) Doctor Freud—I, a wordsmith, I who make my living putting thoughts into words, cannot find the words to tell you what Lueger, Dreyfus and all the rest did to me nor how Tannhauser transformed me. After listening to Wagner's Opera I knew that a Jewish State was the only answer. It wasn't a thought, or even a feeling, it emanated from my brain like an orgasm, and with it my depression flew out like the most powerful ejaculation. I was no longer paralyzed. I could act. And I will. Doctor, my

depression has lifted but my longing for Paula is unceasing. I so want her to share this moment with me.

Freud: (*becomes pensive*) Herr Herzl, I too have known loss. When my Sunday child Sophie died from Influenza, I too thought that I would die. Then I remembered walking on a glorious spring day in the mountains with a young poet who was deeply depressed. As I looked at the beauty surrounding us, I asked how he could not be elated. He replied, "Yes, it is glorious, but it will be swept away like everything else. All of this beauty cannot last, it too will die." I was taken aback until I realized, "Transience is scarcity value in time. The fact that this beauty shall perish makes it all the more precious.

Transience is not a cause for despair, it is an intensifier of joy"

Herzl: That's beautiful, but it doesn't help

(Lights down, when they come up, Herzl is back on the couch)

Herzl: I have no doubt now. The only solution is for the Jews to leave Europe and found a state in a territory I will obtain for them.

Freud: You have too many solutions. Assimilation, conversion, dueling and now immigration. No one is going to take you seriously.

Herzl: They will take me as seriously as I take myself. All action begins in a dream.

Freud: You're going to obtain a territory
to found a nation?

Freud (*Aside*): He's a madman, but his
madness inspires.

Herzl: Doctor, you know I'm right. The
only answer is for the Jews to
leave.

Freud: (*Pointing to the couch*) Let us
resume our work.

*(We hear the Overture to
Tannhauser—it gets
progressively louder)*

*(Herzl paces a bit more, then
lies down on couch)*

Freud: You say, listening to one of
Wagner's operas pulled you out
of near psychotic depression.

Herzl: (*Interrupting*) Only then did I realize that the Jews of Europe are doomed. And must have a homeland of their own. Not flight. An orderly, dignified resettlement in our home.

Freud: Why Wagner? As vicious an anti-Semite as Lueger, why not Mozart?

*(Tannhauser overture fades
—Figaro's aria "If you want
to dance Signor Contino,
you'll dance to my tune"
from The Marriage of Figaro
becomes audible first in
Italian, then in English)*

Freud: The count dancing to our tune.
That's a vision I find uplifting.

Herzl: It isn't possible

*(Freud hums the beginning
of the aria).*

Herzl: Did you know a Jew wrote the
Figaro libretto?

Freud: A converted one.

Herzl: I have my own way of making
the Counts of this world dance to
my tune. And I will. But its
Wagner, not Mozart who moves
my soul.

Freud: Herr Herzl, again I ask why
Wagner? Why Tannhauser?

Herzl: You are dense. As you probably
know, Tannhauser was a
medieval minstrel. I'm a modern
minstrel. Two entertainers, albeit
with wildly different styles.
Tannhauser is seduced,
bewitched by Venus; by the lure
of gentile culture—by the dream

that assimilation is possible.
Venus and assimilation. Two
whores that entrap men.

Freud: A farfetched identification.

Herzl: Tannhauser tries over and over to
escape Venus's clutches. I too—I
knew after Alba, but I didn't
allow myself to know—it was an
empty promise—the dream of
assimilation indeed a wanton
whore.

Freud: You needed an opera by an anti-
Semite to figure that out?

Herzl: I understood it in my head, not in
my heart. The seductive power,
erotic and deceptive, the struggle
to get free, the repulsion—all in
Wagner's score. Now I know not
with my head, but with my entire
body I had to flee the whore's
arms.

*(Overture to Tannhauser
continues in the background)*

Freud: Flee where?

Herzl: To pure love, for Tannhauser to
the chaste Elizabeth; for me to a
vision of Jewish salvation.

Freud: Salvation?

Herzl: By the time I left the theater, I
knew the Jews had to leave
Europe. Emigration, not
conversion! Emigration, not
assimilation—to a land of their
own. And I know just as surely
that it was my fate to lead them
there.

Freud: *(aside)* Now he's Moses.

*(Lights dim. When they go
up, Herzl is confronted by
Emperor Franz Joseph)*

Franz Joseph: Herr Herzl, why do you urge the Jews to desert me? I've been good to them. I kept Lueger out of office for as long as I could. I gave Jews the same rights that other people in my empire enjoyed. I even ennobled many Jews, making them Barons. Does none of that matter?

