

**SOCIALLY ENGINEERING THE “NEW” JEW**  
**From Feminine Stereotypes to Heroic Masculinity:**

**Jews, gays and identity**

By

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## ABSTRACT

The solutions employed by the Jewish and gay communities to combat persecution are similar and for the purpose of this study, are best exemplified by comparing the strategies envisioned by Max Nordau, co-founder of the World Zionist Organization, who sought to recreate the gender-feminized, Jewish male into a “muscle Jew” and root him in his own homeland with those of Magnus Hirschfeld, founder of the first gay rights organization, the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* (Scientific Humanitarian Committee), who sought to remain in his country of birth and fight for his right to be different; the antithesis of assimilation.

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# 1. Introduction

*"Is our hidden God really a God men have constructed in their own image,  
a God who maintains his power by not revealing himself,  
as men maintain their power . . . ?"*

*A Mensch Among Men: Explorations in Jewish Masculinity*  
-Harry Brod

"*Faggot* and *homo* were words reserved for the boys who were hounded for being passive and unathletic."<sup>1</sup> Throughout the centuries, similar accusations have been leveled against Jewish males, even by Jews themselves, namely, Max Nordau in *Degeneration*, Philip Roth in *Portnoy's Complaint*, just to mention a few. The emasculation of the male, of the "other", is a crucial component in the development of both antisemitism and homophobia and has inextricably linked the destinies of both Jews and gays. This paper endeavors to trace and understand this parallel development.

The solutions employed by both groups to combat persecution have been similar and for the purpose of this study, are best exemplified by comparing the strategies envisioned by Max Nordau who sought to recreate the gender-feminized, Jewish male into a "muscle Jew" and root him in his own homeland with those of Magnus Hirschfeld, who sought to remain in his country of birth and fight for his right to be different; the antithesis of assimilation.

It is important to note that these two strategies, which will be referred to as "Zionism" and "gay (homosexual) rights activism", were selected to be compared and contrasted in this study from a truly broad spectrum of choices that were available to both

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<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Steven Greenberg, *Wrestling with God & Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition*, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 244-245.

communities. These two particular strategies are of particular interest in that, by the time we reach the latter part of the Interwar Period in Germany, the Nazis are already calling for the castration of homosexuals, “that Jewish pestilence.”<sup>2</sup> Both groups had been “...scarred with the stigma of the other and physical persecution was following the increase in intolerance.”<sup>3</sup> Jews and gays became destined to share a similar fate in Nazi Germany and the Holocaust.

Of course, there were major differences between both groups, Jews could reproduce themselves, they had developed a long standing, coherent community and also had a “diaspora” therefore, a physical place to return to and call “home”, a Jewish nation. Not so with gays. There is no such thing as a physical “gay, homosexual or queer nation.” For many, “home” was a conscious decision to either remain invisible or to fight for the right to be “different” in the anonymity of the urban setting. In many ways, this anonymous urbanity was used by Jews to help protect themselves, throughout the centuries, from Judeophobia, *Judenhaß*, and antisemitism. Hirschfeld risked struggling for the right to be “different,” to be homosexual and a Jew and to demand that he be treated as an equal, first class citizen of Germany.

These two strategies are presented in the format of a comparative case study of Max Nordau who, in 1897, co-founded the World Zionist Organization and Magnus Hirschfeld, an early gay rights activist who, in that same year, founded the first gay rights organization, the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* (Scientific Humanitarian Committee).

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<sup>2</sup> George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 158.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Halsall, *The Experience of Homosexuality in the Middle Ages*, Paper written by Paul Halsall as a graduate student, published only on line at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/gaymidages.html>.

Magnus Hirschfeld was a gay, German-Jewish physician and sex researcher who was also an outspoken advocate for early, gay emancipation and women's rights in Germany, a tireless opponent of Paragraph 175<sup>4</sup>, and also the founder of the *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft* (The Institute for Sexual Research) in Berlin which was destroyed by the Nazis in 1938.

Max Nordau was an assimilated Hungarian, identifying himself culturally as German who eventually co-founded the World Zionist Organization with Theodore Herzl and served as vice President and President of various World Zionist Congresses. As a social critic, he wrote a number of controversial books, the most often remembered and cited today is *Degeneration*.

These two pioneers have become the prime focus of this study for they both established cutting-edge organizations to spearhead their causes to combat the emaculation of Jews and gays, their negative sexual identities and the stigma of being the “other” which emerged as pivotal issues in the latter part of the nineteenth century, couched in political and racial antisemitism and homophobia.

At this point, I would like to clarify the choice of terms used when referring to gay men in this study. Unfortunately, a discussion about negative sexual identity, homophobia and antisemitism as it relates to the broader LGBTQ or GLBTQ community, namely, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender and queers goes far beyond the scope of this paper. The word “gay” seems to have been adopted, for the first time in academia, by James Brundage in *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*<sup>5</sup> who yielded to

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 175 was a provision of the German Criminal Code from May 15, 1871 to March 10, 1994. It made homosexual acts between males a crime.

<sup>5</sup> James Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

John Boswell's plea for its use in *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*<sup>6</sup>. In this paper, "gay" will only be used in reference to modern self-identified gay people, and "homosexual" for other periods. "Boswell is right to see that the word 'homosexual' has its origins in pathology, but he is overly dogmatic: it is the most neutral word available."<sup>7</sup> The term "queer" will be used when referring to "Queer theory" or as a direct citation.

There is also the issue of either capitalizing the "g" in gay or not. This comes in response to the perplexing question of whether "gay" is a proper noun or not. For the purposes of this paper, the uncapitalized "g" will be used when referring to "gay".

Finally, when referring to the racially-based term for the hatred of Jews, "antisemitism", it will be spelled as "antisemitism" and not "anti-Semitism" unless directly quoting from an original source. The reason is that "semitic" refers to language group and not a race, as propagated by German Nazis.

This study begins with a discussion of stereotypes and the "other." Merton (1968), Fiske (1998), and Moore (2001) agree that a fundamental component in the formation of one's identity is in opposition to the "other" or the negative mirror. Moore (2001) further theorizes that society defines itself via social exclusion and that history can simply be defined as a struggle between "us" and "them." Allport (1954) and Tajfel (1978) developed the theory that stereotypes are cognitive shortcuts. Leyens, Yzerbyt, et al. (1994) contend that stereotypes are not only a natural result of the categorization process but are necessary to communicate too much conceptual diversity within a group which can result in fragmentation.

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<sup>6</sup> John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 41-46.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Halsall, *The Experience of Homosexuality in the Middle Ages*, Paper written by Paul Halsall as a graduate student, published only on line at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/gaymidages.html>.

Connell (1995) and Haynes (2002) contend that there is a burgeoning interest in the scholarly study of masculinity, the ways in which masculinity is socially constructed, multiple masculinities and the dynamics between them. Connell (1995) believes that in both queer theory and feminist theory masculinity has become central in the development of their disciplines and fundamentally linked to power, organized for domination, and resistant to change because of power relations.

The role masculinity plays in Judaism differs from the dominant culture. Brod (1988), is cited for he explores the complex relationship Jewish men have with their masculinity. He brings up the issue that traditional Jewish men strive to be a “*mensch*”, a person with an uprighteous character, which is gender-neutral in the dominant society and seems to reflect the ambiguities of Jewish male identity.

Trachtenberg (1983) and Gillman (1991) believe that Jew-hatred has been created from a representation of reality and not from reality itself. This mythic Jew has been stigmatized as being diabolic. In addition, Chazan (1997) argues that the Jews were perceived as the enemies of God, the Christian faith and Christian community. Furthermore, Trachtenberg (1983) contends that the Jew is not only perceived as wanting to destroy Christendom but eventually becomes thought of as the devil himself. In the latter part of the Medieval Period, this diabolic Jew is emasculated and stereotyped with having blood related afflictions, male menstruation and hemorrhaging. Furthermore, Trachtenberg (1983) states that the Jews were accused of needing the therapeutic effects of Christian blood to remedy these peculiar and secret afflictions, and thus, the blood libel was born. Greenblat (1990) and Wistrich (1994) challenge Trachtenberg, theorizing



that antisemitism is rooted in the representation of the Jew as the “other” rather than in a mythic representation of the devil.

In the discussion about the evolution of stereotypes that emasculate the Jewish male, Gillman (1991), Efron (1992), and Stanislawski (2001) point to the increasingly antisemitic critique in nineteenth century Europe of the hysterical Jew whose body is unfit for military service and is eventually accused of being a coward. The same discourse can be found in Nordau’s (1897) *Degeneration* which highlights the decay of the “exiled” European Jew. The question then becomes, was Nordau’s stereotyping of the “Diaspora” Jew based in reality or was it due to Nordau’s own internalization of antisemitic stereotypes?

Wistrich (2007) contends that after Emancipation, Jews were still not welcomed as equal citizens but were grudgingly tolerated. With the waning of political antisemitism, Davidowicz (1975) contends that racial antisemitism, espousing the destruction of European Jewry was rooted in Martin Luther’s treatise *On the Jews and their Lies*, and was put into literal practice by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Both Gillman (2005) and Bunzl (2007) concur that the German nation-state was invested in an ethnically homogeneous and intrinsically masculine entity whose cultural coherence depended on the systematic abnegation of Jews and homosexuals.