Herzl: Unfortunately, no. Like so many Jews, I was long grateful for the things you did for us although I suspect you don't really like Jews very much. You may think you can erase anti-Semitism in your empire, but you can't. You think it's just about economic inequality but it's not. Nationalism is tearing your empire apart and none of those nations want anything good for the Jews. So why don't you help us do what we need to do to

leave. Find us an autonomous territory of our own.

Franz Joseph: It's not only you Jews who have known pain, I too have known pain. My brother went off to Mexico and tried to make himself an Emperor only to have himself be executed. And one of my sons killed himself along with his lover.

Herzl: Perhaps you should consult Doctor Freud.

Franz Joseph: *(has no idea what Herzl is talking about, looks puzzled)*
Who? They should stay, certainly the Jews are better off in my empire than they would be in some godforsaken wasteland.

(Herzl shakes his head, Emperor turns his head as he is walking out)

Herzl: Perhaps so, but your Empire can never be our home land. Help us find an autonomous territory.

Franz Joseph: You're mad, you will never find a country to give you an autonomous territory. Certainly not in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Good Day, Herr Herzl.

(End of Scene, Lights go down)

Freud: *(speaking to the departing emperor)* I'm not so sure he's a mad man, I just don't know. Is he suffering from severe neuroses? Manic depressive psychosis? Dementia Praecox? Creative genius? All of the above? I just don't know. A vision of Jewish liberation fertilized by Wagner, it's beyond irony, it really does sound crazy. "The lunatic, the

lover, and the poet/are of
imagination all compact" He's an
enigma.

*(Lights go down, when they
come up Herzl walks into
Freud's consulting room)*

Freud: It's been a long time. I read about
you, your travels. Your obsession
—What do you call it? Jewish
nationalism? No, Zionism.

Herzl: You still haven't told me about
your work with Hans.

Freud: *(Looks puzzled)* Nothing else to
say?

Herzl: Later

Freud: I'll break my rule and tell you
more than I should, he's not
seeing me anymore. Our work
was brief. He's deeply troubled.

As I'm sure you know, being the son of a famous man is difficult and you are famous now. Herr Herzl; your fame is dangerous for you. Don't believe what the crowds say to you. Hans tries so hard to have an identity of his own. You must know he repudiates your Zionism. Unfortunately, he is so split that he doesn't know who he is.

Herzl: Having a crazy mother doesn't help.

Freud: Hans said little about his mother. His focus was always on you.

Herzl: Doctor, you've asked me several times, why do I stay with Julie, a wild woman. Of course, the children are the main reason, but the truth is, Julie is just as wild in bed as she is in life. I've never known such sexual ecstasy; I

can't give it up. All of her wildness, craziness, screaming, intensity—she takes it into our embraces. Passion like that, I've never shared with a woman. And she's seductive. Any time I've tried to leave for good, she pulled me back by my cock. And, of course, like I've told you over and over again, although you don't want to hear it, I stay for the children.

Freud: Tell me more about your sex life.

Herzl: There isn't much to tell.

Freud: A boulevardier like you went under the marriage canopy a virgin?

Herzl: Not Quite.

Freud: Yes?

Herzl: In our student days, Heinrich and
I sought out Vienna's sussa
maidala—sweet young things.
There's no lack of them

Freud: Sweet maidens? A strange
destination for prostitutes.

Herzl: Whatever you call them, they put
on a good show—"Oh it's so big;
I never felt like this; you're the
best"—all a show.

Freud: You're a man of the theater.

Herzl: Not that I didn't enjoy it, at least
until Heinrich and I got the clap.
Julie's different; her passion is
real. And as much as she hates
me as a person, she loves me as a
lover.

Freud: Sounds confusing for both of
you—love, hate, they're

practically the same thing for the same person.

Herzl: I didn't really think about it

Freud: You tell me that Heinrich, with exception to Paula, was the only person in the world you felt close to—the only person you trusted. Now you tell me you “hunted in pairs” as they say.

Herzl: We did.

Freud: Anything between you?

Herzl: Sexually?

(Freud nods)

Herzl: Not on my part. I think he had such feelings for me. Nothing came of it...I did get excited watching him do one of our whores...I did think about it a

few times but when I fantasized actually doing anything physically, it disgusted me.

Freud: Perhaps your disgust was a defense against desire.

Herzl: Damn you! You never give up. If anything turned me on besides my wife, it was adolescent girls. They really excite me.

Freud: Heirs and successors of the adolescent Paula.

Herzl: (*angrily*) You're nothing but a dirty old man.

Freud: Take a deep breath. Don't reject what I'm about to say before it has a chance to sink in.

Herzl: I never did anything to my sister. (*pause*) Oh some kid stuff when we were little.

Freud: No you never touched her, but you wanted to and when she died you felt your arousal and desire had killed her. Your guilt—never quite conscious yet never far from consciousness prevented you from completing the mourning work that would have allowed you to completely enjoy your successes.