Kimmel (2004) says that homophobia is more than the fear of gay men or being perceived as gay but is the fear that other men will unmask us and we will not measure up. Foucault (1997) theorizes that homosexuality was invented. He says that the category of homosexuality itself was only created a mere one hundred years ago by a German neologism. He believes that the homosexual had been an aberration, and had

then become a species, justifying itself with a new word. John Thorp (1992) contradicts Foucault and provides historical evidence. He cites Aristophane's speech in the Symposium when speaking about a homosexual social construct similar to our own. Robb (2004) also challenges Foucault by arguing that homosexuality as we know it today existed in the 19th century.

The persecution of homosexuals has been a major topic for gay writers who believe that the origins of modern oppression are found in Christian Europe Crompton (1980) and Johansson (1981). Boswell (1980) argues that Christianity only became hostile as it absorbed the effects of social changes which had nothing to do with religion. Furthermore, Boswell (1980), Richards (1994) and Kuefler (2005) state that it was only in the thirteenth century that condemnation of homosexual activity became a major theme. Jordan (1997), then, introduces the concept of using sodomy as a political weapon in the High Medieval Period. It was also in the thirteenth century that we have the beginnings of the emasculation of the male Jew through demonizing stereotypes Trachteberg (1983).

Various writers, Bullough (1974), R.I. Moore (1987) state that in the latter part of the Medieval Period, Jews, lepers, prostitutes, witches, heretics, and homosexuals were targeted as the out-group. Each group tended to be scarred with the stigma of the others. Physical persecution followed the increase in intolerance. The burnings began when the secular lawmakers took up the ecclesiastical themes.

Ettin (2008) is cited for his work in the emergence of homoerotic poetry by some of the most important Sefardic-Jewish writers, poets and community leaders, in Moorish

Spain. Ettin (2008) also includes the argument that homoerotic poetry in Hebrew literature was merely in keeping with the popular culture of the day.

Both Nordau (1892) and Herzl (1896) agreed that the Jews of Europe lived a disembodied existence in the Diaspora and that only by transforming them into “muscle men” could they successfully be transplanted in their own homeland. Biale (1992) further develops this concept by stating that the homeless Jew was not only disembodied from his land, but also from his own body and sexuality. Herzl (1896) and Nordau (1897) dreamed that, one day, Zionism would recreate the wandering, gender-feminized Jew into a “muscle man” and root him in his own land to become the tiller of his own soil. Boyarin (1997) also agrees that Zionism was considered to be as much a cure for the disease of Jewish gendering as a solution to the economic and political problems of the Jews.

In Sartre’s (1948) discussion of antisemitism, he further perpetuates the stereotype of the “effeminate” male-Jew by stating that the Jewish male is obstinately sweet and has a passionate hostility to violence. Thereafter, Efron (1994) traces the Jew’s effeminate character throughout the early Modern Period. Efron (1994) mentions that the stereotype of the red beard during this period was a sign of an effeminate temperament. Mosse (1985) Fout (1992) and Gillman (1994) discuss how thoroughly Jewishness was constructed around being “homosexual” in fin-de-siecle *Mitteleuropa*.

As a primary source, Hirschfeld’s most important works were reviewed. Hirschfeld’s (1933) *Weltreise* was the missing treasure needed to tie up the various threads of this study. In *Weltreise*, Hirschfeld rejects assimilation, Christianity and Zionism and becomes *Ahasuerus*, the eternal wanderer. Exiled from Nazi Germany,

Hirschfeld begins exploring his Jewishness, the meaning of homelessness and wandering and attains in this decisive period of his life a deeper understanding of the Jew as the “eternal Wanderer,” whose ancestral history of nomadic freedom belies the inveterate Christian misconception of the eternally doomed “Jewish Ahasuerus.”

The topic of the thesis is the social engineering of the “New Jew” by either recreating the gender-feminized, Jewish male into a “muscle Jew” and root him in his own homeland or have him become visible in his urban refuge and begin fighting for his right to be “different”; the antithesis of assimilation. The “muscle Jew’s” transformation begins with the creation of the Zionist gymnastic movement, or *Turnverein*. The idea for the founding of Jewish National sports organizations, gained momentum in 1898, following Dr. Max Nordau’s speech, at the Second Zionist Congress in Basle. He warned: “The history of our [Jewish] people relates to the fact that we were once strong physically but today that is not the case...”<sup>8</sup>

By championing one’s own right to be “different”, Hirschfeld’s biggest problem became the hostility he faced from other homosexuals. They simply accepted their second class legal status and labeled Hirschfeld a trouble-maker. Realizing the strength of his opposition, Hirschfeld sought support by founding the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* (Scientific Humanitarian Committee). Its strategy was to promote research and education to debunk homophobic prejudice and to present a rational case for homosexual law reform.

Adolf Brand, publisher of the first homosexual periodical, denounced Hirschfeld’s “queeny committee” as a talking shop of respectable, middle class homosexuals.

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<sup>8</sup> Michael, Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin-De-Siecle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 89.

The methodology employed in this study begins with a thorough review of the applicable literature in the areas of men's studies and masculinity, social theory as it pertains to the Jewish and gay male, antisemitism and homophobia, emasculating stereotypes, medieval and Nazi stereotypes, early gay rights activism, and Zionism. Thereafter, comparing and contrasting the strategies employed by Max Nordau, advocate of creating a "New" Jew and Magnus Hirschfeld, proponent of fighting for his right to be equal and "different."

The second chapter of this study discusses the theory of creating stereotypes about the "other", antisemitism and homophobia, Jewish masculinity, and homosexual and gay identity. The study explores the emasculation of the Jewish male in Christian European society and the association of the Jewish male with being "effeminate." A discussion of the male Jew's own fear of being identified as "effeminate" and homosexual is also discussed. There is a brief overview of Jewish and gay self-hatred and finally, an overview of homosexual and gay identity.

Medieval European society began emasculating the Jewish male and stereotyping him as being "effeminate" from as far back as the thirteenth century. The third chapter analyzes these pernicious stereotypes, rooted in twelfth-century, western Christendom. It examines how blood becomes crucial not only in the demonization of the Jew but also in his emasculation. During the same period, the persecution of sodomites begins. Homosexual existence in medieval Christendom and under Islam is compared and contrasted which result in some surprising insights into Muslim tolerance of homosexuality and the appearance of Sephardic-Jewish, homoerotic poetry under the protection of Muhammed's crescent.

In the fourth chapter the medieval stereotype of the emasculated Jewish male evolves into the hysterical and cowardly nineteenth-century Jew. But in *Strangers*, Graham Robb argues that even though homosexuals were under the constant threat of the death sentence, persecution was the exception, and that homosexual life in Europe was, if not thriving, then vibrant.<sup>9</sup> During the Weimar Republic, both groups evolved into sophisticated, cultured, and trend setting, “cosmopolitans” but were then accused of being the “symptoms of modernity.”<sup>10</sup> The chapter also explores how the emasculating stereotypes of Jews and gays within the increasingly “masculine” and militaristic, German society were used in the development of racial antisemitism in Nazi Germany.

The fifth chapter delineates the Jewish male’s response to his emasculation in Christian European society. The study spotlights Zionism and how it served as one of the major strategies in recreating the gender-feminized, male-Jew into a “muscle Jew”. Early Zionists agreed that to root European Jewry in the soil of Zion, a major transformation would need to occur. The stereotype of the emasculated, hysterical, mad and inbred Jewish male would need to be reinvented into the masculine tiller of his own soil. The social engineering of this “New Jew” began with the creation of the Zionist gymnastic movement, or *Turnverein*. Berkowitz refers to the “Jewish gymnast’s symbiosis of *Deutschtum*, *Judentum*, and liberalism,” and remarks that this combination “was a critical transmitter of Zionist national culture.”<sup>11</sup>

This study seeks answers to the following questions:

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<sup>9</sup>Graham Robb, *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 126.

<sup>10</sup> Matti Bunzl, *Symptoms of Modernity: Jews and Queers in Late-Twentieth-Century-Vienna*, (University of California Press, 2007), Preface.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and Western European Jewry before the First World War*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 108.

1. Did medieval stereotypes that emasculate the Jewish male destine Jews and gays to share a similar fate?
2. Why did strategies differ between early twentieth-century Jews and gays in the creation of their new identities?

My study will add to the body of literature regarding identity construction of masculinity, stereotyping, antisemitism and homophobia. The study will also enrich the ongoing discussion regarding the success or failure of Zionism in transforming the emasculated Jew into the Israeli “muscle man.” It will also contribute to the discourse on the success or failure of gay activism and the demand for equal rights. In addition, this project will provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between Jews and gays. It is hoped that this increased understanding of each other will contribute to the further development of an expanding, mutually beneficial relationship.

## 2. Stereotypes and the “other”

A fundamental component in the formation of someone’s identity (an individual or a group), besides one’s own reference group is the concept of the “other”<sup>12</sup>, which acts as a “negative mirror” reflecting everything that someone is not, a psychological mechanism which is essential in differentiating “us” from “them”. The phenomenon of the “other” is complex and is composed of attitudes, images and stereotypes that not only create a mental representation of the “other”, but also determine our actions towards that “other” group. R. I. Moore makes the point that society defines itself via social exclusion and that history is written about “us” against “them.”<sup>13</sup>

A stereotype was first invented in the world of printing and was a duplicate impression of an original typographical element. The American journalist Walter Lippman coined the metaphor, calling a stereotype a “picture in our heads” saying “Whether right or wrong,...imagination is shaped by the picture seen...Consequently, they lead to stereotypes that are hard to shake.”<sup>14</sup> Recent approaches focus more on the process through which stereotypes shape social perceptions. These are based on theories developed by Gordon W. Allport (1954) and Henri Tajfel (1978) which define stereotypes as cognitive shortcuts.<sup>15</sup> Stereotypes seem to function as a filter for the individual and his surrounding world, enabling him to save large amounts of cognitive

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 335-440.

<sup>13</sup> R.I. Moore, *The Formation Of A Persecuting Society: Power And Deviance In Western Europe, 950-1250*, (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001) 109.

<sup>14</sup> Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1946), 59.

<sup>15</sup> Susan T. Fiske, “Stereotyping, Prejudice and Discrimination”, in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, eds. Daniel T. Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske & Gardner Lindzey, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 4 edition, 1998).



energy by rapid and automatic categorization.<sup>16</sup> Their construction is not an individual process but is based on cognitive apriorism with no direct contact between the subject and what s/he is objectifying. Therefore, stereotypes are transmitted through social learning.

Stereotypes are both natural and dangerous to society. Jacques-Philippe Leyens, Vincent Yzerbyt and Georges Schadron in their book on social cognition purport that “stereotypes are not only the natural result of the categorization process... but they also fulfill a social function: to explain social events and to justify the in-groups’ actions.”<sup>17</sup> They contend that generalizations and stereotypes are necessary for communication as too much conceptual diversity within a group can result in fragmentation. One way to unify a group is to form cognitive boundaries that exclude what the group is not. By defining marginal groups, the majority defines the boundaries of “normal.” In order to be most effective, these boundaries must be accompanied by a stigmatization of the marginal groups.<sup>18</sup>

Stereotypes can use cultural opposites to demonstrate otherness. When groups use ‘right’ or ‘good,’ morality becomes an intrinsic part of cultural appropriateness. Being outside of that appropriateness is associated with incorrectness, and the stereotypes of cultural opposition identify a marginal or outside group.

Powerful stereotypes that exclude are based in fear. This fear may lead to the persecution of the outside group. They will either be forced physically or

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<sup>16</sup> Susan T. Fiske, “Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination”, 364.

<sup>17</sup> Jacques-Philippe Leyens, Vincent Yzerbyt and Georges Schadron. *Stereotypes and Social Cognition* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 70.

<sup>18</sup> Elyse Poinsett, *Stereotypes, Persecution, and Exclusion: Marginality in Medieval Society The Experience of Homosexuality in the Middle Ages*, Paper written by Elyse Poinsett as a graduate student, published only on line at [www.jmu.edu/writeon/documents/2007/Poinsett.pdf](http://www.jmu.edu/writeon/documents/2007/Poinsett.pdf).

psychologically outside the society, or they will choose strategies to become invisible within that society or completely extract themselves to avoid persecution. Ironically, exclusion from society makes stereotypes even stronger. The less contact people have with a marginalized group, the more fantastical and powerful stereotypes become. This then becomes a continuous cycle of stereotyping, persecution and exclusion, with ever increasing intensity.<sup>19</sup>

Gilman contends that the hated-Jew has not been created from “reality” but rather from a representation of “reality.”<sup>20</sup> An example of this type of representation is the alleged male menstruation and hemorrhaging which are explained by citing the cry of the Jews before Pilate: “His blood be on us and on our children,”<sup>21</sup> This mythic Jew was created out of a Christianity determined to usurp its own hegemony by stigmatizing its “older brother in faith”<sup>22</sup> as being diabolic, as having committed deicide and of being the “other.” Gilman believes that it is this “representation” of the Jew that lies at the very heart of Western Jew-hatred.

Michael Kimmel says that “Homophobia is more than the irrational fear of gay men or being perceived as being gay. It is the fear that other men will unmask us, emasculate us, and reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, that we are not real men. We are afraid to let other men see that fear. Fear makes us ashamed [...] and we are ashamed to be afraid. Shame leads to silence- the silence that keeps other people believing that we actually approve of the things that are done to women, to minorities, to

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<sup>19</sup> Elyse Poinsett, *Stereotypes, Persecution, and Exclusion: Marginality in Medieval Society The Experience of Homosexuality in the Middle Ages*.

<sup>20</sup> Sandor L. Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 2.

<sup>21</sup> Matt 27:25

<sup>22</sup> Victor L. Simpson, Aron Heller, 2009. “Pope in Israel seeks closer Jewish-Catholic bond”, *Washington Post*, May 9, sec. On Faith. “Pope John Paul II was the first pope to visit the Rome synagogue, where he referred to Jews as “our older brothers in faith.”

gays and lesbians in our culture. Our fears are the sources of our silences, and men's silence is what keeps the system running"<sup>23</sup>

## 2.1 Antisemitism and homophobia

Robert S. Wistrich, Head of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem refers to antisemitism as the "longest hatred."<sup>24</sup> Steven Greenblatt contends that "Antisemitism is a real and ongoing category in Western culture which is transmuted from age to age and from location to location."<sup>25</sup> This insidious phenomenon, in part, has its roots in the representation of the Jew as "different" in the Christian Diaspora. Whether real or invented, in Western culture, the image of being "different" is almost always a stigmatizing factor. In Sander Gilman's work *The Jew's Body*, he explores the complexity of these images and representations in the antisemitic stereotypes that have been created around the Jew's physical essence. "In all cases these images present the complexity of the idea of the Jew and of the Jewish response to this projection of difference."<sup>26</sup>

In Joshua Trachtenberg's *The Devil and the Jews* he argues that modern antisemitic stereotypes are rooted in the medieval conception that those who are capable of committing deicide, of crucifying Jesus Christ, must be the devil incarnate. And therefore, Jewish stereotypes are rooted in depictions of evil. Furthermore, these images are given additional credence in the mistranslations of the Old Testament. In particular,

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<sup>23</sup> Michael Kimmel, "Masculinity and Homophobia," in *Reconstructing Gender: A Multicultural Anthology*, (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 103-104.

<sup>24</sup> Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred*, (New York: Schocken, 1994).

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, "Marx, Marlowe and Anti-Semitism," in *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990) pp. 40-58.

<sup>26</sup> Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 3.

Moses being portrayed as having horns rather than beams of light streaming from his head. “Antisemitism today is ‘scientific’; it would disdain to include in the contemporaneous lexicon of Jewish crimes such outmoded items as Satanism and sorcery (although these notions, in all their literalness, have by no means disappeared). To the modern antisemite, of whatever persuasion, the Jew has become the international communist or the international banker, or better, both. But his aim still is to destroy Christendom, to conquer the world and enslave it to his own- and the word is inescapable- devilish ends. Still the ‘demonic’ Jew...”<sup>27</sup>

It was in the thirteenth century that the condemnation of homosexual activity became a major theme. At the same time, we see the beginnings of the emasculation of the male Jew through demonizing stereotypes. Jeffrey Richards calls our attention to those people who did not fit neatly into the grand, medieval scheme. He identifies six minorities- Jews, witches, heretics, homosexuals, prostitutes, and lepers- who were singled out as undersireables during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These groups were religious or sexual minorities, linked to sex and the devil. “But one common factor links them all- *sex*. It was the stereotype of the lustful deviant closely linked with the devil that was used to demonize them all. The devil is the ultimate ‘other’, the inspirer of evil, the anithesis of the Christian God and it was he who, by exploiting the susceptibility of the weak-willed to sexy by poisoning their minds, was portrayed as seeking to use them to overturn God’s natural order.”<sup>28</sup> Richards identifies the enemies of these minorities as the church, municipal authorities, and rising national monarchies- all of

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<sup>27</sup> Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and The Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Anti-semitism*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1983), 220.

<sup>28</sup> Jeffrey Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 21.

whom were spurred by Christian fundamentalism and the enforcement of conformity.<sup>29</sup>

## 2.2 Jewish Masculinity

In recent years there has been an burgeoning interest in the scholarly study of masculinity, also referred to as “Men’s studies.”<sup>30</sup> Emphasis has been on the ways masculinity is socially constructed, “shaped by historical circumstances and social discourses, and not primarily by random biology”<sup>31</sup>, on multiple masculinities “hegemonic” and “hegemonic” in particular<sup>32</sup> and the dynamics among them, and on the relationship between maleness, masculinity, and the exercise of social power. In both gay theory and feminist theory masculinity has become central in the development of their disciplines and fundamentally linked to power, organized for domination, and resistant to change because of power relations.<sup>33</sup>

Jewish men have a complicated relationship with their masculinity. “The ideal of the Jewish man is more the scholar than the athlete,”<sup>34</sup> said Harry Brod, an associate professor at the University of Northern Iowa, where he specializes in men’s studies. “The image of the gentle Jewish man served as a positive self-identification among Jews-

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<sup>29</sup> Jeffrey Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation*, 20.

<sup>30</sup> S. R. Haynes, “Ordinary Masculinity: Gender Analysis and Holocaust Scholarship.” *The Journal of Men’s Studies*, 10/2, (2002): 144-145.