Herzl: Bullshit. (*silence, then weeps*) Oh God, it's true.

Freud: We have to stop

Herzl: (*stops by the door, angrily*) How dare you judge me.

Freud: Judge?

Herzl: By what right. You have long been fascinated by your Berlin friend Fleiss. I'm sure there was more there than there ever was

between me and Heinrich. When I told you I knew I had founded the State of Israel with the first Zionist congress before 150 people, you accused me of grandiosity. Whose grandiosity? You call your meetings with Fleiss congresses, just the two of you. I won't comment on the sexual connotations of Zionist congress. And all of Vienna gossips about your traveling alone with your sister-in-law. So don't suggest to me that I suffer from sexual guilt.

Freud: You protest too much. The only thing I heard was how our last session really struck home.

Herzl: (*shaken*) (*sobs*) I don't care about the homosexual stuff, that's you not me—Paula is another matter. I can't get what you said about us out of my head.

Freud: That's good. Painful, yet helpful

Herzl: I've always been an extremely private person except for Paula and Heinrich there was no one I could open my heart to. Julie, even if she tried, would never understand we're too different. And now with my public position, I can't share my pain, my secrets, my shame, my hope and my aspirations with anyone. I am utterly alone.

Freud: I too must be secretive. If I share my innermost thoughts and feelings I could destroy the fledgling psychoanalytic movement just as you might damage Zionism. (*silence*) You are no longer alone.

Herzl: Neither are you.

*(Consulting room lights
fade; stage right lights go
on; Herzl is back on the
couch)*

Herzl: Doctor, last night Julie attacked me as soon as I walked through the door screaming, “You think you stay with me for my body, are you sure it isn’t for my money. You’re spending down my dowry promoting your asinine Zionism. As large as my dowry was, you’re going to leave nothing. Bastard. Going to your lawyer, making sure I have no control over our children should you die – monstrous cruelty.” *(Pause)* Spend her dowry down? When we went to Paris, she insisted on living in the most expensive neighborhood in a palatial apartment. Taking four servants with her – knowing damn well I couldn’t afford any

of it on a journalist's salary. Don't accuse me of spending down Julie's dowry. Though it's true that I have diverted some of it to Zionist purposes. When I opposed her insane spending, she screamed. She got in my face, tried to attack me. If my mother hadn't grabbed my hands, I might have slapped her silly. (*Herzl pauses, becomes thoughtful*)

(*Herzl resumes speaking*) Last night she finally stopped screaming and wept for a long time then said, "Your mother, always your mother. Never me. If I hadn't given in and let your mother live with us, our marriage would have stood a chance." Doctor, that isn't true, yet at that moment, under my anger, I felt sorry for her.

(Weeps; light fades)

Freud: Wealth rarely brings happiness; money isn't a childhood wish. It never brought your wife happiness. Herr Herzl don't be offended. I can't but wonder if you did marry your wife for her money.

Herzl: No! It's true, it does allow me to pursue my Zionist dream. I make no apology for that. Doctor, you don't know how irrational Julie can be. That's why I made sure she would never have control over our children's' lives. It's not cruel, it had to be done.

Freud: Perhaps.

*(Lights dim, then go up as
Herzl walks in and lies down
on couch)*

Freud: Herr Herzl we need to return to your loses. We haven't finished with your mourning work.

Herzl: Mourning work? I feel tortured, sob, yearn. What else do you want?

Freud: I want nothing. The need to do the mourning work is inexorable. Let me explain. You need to bring to mind each and every memory of those you have lost. If you let yourself you will feel anger, even rage at Paula for having left you. At the same time, feel deep, deep sorrow. You haven't felt your anger, nor your sorrow in a sustained and deep way.

Herzl: Fuck you.

(Stage right goes dark, stage left is illuminated as

Prologue enters)

Prologue: Not very good technique Sigmund. First you didn't pick up on Theodore's primal trauma—losing his sister. Now lecturing him instead of listening. I could make a case for you as a profound thinker—as a therapist? Not so much. I'd say so, so—although I concede you had to invent it as you went along.
(*exits*)

(Stage left goes dark)

Freud: (*Ignores Herzl's outburst*) Don't fight against your sorrow. Letting yourself feel sorrow will help to cure your depression.

Herzl: A great theory doctor

Freud: Your obsession with Zionism is a defense. You can't feel sorrow

with the intensity you need to, at least not for very long, with your energy being elsewhere.

Herzl: Fuck you. Theories, theories, theories. You're as feeling as a pile of dung

Freud: (*annoyed*) You don't love people; you love an idea. It's safer. (*Grows pensive*) I am being a little harsh. I'm harder on people I value. Theodore, I'm convinced that we must love or grow ill. As you know all too well, to love is to put yourself at risk.

Herzl: Herr doctor, you're the one that lives in your head. Theories, theories, theories. In all of our work together, you've never expressed any empathy for me.