<sup>31</sup> M. Berger, B. Wallis & S. Watson (Eds.), *Constructing Masculinity*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 3.

<sup>32</sup> R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1995), 37.

<sup>33</sup> R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 42.

<sup>34</sup> H. Brod (Ed.), *A Mensch Among Men: Explorations in Jewish Masculinity*, (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1988), 22.

as well as the foundation of antisemitic caricatures.”<sup>35</sup> “Because standards of Jewish masculinity are different than in the dominant culture, there are already questions about masculinity in the minds of Jewish men,”<sup>36</sup> Brod said, “and there is a tendency toward sensitivity in Jewish men.”<sup>37</sup> The traditional Jewish male strives to be a “*mensch*”, an ordinary descriptive of a person who possesses genuine human qualities and is essentially gender-neutral. This seems to reflect the ambiguities and perplexities of Jewish male identity.

### 2.2.1 Ahasuerus, the wandering Jew

Ahasuerus, the wandering Jew, is a figure from medieval period whose legend began to spread in Europe in the thirteenth century and became a fixture of Christian mythology. The original legend concerns a Jew who taunted Jesus on the way to the crucifixion and was then cursed to walk the earth until the Second Coming. The exact nature of the wanderer's indiscretion varies in different versions of the tale, as do aspects of his character; sometimes he is said to be a shoemaker or, in others, a tradesman. This figure became the stereotype of the Jewish people: exiled, homeless, and eternal wanderers.

In James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Mulligan characterizes Bloom, the main character and a Jew as a homosexual who is “greeker than the greeks.”<sup>38</sup> When he sees Bloom again he comments: “the wandering Jew...did you see his eye? He looked upon you to lust after

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<sup>35</sup> B.E. Carroll (Ed.), *American Masculinities: A Historical Encyclopedia*, London: SAGE Publications, 2003), 251-252.

<sup>36</sup> H. Brod (Ed.), *A Mensch Among Men: Explorations in Jewish Masculinity*, 23.

<sup>37</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of “the Jew” in English literature and Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 222.

you. Bloom's "eye" here neatly captures his "greekjewish" doubleness as it refers equally to his supposed "greek" homosexual advances to Stephen as well as the Jew's hypnotic eye usually associated with Ahasuerus, the wandering Jew.<sup>39</sup>

"One of the central claims of Zionism was that the Jews lived a disembodied existence in exile and that only a healthy national life could restore the necessary measure of physicality or materiality. This political ideology was not only based on the body as a metaphor; it sought, in addition to transform the Jewish body itself, and especially the sexual body. Zionism meant to both the physical rooting of the "people of the air" *Luftmenschen*<sup>40</sup> in the soil of [British mandate] Palestine and the reclamation of the body."<sup>41</sup>

In Biale's *Eros and the Jews*, he addresses this same, reoccurring issue; the disembodied existence of the homeless Jew, but this time it is a 20<sup>th</sup> century, self alienated and hating American Jew, in his discussion of Philip Roth's 1969 novel, *Portnoy's Complaint*. *Portnoy* complains that words seem to be a substitution for sex and that Jews, the quintessential People of the Book, live in eternal exile from their bodies. The historical Judaism of *Portnoy* is a religion devoid of the erotic: sexual

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<sup>39</sup> Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of "the Jew" in English literature and Society*, 221-222.

<sup>40</sup> "Luftmensch" - an impractical contemplative person having no definite business or income. An adaptation of the Yiddish "luftmentsh," <http://powerwords.tribe.net/thread/3662e9dd-b2a1-4be7-b1ad-89e462b7d957> "Luftmensch" was first introduced to English prose in 1907, when Israel Zangwill wrote "The word 'Luftmensch' flew into Barstein's mind. Nehemiah was not an earth-man.... He was an air-man, floating on facile wings." In the heyday of Zionism, the term was used by Zionists to denigrate European Jews.

<sup>41</sup> D. Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America*. (New York: BasicBooks, 1992), 179.

repression rants the monologist, is the product of the heritage of Jewish suffering and compulsive legalism.”<sup>42</sup>

### 2.2.2 The menstruating Jewish male

Trachtenberg says, “but the Jews suffered also from certain peculiar and secret afflictions that were characteristic of him, and which did not normally bother Christians. Indeed, it was this belief that helped to account for the Jewish need of Christian blood, the sole effective therapeutic available to them. Most often among these ailments was that of menstruation, which the men as well as the women among the Jews were supposed to experience; close seconds were copious hemorrhages and hemorrhoids (all involving loss of blood).”<sup>43</sup> The alleged male menstruation and hemorrhaging are explained by citing the cry of the Jews before Pilate: “His blood be on us and on our children,”<sup>44</sup>

The Christian belief that Jewish men are effeminate and that they menstruate may have been triggered by the idea of circumcision and their own fear of castration. The perception of Jewish men as nonviolent did not give other men the idea that they could also be nonviolent, but instead may have encouraged violence against Jews. “In stigmatizing Jews, gentiles have feared ‘the Jew’ (any gentleness) in themselves, and Jews have internalized anti-Semitism.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> D. Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America*, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 50.

<sup>44</sup> Matt. 27.25

<sup>45</sup> Carol Ann Douglas, “Scapegoat: The Jews, Israel and women’s liberation”. Off Our Backs. FindArticles.com. [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3693/is\\_200011/ai\\_n8908674/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3693/is_200011/ai_n8908674/).



### 2.2.3 The emasculated Jewish male

In Jean-Paul Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew*, he tries to explain the etiology of hate by analyzing antisemitism. Sartre states, "The Jews are the mildest of men, passionately hostile to violence. That obstinate sweetness which they conserve in the midst of the most atrocious persecution, that sense of justice and of reason which they put up as their sole defense against a hostile, brutal, and unjust society, is perhaps the best part of the message they bring to us and the true mark of their greatness."<sup>46</sup> Sartre later admitted that he created this work "without having read one Jewish book."<sup>47</sup>

Only one year after the end of World War II and the Holocaust, Sartre's essay, which sought to combat European antisemitism, seems to have perpetuated a number of insidious stereotypes, including those of the Jew's "obstinate sweetness" and passionate hostility to violence, stereotypes that may arguably be seen as the modern equivalent of the Jew's alleged effeminacy. Since medieval times, and especially in the early modern era, it had been widely asserted that Jewish men menstruate monthly, a charge that has been interpreted by Yosef Yerushalmi as suggesting that "Jewish males . . . are, in effect, no longer men but women, and the crime of deicide has been punished by castration."<sup>48</sup> Other scholars have linked the charge of male menstruation with the truncated (and less viril) phallus of the circumcized Jew.<sup>49</sup>

Since Christians believed that the Jewish male menstruated, therefore, the male Jew's gender and sexual identity came into question. The Jewish male was neither seen

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<sup>46</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. G. J. Becker (New York, 1948), 117.

<sup>47</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, 117.

<sup>48</sup> Y. H. Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto* (New York, 1971), 128.

<sup>49</sup> Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley, Calif., 1997), 210-11.

as a man or even a woman but rather an indeterminate, “third sex.” During the same period, German scholar Karl Heinrich Ulrichs coined the term “third sex” to refer to “urnings” or homosexuals. Magnus Hirschfeld also used the term “third sex” in his writings. The indeterminate and confusing gender identity of the Jewish male eventually led to accusations that a higher percentage of Jewish men were homosexual and that homosexuality was a particularly “Jewish” phenomenon, a “pestilence” that Hitler’s Germany would seek to eradicate.

The Jew’s effeminate character has found expression throughout the early modern period. In the late eighteenth century, as noted by John Efron, Henri Gregoire, priest, abolitionist and icon of antiracism remarked that Jewish men “have almost all red beards, which is the usual mark of an effeminate temperament,” and in the nineteenth century, as Sander Gilman has noted, the controversial German theologian David Friedrich Strauss commented on the “especially female” nature of the Jews.<sup>50</sup>

#### **2.2.4 The male Jew and homosexuality**

Gilman has provided us with an important piece to this gender identity puzzle by observing how thoroughly Jewishness was constructed as “queer” in fin-de-siècle Mitteleuropa: “Moses Julius Gutman observes that all of the comments about the supposed stronger sex drive among Jews have no basis in fact; most frequently they are sexual neurasthenics. Above all the number of Jewish homosexuals is extraordinarily

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<sup>50</sup> J. M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (New Haven, Conn., 1994), 182n11; Gilman, *Freud*, 162, citing Strauss’s *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (Leipzig, 1872), 71).

high.”<sup>51</sup> This view is echoed by Alexander Pilcz, Freud’s colleague, who noted that ‘there is a relatively high incidence of homosexuality among the Jews.’”<sup>52</sup> The literary crossroad for this association is, of course, Proust, for whom both Jews and gays are the “accursed race.” Both of these conditions constitute, for Proust, “incurable diseases.”<sup>53</sup>

In the 1890s there was a shift in the discourse of sexuality. Increasingly, homosexuality became identified as a Jewish problem- not least via Magnus Hirschfeld’s prominence. With growing homophobia and antisemitism, he became a favorite target of the Nazi propaganda machine. Fout observed that one of the leading exponents of the “moral purity” (family values) movement in Germany, “Adolf Stoecker was a rabid anti-Semite, and many of the moral purity attacks on Hirschfeld were of a fundamentally anti-Semitic character- homosexuals were always depicted as outside the bounds of society.”<sup>54</sup> The persistent association of Jews with homosexuals and homosexuals with Jews was to turn not a half a century later into the most murderous practice against both that the world has ever known. In 1928 a typical Nazi newspaper referred to the “indissoluble joining if Marxism, pederasty, and systematic Jewish contamination”<sup>55</sup> and in 1930 Wilhelm Frick, soon to be minister of the interior of the Nazi government, called for the castration of homosexuals, “that Jewish pestilence.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Sandor Gilman, “Sigmund Freud and the Sexologists: A Second Reading”, In *Reading Freud’s Reading*. Sandor L. Gilman, Jutta Birmele, Jay Geller, and Valerie D. Greenberg, eds. Literature and Psychoanalysis, (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 49.