Freud: That's not true.

Herzl: That brings to mind Ravachol, the murderous anarchist. The one the liberals did not have the guts to execute. He spoke of "the voluptuousness of an idea." I never forgot that. My passion for Zionism has to have that kind of sexual energy. And it does, it is really voluptuous.

*(We hear more of the
Tannenbaum overture)*

Freud: I don't deny it, what you are talking about we call sublimation. Nevertheless, your Zionism remains a defense. Anything of significance in our lives has multiple meanings, but we must stop.

Herzl: I leave to meet the Kaiser in Palestine; the Sultan in Istanbul.

Freud: When you return, tell me about your encounter with Kaiser Wilhelm. I know you are going on a journey of profound significance to you and your energy of necessity will be focused on your tasks. But Herr Herzl, you will have moments of sorrow. Don't fight them. Sink into them. Let yourself feel them.

Herzl: They come of their own, you're on the wrong track doctor. It's not that I avoid sorrow, I have too much of it. (*Herzl walks out*)

(Lights down go, then come up. Herzl walks into consulting room looking much different than he did in his last session. He is now confident and energetic.)

Freud: Herr Herzl, I'm so glad to see you. Let's have a coffee and an

apple strudel before we begin. I never thought that the Kaiser would actually see you. Herr Herzl, I don't know why I break all my rules with you. I talk too much about myself, I serve you coffee, I give you advice rather than helping you know yourself. I see why you have such power over men. It's a kind of magnetism. When we resume our work, I will remain neutral. It's better for the therapy.

(Maid brings in strudel and coffee)

Herzl: Coffee and strudel—excellent strudel at that. As much as I want it, I puzzle over why you make me an exception to your analytic rules. Perhaps because the papers write so much about me.

Freud: Don't make too much about it. I served the rat man a whole meal.

Herzl: The rat man?

Freud: (*becoming concerned that he has become too friendly. Points to couch*) Let's begin.

Herzl: The rat man?

Freud: You needn't be concerned. He was a patient of mine that had an obsession about rats eating into his anus. Let's talk about you.

Herzl: Rats into his anus?

Freud: That doesn't concern you

Herzl: You mentioned him

Freud: (*Ignoring Herzl's last remark*)
And Kaiser Wilhelm?

Herzl: We met in a desert outside Jerusalem, his majesty on horseback with his entire entourage. He was cordial, reserved, listened. Acted respectfully towards me but said very little. Then rode off. I used all my charm, I don't suffer false modesty, to convince him that a Jewish State, or at least an autonomous region, would benefit not only the Jews, but Germany and the rest of Europe, I asked him for his support convincing the Ottoman Sultan that the Jews could and would save his empire from financial collapse if he gave us enough land to establish an autonomous Jewish region. It wouldn't have to be in Palestine. We would even take a barren, sparsely populated area and remain loyal supporters of his realm. Kaiser Wilhelm seemed interested—I had hope, I

still have hope, but he didn't commit himself. The only thing the emperor said was the land was so dry. Then rode off. Our brief meeting back here, didn't go well.

Freud: Not necessarily Palestine?

Herzl: You haven't been there, despite what the Zealots say, it's the most godforsaken place I've ever seen. As the Kaiser said, the countryside is rock and sand. Sparsely populated by a few Bedouin. Jerusalem is crumbling, filthy, odiferous, inhabited by fanatics. They gyrate around a few blocks of granite that survive from Herod's time. They offend the natives with their worship of their Wall. I can't stand them.

Freud: Forget Jerusalem. Not that the Christians or the Muslims would

ever let the Jews control their "holy places." About as holy as the crumbling stone the fanatical Jews worship.

Herzl: You're right, there are plenty of other places that are better suited to be a Jewish homeland. Unhappily, the masses won't think of it.

Freud: The masses. Jewish, Christian, Muslim—the same ignorance, unreasonableness, blindness—just in different costumes.

Herzl: (*Is taken aback by Freud's comments on the masses, regains his composure*) Why do you never call me Doctor Herzl like the rest of the world? I'm a Doctor of Law you know?

Freud: My apologies, doctor. I just don't think of non-medical

professionals as doctors. Although of course they are. And I myself came close to going into law instead of medical school. So, you are right and wrong—after all of these months you bring it up just as we are discussing your disillusionment with the Holy Land. Don't you think Doctor that its odd that you always change the subject just when we come close to the crux of the matter?

Herzl: As the Kaiser said, Palestine could be a splendid land if only it had water. Give it to us and there will be pools and fountains.

Freud: Perhaps. Still, won't it be better to look elsewhere for your homeland?

Herzl: I can't. The masses won't even consider it. The Kikes with their

vulgarity, their money grasping,
their ridiculous rigidity.
Especially the Eastern ones. The
Russian Jews in particular give
the anti-Semites justification for
their hatred.