<sup>52</sup> Sandor Gilman, “Sigmund Freud and the Sexologists: A Second Reading”, 47-76.

<sup>53</sup> Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, (New York: Routledge. 1992), 226.

<sup>54</sup> John C. Fout, “Sexual Politics in Wilhelmine Germany: The Male Gender Crisis, Moral Purity, and Homophobia.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2.3 (1992), 388-421.

<sup>55</sup> *Voelkischer Beobachter*, quoted in Moeller, “Homosexual Man,” 400.

<sup>56</sup> George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 158.

To complicate matters even more, there was even an antisemitic homoerotic movement in Germany. The Hans Blueher's Bund promoted an ideal of the homosexual as supermanly, not "degenerate" and "effeminate" like the homosexual Jew. Blueher was associated with the most vicious of antisemitic racists. And Benedikt Friedlaender, a Jewish homosexual rights advocate, was careful to claim that all the "effeminate" homosexuals were in the other movement, that of Magnus Hirschfeld. Friedlaender left the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* in 1902 and, with Adolf Brand and Wilhelm Jansen, founded the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* (*The Community of our Own*).

### 2.2.5 Jewish self hatred

Not surprisingly, Jews also included the stereotype of the Jewish male as effeminate and defenseless into their own repertoire of self hating attributes. This can be best portrayed in Otto Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Sex and Character), published in 1903. Weininger was an Austrian Jew who converted to Christianity and dramatically committed suicide at the age of 23. In his book *Sex and Character*, Weininger argues that all people are composed of a mixture of the male and female. The male aspect is active, productive, conscious and moral/logical, while the female aspect is passive, unproductive, unconscious, immoral and alogical. In his chapter entitled "Judentum" (Jewry), Weininger argues that the archetypical Jew is feminine, and thus profoundly irreligious, without true individuality (soul), and without a sense of good and evil. Christianity is described as "the highest expression of the highest faith", while Judaism is called "the extreme of cowardliness". Weininger's argued that everyone had some femininity, what he calls "Jewishness". In his condemnation of the decay of modern times, Weininger attributes much of that decline to feminine, and thus Jewish,

influences.<sup>57</sup> Hitler said, "Dietrich Eckart once told me that in all his life he had known just one good Jew: Otto Weininger, who killed himself on the day when he realized that the Jew lives upon the decay of peoples."<sup>58</sup>

### 2.3 Homosexual and gay identity

Jean Foucault argues, "...homosexuality became because we made it so"<sup>59</sup> Foucault says that the category of homosexuality itself was only created a mere one hundred years ago, after a German neologism coined some twenty years later. Foucault gives root to the social derivation of homosexuality believing that homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality, "only after it was transposed from the practice of sodomy into a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul."<sup>60</sup> He believes that the homosexual had been an aberration, and had then become a species, justifying itself with a new word.

Homosexuality, then, is a social construct of our own culture, and virtually even of our own century. What we mean by "homosexuality" did not exist in Greece; there is no such thing as Greek homosexuality. Foucault believed that the depth of desire is only sexual preference, that it is nothing more than superficial tastes and preferences.

John Thorp contradicts Foucault by providing historical evidence. He states that it is true that the Greeks did not have the word for homosexuality but homosexuality, as we know it today, did exist and verifies its existence by citing Aristophane's speech in

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<sup>57</sup> Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character*, (London; New York: W.Heinemann; G.P.Putnam's Sons), 1906, 314-315.

<sup>58</sup> Adolph Hitler, *Hitler's Secret Conversations 1941-1944*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, Inc., 1953), 156.

<sup>59</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. 1: An Introduction*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York 1980), 43.

<sup>60</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. 1: An Introduction*, 43.

the *Symposium*. Aristophanes speaks about a males' desire for other males at a psychically deep level and a class of men who had a life-long predilection for other men. Greek homosexuality seems very close to our own category in fundamental ways.<sup>61</sup>

Graham Robb, in his book, *Strangers*, also argues that homosexuality as we know it today existed in the 19th century. Even though homosexuals lived under the threat of the death sentence they still built a thriving homosexual life in Europe. In doing so, he takes on Michel Foucault, who theorized that until Victorian doctors came up with the category homosexual, no one identified him or herself as such.<sup>62</sup>

Throughout history, there have been many terms used to describe a man who is sexually attracted to another man. *Sodomite*, *bugger*, *puff*, *sissy* and *faggot* in the stereotypically, derogatory manner and *urnings* and *homosexuals* in psycho- and socio-sexological settings. In post-WWII America, "*a friend of Dorothy*", was euphemistically used by gay people to communicate their sexual identity to one another. It served as an allusion to the gay icon, Judy Garland, whose classic portrayal of Dorothy, a young and innocent girl, accepting of all who are different and who is torn by a tornado from her home in Kansas, tears at the heartstrings of both young and old, in the 1939 movie classic, *The Wizzard of Oz*. Dorothy believes, with all of her heart that she will, one day, find home, *Somewhere over the Rainbow*. A similar term "a friend of Mrs. King", an allusion to the Queen of England was used in England, mostly in the first half of the 20th century.

Dorothy's yearning to find her home resonates deeply in the hearts of most gay men which explains the popularity of the movie and Judy Garland within the gay

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<sup>61</sup> John Thorp, "The Social Construction of Homosexuality," *Phoenix* 46.1 (1992), 54-65.

<sup>62</sup> Graham Robb, *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004).

community and served to inspire the 1969 Stonewall riots. As previously mentioned, Jews had a diaspora and the dream to return to an actual place. This was not the case with gays. Home was remaining invisible in the anonymity of the urban landscape. While dealing with the modern day plague of AIDS, which in many cities, decimated the local gay population, gay men began to learn about the importance of community, the necessity of having political and economic power, and the strength inherently found in visibility, best stated in the 1980-1990's anti-AIDS slogan, Silence = Death.

Many gay Jews struggle with the acceptance of being gay with Orthodox Jewry. This topic is best explored by Rabbi Steven Greenberg in his groundbreaking work *Wrestling with God & Men*. Employing traditional rabbinic resources, Greenberg presents the reader with surprising biblical interpretations of the creation story, the love of David and Jonathan, the destruction of Sodom, and the condemning verses of Leviticus.

As opposed to the more secular Magnus Hirschfeld, it is important for Rabbi Greenberg to have the acceptance of the Orthodox Jewish community. He endeavors to find this acceptance by shifting the authority of the law from the statute to its conjectured purposes. He goes so far as to reinterpret the passage in Leviticus, “and with a male you shall not lie in the same manner as with a woman: it is an abomination.”<sup>63</sup> by arguing that God created three sexes and this law was created for a heterosexual man who might consider using another man merely for his sexual needs. For gays, this law may not apply if the gay man's same-sex relationship is one of love of nurturance.

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<sup>63</sup> Leviticus 18:22

Ultimately, Greenberg argues that Orthodox communities must open up debate, dialogue, and discussion—precisely the foundation upon which Jewish law rests—to truly deal with the issue of homosexual love.<sup>64</sup>

Gay men also discriminate within their own community based on effeminacy. No fats or femmes appear all over gay dating websites. Why is there this disassociation within the gay community from flamboyant men? Unfortunately, within the recent past, the stereotype of a gay person as an effeminate man has been the product of typical gay TV and film roles, even though these characters do not represent the entire spectrum of the gay community. This one-sided view of gay life has led to many misguided gay stereotypes and has also led to a disassociation of effeminacy by most gay men. Are these claims of "no femmes" just a matter of preference or is there something else behind it? Is this a self-hate issue that has been brought on by society? Most gay men, like Jews, want to assimilate. It seems that the only thing Jews and gays want as human beings is to be accepted.

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<sup>64</sup> Rabbi Steven Greenberg, *Wrestling with God & Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition*, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 244-245.



### 3. Medieval stereotypes

In order for the Church and emerging states to maintain control over what they perceived as a disorderly population, medieval people were increasingly forbidden to deviate from the Church doctrine and religious and political orthodoxy were all firmly bolstered by the imposition of sexual orthodoxy. Medieval secular law almost universally deferred to ecclesiastic law, in ever more rigid sanctions.

Sodomy as a political weapon was deliberately reinvented in the latter half of the Medieval Period: the question is, how and why was it reinvented? Logically, it makes sense that generalized accusations about social groups precede specific allegations. Sodomy accusations, have their main purpose in a general demeaning of someone's character when they are already being accused of something else. Yet, if an act of sodomy is to be taken seriously, sodomy must be considered somehow immoral and therefore, on religious grounds, be able to rally the public into the persecution of the accused.

One of the first politically-motivated allegations of sodomy are found in the tenth-century. Firstly, there are texts discussing the martyrdom of Pelagius and the demonization of the Muslim Caliph of Cordoba as a sodomite.<sup>65</sup> Secondly, in Rather of Verona's 968 CE *Book of Justification*, he states that any man who did not keep a woman must be committing that "foulest sin" (which from the context, is sodomy). Rather could have written this as a defense for married clerics trying to retaliate for reforming clerics' demands for celibacy.

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<sup>65</sup> Mark Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 12-14.

These two tenth-century examples seem to suggest that there was a greater demand for the use of sodomy as a political weapon than in previous centuries. There was the need to demonize Muslims and married clerics had to defend their actions. Once sodomy as an accusation had revealed its effectiveness, it was vigorously used for other political purposes. From the eleventh century there seems to be a continuous tradition of such accusations down to the present day.<sup>66</sup> The Jew, as medieval Christendom saw him—sorcerer, murderer, cannibal, poisoner, blasphemer, the devil’s disciple in all truth. But how did such a conception arise? What was its origin? And why did it flourish particularly in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries? What were the factors that suddenly became operative at that time to make the Jew the black beast of Europe?<sup>67</sup>

It is difficult to use Christian historical periodization when discussing the North African- and European-Jewish experience from the Christianization of the Roman Empire by Constantine in 312 C.E. until the beginning of the Renaissance, around 1300 C.E. This, of course, is due to the reason that throughout most of the Middle Ages, 95% of Jews lived under the domination of Islam. By 709 C.E., only 77 years after the death of Muhammed, all of North Africa was under the control of the Arab Caliphate and by 717 C.E. the Arabs had overrun most of Visigoth Spain. The Muslim conquest meant for the Jews a great improvement in their situation in various respects: first, they ceased to be an outcast community persecuted by the ruling church and became a part of a vast class of subjects with a special status: *Ahl al Kitab*, People of the Book and *Ahl al Dhimmi*, People who are protected. In addition, two great centers of Jewish scholarship were

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<sup>66</sup> The Invention of Sodomy as a Political Weapon, [magistraetmater.blog.co.uk/2008/12/09/the-invention-of-sodomy-as-a-political-weapon-5192369](http://magistraetmater.blog.co.uk/2008/12/09/the-invention-of-sodomy-as-a-political-weapon-5192369)

<sup>67</sup> Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1983), 159.

allowed to flourish under the crescent of Islam, Cordoba in Spain and Sura and Pumbedita in Babylonia. Medieval, Christian Europe did not allow for such centers of Jewish learning. In fact, the opposite was true.

Since the Jewishness of early Christianity was ubiquitous, in its need to differentiate itself from Judaism, and friction between the early Christians and other Jewish groups became inevitable. “With the addition of Pauline theology, friction turned into confrontation. This confrontation could not be defused, as Mohammed later did, by calling the Jews the ‘People of the Book,’ who, as such, were entitled to perpetually live among Muslims undisturbed. By its very nature, Christianity was forced to challenged Judaism’s legitimacy or lose its *raison d’etre*.”<sup>68</sup>

It is a striking consideration that despite the virulent anti-Jewish campaign of the early Church, the period between the break-up of the Roman Empire and the Crusades- roughly the sixth to the eleventh centuries- was comparatively favorable for the Jews.<sup>69</sup> “The Christianization of Europe was a slow process and quite superficial at first...By the tenth or eleventh century this process was nearing completion.”<sup>70</sup>

Trachtenberg succinctly points out that “...the change in the position of the Jew was effected by a number of factors, notably by the impairment of his legal status under the evolving feudal system, culminating with the abrogation of the right of the Jew to bear arms and the introduction of the concept of “chamber serfdom” (Kammerknechtschaft- subjugation directly to the emperor) in the thirteenth century; by the economic decline he suffered with the development of European society and the emergence of a favored

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<sup>68</sup> Kenneth R. Stow, *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe*, (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1992), 13.

<sup>69</sup> Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1983), 159.

<sup>70</sup> Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 161.

Christian merchant class; by the social upheavals and the deterioration of his social status consequent upon the First Crusade. But these factors all operated against the backdrop of Church policy, which determined public opinion (and therefore juridical and commercial practice as it affected the Jew) and which must in the end bear the major responsibility for the transformation of the popular attitude toward the Jew.”<sup>71</sup>

Therefore, these profound differences in the experiences of Jews living under the cross as opposed to those living under the crescent in the Middle Ages may shed some light onto why such damaging medieval stereotypes of Jews were created in Christian Europe and not in Muslim Spain, North Africa and the Middle East. In this context, Luther’s abhorrence and condemnation of the Jews, the seemingly endless struggle for Jewish emancipation in Central and Eastern European countries, the ensuing rise of political and racial antisemitism and, of course, the Holocaust, all originating in Christian Europe rather than in the Islamic World, can be more clearly understood.

### 3.1 The diabolic Jew

The medieval, Christian stereotype of the male Jew allegedly menstruating and hemorrhaging developed into a portrayal of the Jewish male as effeminate, hysterical, shrewd, cowardly, promiscuous, clannish, and incestuous, embedded itself in Western consciousness and eventually influenced nineteenth- and twentieth-century antisemitism. These anti-Jewish perceptions generated during the Middle Ages have proven remarkably enduring and devastating to the Jewish minority.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>72</sup> Robert Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), xiii.

Trachtenberg states that “the theologically created Jew had been invented in the eastern half of the Roman Empire during the early struggle of the Church to establish itself. In an effort to prove its superiority to Judaism it sought to displace....It was not content to brand Judaism as a decadent, superseded faith, or the Jews as the murderers of the son of God and the rejected of God Himself....The early Church established the Christian attitude toward the Jew by antedating ‘the rejection of the Jews and the emergence of the Church to the beginning of revealed history and by emphasizing the position of Abraham as the father of many nations, of whom only one, and that themselves, was chosen,’ so that the Jews at long last stood revealed as imposters and frauds, contumacious pretenders to an election that was never rightfully theirs.”<sup>73</sup>

Herein lies the paradox of Christian policy toward the Jews. Bitterly condemned and excoriated, they were yet to be tolerated on humanitarian grounds, and indeed preserved on theological grounds, as a living testimony to the truth of Christian teaching.<sup>74</sup>

Demographically speaking, the medieval Jewish population was relatively inconspicuous. But the Jewish presence was not. Jews remained loyal to their Jewish identity and became a source of enormous social anxiety. Their loyalty to Judaism, as medieval people interpreted it, intrinsically challenged Christianity’s truth. In addition, medieval man tended to believe that human nature did and could not change. Therefore, the Jew encountered on the streets of medieval Europe was as culpable of committing deicide as the Jew of the Gospels.

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<sup>73</sup> Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 162.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

In Joshua Trachtenberg argues that modern antisemitic stereotypes are rooted in the medieval conception that those who are capable of committing deicide, of crucifying Jesus Christ, must be the devil incarnate. The Jew can be described as having thick, sensual lips, a big, curved nose, red hair, a pale face with freckles and large bulging eyes. Here, red hair and freckles are considered the markings of evil, rather than being effeminate, for the Jew was known to be in league with the devil. Therefore, Jewish stereotypes are rooted in depictions of evil. Furthermore, these images are given additional credence in the mistranslation of the Bible or Old Testament. In particular, Moses being portrayed as having horns rather than beams of light streaming from his head.

Chazan argues that "an earlier period of significant change and dislocation in the West--the dynamic and creative twelfth century--saw the interaction of new societal circumstances and a prior ideational legacy. This interaction produced an innovative view of Jews fated to influence anti-Jewish perceptions down into our own century."<sup>75</sup> His point is further elaborated in his conclusion: "in fact every new stage in the evolution of anti-Jewish thinking is marked by dialectical interplay between a prior legacy of negative stereotypes and the realities of a new social context. Out of this interplay emerge novel anti-Jewish perceptions, which in turn become part of the historic tradition of anti-Jewish sentiment. In this way, anti-Jewish thought maintains a measure of stability and continuity, while in fact evolving considerably over the ages."<sup>76</sup>

Chazan argues that in the Middle Ages there were essentially three phases in the evolution of negative Jewish stereotypes. In the first phase, the tenth century, the Jew,

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<sup>75</sup> Robert Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), vi.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

taking advantage of commercial opportunities afforded him in the newly emerging northern European countries, was negatively perceived as the “immigrant”.

In the second phase, the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the northern European commercial revolution forced Jews into money lending instead of commercial trading, and simultaneously strengthened the dependence of the Jews upon ruling elites. “The move to money lending and resultant intensification of the link with the secular authorities had to deepen the animosity created by a perception of the Jews as lackeys of the ruling class.”<sup>77</sup>

Through this second period Chazan identifies five anti-Jewish themes, divided into two categories. First, Jewish Otherness: including negative imagery of Jews as newcomers and religious dissidents. Second, Jewish harmfulness, as reflected in images of Jews as [economic] competitors, allies of the barony, and historic enemies. For Chazan the latter grouping was most potent and held the greatest potential for further development in negative images of Jews. These he places in the third phase.