Freud: And the Western anti-Semites?
Doctor Herzl, at best, you're a
snob. More likely, an anti-Semite
yourself. You identify with your
enemies and repeat their slanders.
I concede Eastern European Jews
are frequently obnoxious.

(Prologue appears on stage)

Prologue: Two exceptional Jews tinged
with anti-Semitism. Too ironic
even for me. *(He fades)*

Herzl: It's difficult not to hate when so
much hatred is directed at you.
Hate the haters, even hate your
own. *(Pause)* In spite of their

entrenched medievalism, I will
break down their walls and lead
them to freedom.

*(Lights dim, when they come
up, Herzl walks in)*

Herzl: I'm leaving again for
Constantinople, then St
Petersburg.

Freud: I've been thinking about our
session yesterday. You certainly
don't love Judaism, never
mention it to me. Yet you say you
love the Jews. Can you love the
Jews, at least some of them,
without loving Judaism?

Herzl: You do. *(pauses)*

Freud: Herr Doctor, I saw your play,
The New Ghetto, last night. It's
not like your frosty comedies I
used to enjoy. It really moved

me. I couldn't sleep all night.
Kept thinking one can't provide a
country of one's own to one's
children; one must educate them
in such a way that they will be
able to cross frontiers.

Herzl: Doctor Freud, why don't you say
"I" instead of "one?" My play
clearly shook your assimilationist
soul.

Freud: Your new ghetto has no walls.
Just scorn.

Herzl: I fear the walls will be back.
Anti-Semitism is an incurable
psychosis.

*(Stage goes dark, when it
comes up Herzl is back on
the couch, he is excited)*

Herzl: You asked me to think more
deeply about my childhood. I

have.

Freud: And?

Herzl: I had an insight. My mother's love and understanding were and are so powerful, so wonderful, so unconditional that Julie never had a chance. If I'm honest with myself, I have to admit that no woman would have. We shared so much—the German classics – Schiller, Goethe Lessing—poetry—music. She had absolute confidence in me. Was absolutely sure I would succeed at anything I chose. Supported my aspiration as a writer from the moment I picked up a pen. My father too, although he was often absent on business.

Freud: A mother's love for her son is the only unambivalent relationship in life. Such belief in

the success of a child often gives
that child the belief in themselves
that makes it a reality.

Prologue/Epilogue: That's your wish-
fantasy, I'm told your mother is
extremely self-involved.

Herzl: Julie's love—if that's what it is—
is certainly ambivalent. She has
little interest in literature, in my
writing, and even less in
Zionism. In the beginning I was
dazzled by her. Her beauty, her
exquisite taste, her clothes, her
glamorous world. I thought I
loved her. More than loved her.
Not realizing that we were a
mismatch that never belonged
together. I couldn't meet her
needs nor she mine.

Freud: From what you say, any woman
would have been a mismatch.

Who could give you the
adoration your mother did?

*(Lights fade, when they go
back up Herzl is on the
couch)*

Herzl: I had a disturbing dream.

Freud: I've wondered why you never
shared a dream. Tell me this one.

Herzl: I'm going up the steps of the
Opera House. There is a huge
crowd. I push past them and go
onto the stage. Luger is there
with a saber and a second. He
asks, "Where's your second?" I
say, "I don't need one." We face
off and his first thrust goes home.
As my blood spurts out I know I
am dying. I wake up as the
packed audience greets Luger
with a standing ovation.

Freud: Your thoughts about the dream?

Herzl: That I can never defeat Luger and all he represents. (shouts) I don't believe that for a moment.

Freud: Your dream says otherwise. And your other thoughts?

Herzl: This is embarrassing. I thought that my death would stir the masses and they would embrace Zionism and leave for the holy land.

Freud: What embarrasses you?

Herzl: It's too Christian. My sacrificial death leads to redemption. Let Christ die to save souls. I want to live for Zion.

Freud: Herr Herzl your public posture is one of supreme self-confidence. Your dream expresses the self-

doubt and vulnerability you so strenuously deny. We need to return to it when you come back from St. Petersburg.

(Lights Fade)

Herzl: What a trip. The Sultan received me with every honor. I spoke to the Vizer daily, and twice with the Sultan. His court is considering giving us a territory. An autonomous region within his Empire, in or near Palestine.

Freud: Considering?

Herzl: It will happen.

Freud: He will use the Jewish bankers and give you nothing.

Herzl: You're the most negative person I've ever met. Why do I come

here? Then I saw Plehve, the Russian interior minister.

Freud: (*Drops his cigar and jumps out of his seat*) You did what? Met with a mass murderer whose secret police instigated the massacre at Kishinev? And who knows how many more programs.

Herzl: I would meet with the devil if it would advance our cause.

Freud: He is the devil.