Chazan also provides the reader with the chronicle of Jewish fortunes during the Second Crusade. From the eleven entries cited, it becomes clear that there was a major deterioration in the image of the Jew. Occasionally, economic reasons are mentioned and their role in stirring up anti-Jewish animosities but the dominant theme is the alleged murder of Christians by Jews, reflecting a sense of the Jews as continuously vindictive and dangerous.<sup>78</sup>

“Of all the northern European anti-Jewish stereotypes, the one that predominated, both prior and subsequent to the middle of the twelfth century, was the historic Christian

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 57.

notion of the Jews as enemies of God, the Christian faith, and the Christian community.”<sup>79</sup>

### 3.2 Medieval Sodomites

In Matthew Kuefler’s essay, *Male Friendship and the Suspicion of Sodomy in Twelfth-Century France*, he asks an important question regarding changing attitudes towards homosexuality after the Gregorian Reformation. Why did the persecution of homosexuals and allegations of sodomy become prominent then, when they had not been in the earlier Medieval Period?<sup>80</sup> His answer is that ecclesiastics and royal supporters were trying to undermine the male bonds of the warrior class which undercut their loyalty to the church and the state, by making friendships between men seem problematic. This is a theory fraught with controversy. Yet, the question remains, why did persecution of homosexuals and allegations of sodomy become prominent in the latter part of the Medieval Period?

Kuefler acknowledges R.I. Moore’s theory that society defines itself via social exclusion, but comments “it does not explain why male homoeroticism should be listed among the categories for exclusion”.<sup>81</sup> Yet, if we are searching for the perfect scapegoat in the Medieval Period, sodomites or male homosexuals seem to become the natural target. To create a convenient scapegoat one firstly needs to find a minority, such as sodomites, Jews, lepers, prostitutes, witches or heretics, unable to defend themselves against the onslaught of the majority, while being persecuted based on a discourse of how

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 58

<sup>80</sup> Matthew Kuefler, "Male Friendship and the Suspicion of Sodomy in Twelfth-Century France", in Matthew Kuefler (ed), *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, (Chicago, University Press, 2005).

<sup>81</sup> Matthew Kuefler, "Male Friendship and the Suspicion of Sodomy in Twelfth-Century France"



these this minority is evil and threatens society. That combination is enough to produce an out-group.

There are two more advantages to persecuting the sodomite. One, paradoxically, is the “invisibility” of homosexuals as compared to most Jews, witches, lepers, and prostitutes, an invisibility homosexuals share with heretics. This means that there seems to be an infinite supply of homosexuals whereas Jews can be totally eliminated, as in the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290. The ills of a particular society can always be blamed on the lurking heretic and/or sodomite who hides among the righteous Christians and who must therefore be rooted out and punished. Secondly, it seems logical that the persecutor would unlikely want to become a member of the out-group. Modern statistics indicate that only about 2% of all men are solely same-sex oriented.<sup>82</sup> A larger minority, maybe 10 to 15% of men, have regular to occasional same-sex encounters. These statistics seem to indicate that heterosexual men, when so inclined, can easily decide to persecute gay men without retribution

### 3.2.1 Homosexuals under the cross

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<sup>82</sup> Bogaert, A. F. (2004). The prevalence of male homosexuality: The effect of fraternal birth order and variation in family size. *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, 230, 33–37. Bogaert argues that: "The prevalence of male homosexuality is debated. One widely reported early estimate was 10% (e.g., Marmor, 1980; Voeller, 1990). Some recent data provided support for this estimate (Bagley and Tremblay, 1998), but most recent large national samples suggest that the prevalence of male homosexuality in modern western societies, including the United States, is lower than this early estimate (e.g., 1–2% in Billy et al., 1993; 2–3% in Laumann et al., 1994; 6% in Sell et al., 1995; 1–3% in Wellings et al., 1994). It is of note, however, that homosexuality is defined in different ways in these studies. For example, some use same-sex behavior and not same-sex attraction as the operational definition of homosexuality (e.g., Billy et al., 1993); many sex researchers (e.g., Bailey et al., 2000; Bogaert, 2003; Money, 1988; Zucker and Bradley, 1995) now emphasize attraction over overt behavior in conceptualizing sexual orientation." (p. 33) Also: "...the prevalence of male homosexuality (in particular, same-sex attraction) varies over time and across societies (and hence is a “moving target”) in part because of two effects: (1) variations in fertility rate or family size; and (2) the fraternal birth order effect. Thus, even if accurately measured in one country at one time, the rate of male homosexuality is subject to change and is not generalizable over time or across societies." (p. 33)

313 C.E. was an ominous year for both homosexuals and Jews. It was the year that Emperor Constantin declared that Christianity would become the official religion of the Roman Empire. In 314 the Council of Ancyra, excluded the Sacraments for 15 years for unmarried men under the age of 20 who were caught in homosexual acts. By 342, the first law against homosexual marriages was promulgated by the Christian emperors Constantinius II and Constans.<sup>83</sup> In 390, the Christian emperors Valentinian II, Theodosius I and Arcadius declared homosexual sex to be illegal and those who were found guilty of it were condemned to be burned alive in front of the public.<sup>84</sup> It is interesting to note that homosexuals as well as Jews became an important source of revenue for the Roman Empire since both were heavily taxed. Until 498, in spite of laws against homosexual sex, the Christian emperors continued to collect taxes from male prostitutes until the reign of Anastasius I.<sup>85</sup> By 529, Justinian began the scapegoating of gays for such problems as “famine, earthquakes and pestilence.”

The Visigothic kingdom in Spain was converted from Arianism to Catholicism in 589 and this conversion led to the revision of their laws to conform to other Catholic countries. These revisions included the provisions for the persecution of homosexuals and Jews.

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<sup>83</sup> Theodosian Code 9.8.3: "When a man marries and is about to offer himself to men in womanly fashion (quum vir nubuit in feminam viris porrecturam), what does he wish, when sex has lost all its significance; when the crime is one which it is not profitable to know; when Venus is changed to another form; when love is sought and not found? We order the statutes to arise, the laws to be armed with an avenging sword, that those infamous persons who are now, or who hereafter may be, guilty may be subjected to exquisite punishment.

<sup>84</sup> (Theodosian Code 9.7.6): All persons who have the shameful custom of condemning a man's body, acting the part of a woman's to the sufferance of alien sex (for they appear not to be different from women), shall expiate a crime of this kind in avenging flames in the sight of the people.

<sup>85</sup> Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History: A History of the Church in Six Books, from A.D. 431 to A.D. 594*, trans. E. Walford, (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1846), 3.39.

### 3.2.2 Jewish homosexuals under the crescent

In 711, the Muslims coming from North Africa, conquered southern Spain which brought about sexual tolerance and tolerance back to the region. During this period there was a reemergence of gay literature and art. For Jews, Medieval Spain is considered a Golden Era of Jewish religious and cultural life. Many great rabbis and scholars lived and wrote there, and Hebrew poetry had a renaissance not seen since biblical times. While the rhyme scheme and structure was borrowed from Arabic, the themes and metaphors were uniquely Jewish, drawn as they were from the Bible and other religious literature.

Yet, not all themes were religious. Many were secular, and quite a few were erotic--even decidedly homoerotic. Yehudah ha-Levi, the famed Jewish writer and poet, is best known for his Hebrew religious poems but also wrote Arabic homosexual-themed love poetry.

In his discussion about Jewish poetry and sexuality, Ettin states that “Hebrew poetry also imbues secular values rather than Christian or Islamic...celebrating wine and sexuality, including homoeroticism that at least in its explicitness is new to Hebrew poetry.”<sup>86</sup> He cites an example of homoerotic verse from one of the greatest Jewish figures of the Sefardic Golden Age, Samuel ha-nagid (known as ibn Nagrela in Arabic) the early eleventh century vizier of Granada under the Moors, a community leader, administrator, outstanding general, and brilliant poet.<sup>87</sup>

I would die for that faithless gazelle.

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<sup>86</sup> Andrew Vogel Ettin, “Poetics of Sacred Desire in Medieval Hebrew Poetry,” in *The Body and the Book: Writings on Poetry and Sexuality*, eds. Glennis Byron and Andrew J. Sneddon (Rodopi: Amsterdam/New York, NY, 2008), 54.

<sup>87</sup> Andrew Vogel Ettin, “Poetics of Sacred Desire in Medieval Hebrew Poetry,” 54-55.

Yet do I love him deep within my heart-  
Who declared to Luna, rising,  
'You behold my glowing face, yet dare to appear?'  
And the moon in the darkness seemed  
Like an emerald in the palm of a black-skinned maiden.

It has also been argued that the emergence of homoerotic poetry in Hebrew literature, written by some of the greatest sefardic writers and poets of the time was merely in keeping with the popular culture of the day.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Andrew Vogel Ettin, "Poetics of Sacred Desire in Medieval Hebrew Poetry," 57

## 4. From Emancipation to Nazi Germany

For the Jews of Germany, the modern age began with the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Both historical developments contained liberating messages that touched everyone, but none so profoundly as the persecuted and the disinherited. Throughout the nineteenth-century, the fate of the Jews was directly connected with Liberalism.

Donal Niewyk states that in the latter part of the nineteenth-century “...there was a significant weakness in German liberalism and it limited further Jewish progress.”<sup>89</sup> Due to Otto von Bismarck’s overwhelming popularity after defeating the Austrians in 1866 and the French in 1871, the Iron Chancellor’s semifederal authoritarianism and Prussian militarism was fully accepted by the newly unified German people, many of whom came to view Jews as intentional outsiders.