Herzl: He received me with exquisite courtesy. We have a common goal, getting the Jews out of Russia. He with the stick, me with the carrot. Plehve is using his influence to get the Ottomans to stop considering and to act.

Freud: (*Explodes*) Get out of here!

*(Lights dim, when lights
come up Herzl is walking
into Freud's consulting
room)*

Freud: I didn't expect you to come back

Herzl: I'm smarter than you. Don't you
know I despise Plehve as much
as you? The difference is, I know
how to use him.

Freud: Lay on the couch please

(Herzl complies)

Herzl: I just returned from the Zionist
council in Basel. In Basel I
founded the Jewish State. At my
direction, the delegates wore
formal clothes, met in the most
impressive hall in town, designed
a flag and adopted an anthem. I
ordered the Orchestra to open the

meeting by playing the overture to Tannhauser.

(Pause)

Freud: Wagner again? I've thought about your Tannhauser allegory. Wagner's opera is about seduction and being trapped by the seductiveness, Venus. Then, after many struggles being freed by his love of the pure Elizabeth. You didn't know who your Elizabeth would be, in a sense that didn't matter. You were free. You escaped your paralysis, your inertia, and your depression. You could pursue a pure love. That much I understand. How Elizabeth got to be Zionism, I don't understand.

Herzl: Ingenious doctor. Wagner as midwife to Zionism. Herr Doctor,

I didn't need to know how? It simply was and is.

*(Lights dim, come up in
Freud's consulting room with
Herzl on the couch)*

Herzl: All is not well in my movement,
the masses rebel, resent my
leadership. Accuse me of leading
a movement with no heart, only
strategy.

Freud: Sounds like the critics'
objections to your plays.

Herzl: The Cultural Zionists despise me.
Ahad Ha Am threatens to split
the movement.

Freud: Dissenters, I know all about
them—Jung, Adler, Stekel. Pay
no attention to the content; it's all
about slaying the father.

*(Lights go down, when they
come up, Herzl is standing
facing a short man in a worn
business suit on stage right.)*

Ahad Ha Am: Your hypothetical State isn't Jewish, you care nothing for 2,000 years of Jewish experience, Jewish ritual, Jewish belief, Jewish soul. All you care about is the masses adoring you.

Herzl: Ahad Ha Am, Man of the People. Your name used to be Asher Ginsberg. You're no more a man of the people than I am. You want the masses to start speaking Hebrew. Are you out of your mind? If only we embrace our own culture, the goyim will love us, Asher—sorry, Ahad—that's wilder than anything I ever suggested.

Ahad Ha Am: It isn't about the goyim loving us, that will never be. It's about us loving ourselves.

Herzl: If we listen to you, there won't be any Jews to love themselves. The answer has to be political.

Ahad Ha Am: I can't stay in a movement that has ceased to be Jewish in a meaningful way. Your book, The Jewish State, lacks passion. It is flat, lacking in Jewish content and not in the least realistic. I'm afraid it is pure fantasy, it's not going to persuade anyone.

Herzl: I wrote it in a state of ecstasy, in the wild nights after my conversion at the Paris Opera to Zionism. It is a why and how book—not a rabbleroxing speech. And you are wrong, plain

wrong, it is selling very well.
And influencing many people.

Ahad Ha Am: I don't believe it

Herzl: I won't engage in the breast-beating of a ghetto Jew. We are moving into a world that you just don't understand.

Ahad Ha Am: All you're doing is stirring up Arab resentment, it will never work.

Herzl: Under my leadership it will. I hear you're going to London to peddle tea. A business opportunity and that's the end of your cultural Zionism

Ahad Ha Am: (*angrily*) Selling tea is better than playing the Messiah. (*to Herzl*) You have a swelled head, claim too much. You didn't invent Zionism. Moses Hess said

as much a generation ago in his
"Rome and Jerusalem."

Herzl: Never heard of him

Ahad Ha Am: George Elliot's novel,
Daniel Derona, has a Zionist
protagonist.

Herzl: Only the goyim read it; it has no
impact on Jews. All your
followers do is sit around and
talk of Jewish misery—
occasionally of Jewish
achievement—nothing political.
We don't need that. Only my
political Zionism can bring us
freedom.

*(Lights go out, when they
come up, we are back in
Freud's consulting room)*

Herzl: We need unity and that won't
come from the masses speaking

Hebrew.

Freud: (*puzzled*) You don't look well.

Herzl: I'm aptly named for my heart,
which is too little. It's failing me.
I go for rest cures and come back
more exhausted. I can't die until I
know Zion lives. I know I will
die young, and I am terrified.

Freud: We need to talk about your
terror.

Herzl: What else can I say. The thought
of ceasing to be is more than I
can bear.

Freud: You went to Gymnasium, you
must have read Lucretius.

Herzl: I'm telling you I'm terrified and
your response is to ask me about
my knowledge of the classics. I
don't know why I come here.

Freud: He thought that death was no possible experience so nothing to be feared.

Herzl: And they say he died a mad man. Herr Doctor, that doesn't help at all. As you say, you're terrible at the consolation game.

Freud: We are assailed by the raging forces of the external world, cannot live without the anxiety within that serves as a warning to danger, and most painful of all, we are subject to attack by our fellow men. The last seems gratuitous, yet no less inevitable than the rest.

Herzl: More consolation? Sigmund, we're both dying. You of cancer and me of a failing heart. And you want to talk philosophy. Don't you share my terror?

Freud: No. I think I will welcome death.

Herzl: I don't believe you.

Freud: If we can't live forever, we can create something that does and Dore we have. My psychoanalysis and you the Jewish State. Though we must die, what we love need not. That's as much consolation as I have to offer.

Herzl: My passion for Zion is infinite but it's still not me. It's me Dore Herzl that dreads dying.

Freud: That's all I have to offer.

(Lights go down, when they come back up Herzl is standing in front of Freud's desk. He is excited)

Herzl: No couch today. I need to see you; need you to see me.

Freud: If you must.

Herzl: Herr doctor, you have given the goyim the most magnificent fuck you I can imagine.

Freud: Fuck you?

Herzl: Yes, fuck you. Your new book “Moses and Monotheism” maintains that Moses was a goy, an Egyptian.

Freud: And that’s a fuck you to the goyim? My fellow Jews certainly don’t think so, they rage at me for depriving them of their greatest hero. Their ego ideal. And at a time when my people are in the gravest danger.

Herzl: Maybe that too, even an act of supplication to appease their hatred. But its primary import is its assertion that the truth has transcendent value. In the face of the most mad chauvinism, the most debased, fanatical nationalism the most atavistic tribalism a Jew asserts that even at the cost of depriving his people of their idealized founder, the truth must prevail. Your book is indeed a magnificent fuck you.

Freud: You have no idea how meaningful your words are. *(weeps)* I have been struggling with guilt ever since I sent off the proofs.

(Lights dim, when lights come up Herzl is once again on Freud's couch. He seems recovered, buoyant, filled with energy)

Herzl: The English have offered Uganda for a national home. There are some difficulties, they can be overcome. This won't be like the Kaiser or the Sultan, the English mean what they say. The real barrier is the Jews. The masses won't go unless they can have a land that they can't have, and the wealthy Jews are even worse. They won't consider a state outside of Palestine. I will persuade them if it kills me.

(Stage left goes dark, stage right is illuminated, and Prologue enters)

Prologue: It did. Herzl never had a chance to work through his terror of death with Freud. Why don't we eavesdrop on them in "the world to come" a world neither believed in.

*(Prologue exits, stage left is
again illuminated)*

Herzl: I grew weaker and weaker. The weaker I became, the harder I worked – writing, organizing, speaking, traveling, trying to persuade Jews and Gentile rulers of the wisdom of the Zionist cause. Then I couldn't do it anymore.

Freud: I too worked almost to the end.

Herzl: Why did we do it? The most self-centered desperation and the most intense devotion co-existed in me, and I think in you. How was that possible?

Freud: The rules of logic have little to do with our inner lives. Pride, stubbornness, ambition, denial, fear belief in the nobility of a cause, and at moments love

constitute the strange
amalgamation that is us.

Herzl: Sigmund you surprise me – no
mention of hatred or rage.

Freud: I stand corrected. I fear I am
becoming sentimental in death.

Herzl: I wouldn't worry about that.

Freud: As low an opinion as I had of
humanity, I never expected the
present horrors.

Herzl: I knew how bad things were yet
didn't quite believe it.

Freud: I remember saying after a Nazi
book burning, now they burn my
books, in the Middle Ages, they
would have burned me. If I
hadn't written a book with the
U.S. Ambassador to France, who
obtained visas for me and my

family, we all would have perished in Nazi ovens. With his intervention, I was able to spend my last years in the England I long admired. My four sisters; I couldn't get visas for them—were murdered. Four helpless, harmless women in their eighties murdered.

Herzl: My daughter Paula, named for my beloved sister, became addicted, was devastated by mental illness, and died in 1930. Heart attack or by her own hand? I'll never know. Hans never found himself, your analysis did little. Unstable, tormented by a split self, he shot himself in the head the day of his sister's funeral. Julie and I reconciled at the end, a light in the endless darkness. I finally backed her in the 10,000th quarrel with my mother. I can't say I loved her,

even at the end. Yet my anger melted and I was able to treat her kindly, even warmly. She died horribly of Ovarian cancer three years after I.

Freud: Herr Doctor Herzl so much suffering. To whom can we turn to register a complaint?

Herzl: My youngest Trudy suffered the family curse, depression—even periods of madness. Somehow, she married and had a son—Steven Theodore—who they sent to England to escape the persecution. Trudy and her husband were murdered in Theresienstadt. When Steven, by then a British official in Washington, heard the fate of his parents, he jumped off a bridge into the Potomac and died.

Freud: Worse, so much worse, than even I, the unrelenting realist could have imagined.

(Lights fade, Prologue reappears to sounds of Hativah, the Israeli National Anthem—are at first dim, then gradually increasing into a crescendo.)

Postlogue: Foreseeing the destruction of the European Jews forty years later; Herzl would have accepted the English proposition, unfortunately this was one time he could not bring his followers on board. He had no sentimental attachment to "the land of his fathers." On his one visit there, he was appalled by the filth, poverty, and fanaticism he found. His followers felt otherwise and a temporary refuge that might have saved millions of Jews was never

pursued. His masterpiece The Jewish State is a blueprint for creating it. His utopian novel, New Old State, details the nature of that state. There is very little explicitly Jewish about it. Rather, it is a vision of a liberal paradise.

(Pause—volume of Hativah increases)

How a middle-class journalist was able to gain entrance into the highest circles of government is a mystery. As many testified, his charisma was dazzling, its source remains a mystery. Creativity cannot be explained, and Herzl the Playwright created his most audacious character, Theodore the Zionist out of whole cloth.

(Pause)

Yet somehow for all the pain, Theodore's life was a triumph.

He saw what others didn't want to see and envisioned a solution. Herzl didn't create the State of Israel alone; it took the political genius of Ben Gurion, the diplomatic genius of Aba Eben and the military genius Moshe Dylan, along with the sacrifice of tens of thousands. Nevertheless, there never would have been an Israel without Theodore Herzl.

(Sounds of Hativah reach a crescendo; then fade away)

(Curtain)

About the Author

Dr. Levin has been kissed by a wolf, petted a jaguar, climbed Kilimanjaro, plunged into a crevasse on Alaska's Mount Denali, and looked down on Everest's base camp from 18000 foot Kala Pitar, all while writing seventeen books, carrying a heavy caseload of psychotherapy patients in Manhattan and Long Island and teaching at the New School for Social Research in New York's Greenwich Village. His teaching at the New School has been wide ranging. He directed and taught in a program to train addiction counselors for over 25 years, as well as teaching "cross-over" philosophy-psychology courses, the first of which was "Reason and Passion in Western Thought:

Plato, Spinoza, and Freud,” followed by “Anxiety and the Nature of Reality,” “Theories of the Self,” and “Our Relationship to the Wild.” He went on to teach a variety of other innovative courses, which he designed, and has taught more standard curricula at St. Joseph’s, Marymount Manhattan, and Suffolk County Community Colleges. He has also taught and supervised at psychoanalytic institutes and has been a guest lecturer at such diverse venues as the Pennsylvania Society of Clinical Social Workers, Boston College School of Social Work, and Harvard University’s Continuing Education Addiction Program.

Dr. Levin has been featured on a range of media, including over a hundred radio shows, and on television on Chris Matthews’

“Hardball,” NBC’s “Dateline,” and Danish, Spanish and German TV.

Dr. Levin was educated at the University of Pennsylvania, McGill University, and New York University, from which he received his Ph.D. He is also a Fellow of the American Institute of Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis, where he received his psychoanalytic training.

His clinical practice has also been wide ranging. He treats adults, older adolescents, and couples. In over thirty years of practice, there is little in the scope of human misery and psychopathology that has not been presented to Dr. Levin by people looking for relief. Priding himself on his ability to relate to all kinds and conditions of men and

women, he has usually been able to offer meaningful assistance.

Although primarily about addictions (including sexual addiction) and their treatment, Dr. Levin's writings have also covered a wide range of other topics, including narcissism, childlessness and chronic depression, as well as book reviews and travel articles. They include textbooks, professional works, and popular expositions. In all these genres, Dr. Levin strives for clarity and accessibility. Dr. Levin's work has been translated into Italian, Greek, Farsi and Arabic.

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North Fork Reform Synagogue
Presents

June 12, 2022

A Dramatic Reading
of
**HERZL'S
ANALYSIS**

Written by Jerry Levin



Two geniuses live on the same Vienna street - one founded psychoanalysis; the other set the stage for the creation of the State of Israel. In Jerry Levin's imaginative re-creation of the relationship between Sigmund Freud and Theodore Herzl, Herzl becomes Freud's patient. Or is it the other way around? Does Herzl cure Freud? It's for you to decide. Either way sparks fly as each is transformed in a setting of cataclysmic events - the rise of virulent nationalism and resurgent antisemitism as Europe rushes toward the abyss. The personal and the political, the emotional and the historical find expression in this clash of giants.

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