Gilman contends that it is one of the great ironies of nineteenth-century European culture, that Jewish Wagnerites legitimized and furthered Wagner as their ticket into German avant-guard culture. “And it is the Jew’s unconscious mimicry and therefore parody of “the German” and his good taste that made him”<sup>90</sup> [increasingly vulnerable to accusations of racial pollution]. An argument can also be made that while Central European Jewry was obsessed with assimilation, they not only distanced themselves from their own identity but also became blind to the ominous presence of a new and virulent form of racial antisemitism.

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<sup>89</sup> Donald L. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 5-6.

<sup>90</sup> Sander L. Gilman, “Sibling Incest, Madness, and the Jews,” 165.

## 4.1 Nineteenth-century political antisemitism and homophobia

The outstanding feature of this period was the polarization between the unprecedented integration of the Jews in every sphere of life, and the growth of political antisemitism. In the Weimar Republic, Jews held major political posts and the most prominent Jewish political figure was Walther Rathenau, the German foreign minister. In 1922, Rathenau was murdered by a group of rightwing radicals who charged the Jews with the responsibility for Germany's defeat in World War I, known as the Dolchstosslegende (stab-in-the-back myth) and for the economic and social crises that had struck the newly born republic.

Modern political antisemitism is different from any earlier, sporadic outbreaks of Jew-baiting. It was brought about by conditions which had not existed before, such as industrialization and the development of new and expanded urban centers, in the last third of the nineteenth century. It was only then that it was possible to organize political movements wholly or partly on the basis of antisemitism, and to make antisemitism part of a coherent set of ideas. Indeed, the word antisemitism itself--with its attempt to draw on the support of science--made its first appearance in 1879.

### 4.1.1 The hysterical, cowardly Jew

Gilman also points to the "increasingly anti-Semitic critique" in nineteenth-century Europe "of the Jewish body as inherently unfit for military service" and the association in that century of Jewish males with nervousness and traditionally female hysterical tendencies.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York, 1991), 42, 63-64.

More and more, Jewish hysteria was used as an antisemitic stereotype to emasculate Jewish men. "Twice as many Jewish men suffer from the female disease of hysteria than do non-Jewish males."<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, Jewish hysteria was labeled a psychosis by German and Austrian-Jewish psychiatrists towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They argued, with certainty, that Jewish males were racially more inclined to be unstable, a feminine defect of character, which, of course, led to a much higher degree of insanity. One of the most influential psychiatrists of the nineteenth century, Emil Kraepelin, whose mother was a Jew, "...noted that it was really impossible to tell which of the various influences; race, lifelong habits, climate, diet, or general health conditions were responsible for mental illness. But with the Jews, Kraepelin was sure that race did play an etiological factor in their insanity..."<sup>93</sup>

By the late nineteenth century, German antisemites had popularized the notion of a distorted Jewish gender order and criticized Jewish men for being weak in body, meek in personality, and dominated by all too assertive wives. In recent years, historians have moved beyond examining the claims of antisemites and have started to explore these issues from Jewish perspectives. Indeed, we find German-Jewish men who embraced ideals of a gentle Jewish masculinity. Moreover, some Jewish studies scholars have claimed that Jewish communities throughout the ages have distinguished themselves from surrounding societies by a distinct gender organization.

Consequently, the menstruation and hemorrhaging stereotypes of the Jewish male developed into a portrayal of him as effeminate, hysterical, shrewd, cowardly,

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<sup>92</sup> Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 63.

<sup>93</sup> John M. Efron, *Leo Beck Institute Year Book Vol. XXXVII*, "The 'Kaftanjude' and the 'Kaffeehausjude': Two Models of Jewish Insanity – A discussion of causes and cures among German Jewish psychiatrists", (London, 1992), 170-171.

promiscuous, clannish, and incestuous. It embedded itself in Western consciousness and greatly influenced twentieth-century racial and political antisemitism. These anti-Jewish perceptions generated during the Middle Ages have proven remarkably enduring and devastating to the Jewish minority.<sup>94</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Nineteenth-century homosexuals

Homosexuals in the 19th century were living under a death sentence. Sodomy was punishable by death in England until 1861. Yet, Graham Robb argues that persecution was the exception, and that homosexual life in Europe was, if not thriving, then vibrant. To build this case, he combed through criminal records, letters, diaries, and newspapers to reconstruct this lost, homosexual community. In doing so, he challenges French philosopher Michel Foucault, who theorized that until Victorian doctors came up with the category homosexual, no one identified him or herself as such.<sup>95</sup>

In the early part of the nineteenth-century, homosexuality was thought of as an illness. As long as homosexuality was considered to be a condition, there could be a cure. Once Magnus Hirschfeld began championing the concept that homosexuality was not a choice or an illness but rather, was innate, the adversaries of homosexual rights began advocating the castration or complete elimination of homosexuals for they were now considered to be, incurable. This mirrored the situation of the Jews. Prior to the emergence of the racial sciences, Christian Europe considered Jews to be a religious minority. Therefore, being Jewish could be remedied in the holy waters of baptism. In Martin Luther's *On the Jews and their Lies*, Jews become incurable of being Jewish and

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<sup>94</sup> Robert Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), xiii.

<sup>95</sup> Graham Robb, *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004).



he calls for their destruction. In racial antisemitism, Jews become Semites, an inferior racial group, and move along the continuum from being considered to be incurable to becoming a parasite; a pestilence, accused of draining and infecting the superior Aryan, host-race.

Robb asserts that there were places in Europe where homosexual life was actively, uninhibitedly lived and homosexual men could meet each other: the docks in Barcelona, the Champs-Élysées in Paris, Broadway and Central Park in New York, and almost anywhere in Naples. There was even the Homosexual Grand Tour, which stretched from London to Amsterdam and Paris and beyond.<sup>96</sup>

## 4.2 The Interwar period: racial antisemitism and homophobia

Wistrich states that after Emancipation, in Central Europe, Jews were not welcomed as equal citizens but were only grudgingly tolerated. He contends that Jews failed to understand that the very equality they believed was shared with their countrymen was what was so ominous and threatening to antisemites. “For *völkisch* racialists, Jews were viewed as ‘parasites’ lacking a landscape (or homeland) of their own (a view of Jews that was not lost on the nascent Zionist movement).”<sup>97</sup>

In addition, Wistrich contends that “it was the multi-national Habsburg Empire rather than Imperial Germany which was the cradle of modern political antisemitism. Although the impetus came from events in Germany and Hungary, antisemitism in

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<sup>96</sup> Graham Robb, *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, 86.

<sup>97</sup> Robert S Wistrich, *Laboratory for World Destruction: Germans and Jews in Central Europe*, (Omaha, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2007),

Austria was essentially novel in its methods, techniques of agitation and political impact.”<sup>98</sup>

By 1914, the antisemitic political parties in Hungary, Germany and France failed to garner any substantial support and it seemed that political antisemitism was in decline. Only Austria was the exception where Lueger remained mayor of Vienna from 1897 to 1910.<sup>99</sup> By the latter half of the nineteenth-century, Jews were no longer considered to be merely a religious group but rather a race of people called "Semites." This was due to the newly evolving racial theories which placed masculine and viril, blond and blue-eyed Aryans and effeminate, curly-haired and beedy-eyed Semites as the two extremes on the scale of racial evaluation. This racist ideology supplied modern antisemitism with a new energy in the first decades of the twentieth century that enabled it to overcome waning political antisemitism. Some scholars, such as Lucy Dawidowicz, contend that Martin Luther's treatise *On the Jews and their Lies* was one of the first racially antisemitic essays ever written for it advocated the annihilation of Jews as a people rather than a religion; "[w]e are at fault in not slaying them."<sup>100</sup> The treatise exercised a major and persistent influence on Germany's attitude toward its Jewish citizens in the centuries between the Reformation and the Holocaust. Four hundred years after it was written, the National Socialists displayed *On the Jews and Their Lies* during the Nürnberg rallies, and the city of Nürnberg presented a first edition to Julius Streicher, editor of the Nazi newspaper *Der Stürmer*, the newspaper describing it as the most radically antisemitic

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<sup>98</sup> Robert S. Wistrich, "George von Schoenerer and the Genius of Modern Austrian Antisemitism," *Wiener Library Bulletin* 29, 39/40, 1976, abridged pp. 20-29.

<sup>99</sup> Jakob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism 1700-1933*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 303.

<sup>100</sup> Martin Luther. *On the Jews and Their Lies*, cited in Michael. Robert. "Luther, Luther Scholars, and the Jews," *Encounter* 46 (Autumn 1985) No. 4:343-344.

tract ever published.<sup>101</sup> Martin Luther's *On the Jews and Their Lies*, is justifiably believed to have contributed much to the Nazi Holocaust. In the mid section of his essay Luther gives his advice on how to treat Jews, all of which was put into literal practice by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Dawidowicz writes that the similarities between Luther's anti-Jewish writings and modern antisemitism are no coincidence, because they are derived from a common history of *Judenhaß* (hatred of Jews), which can be traced to *Haman's* advice to *Ahasuerus*.<sup>102</sup> Although modern German antisemitism also has its roots in German nationalism and Christian or religious antisemitism, she argues that a foundation for this was laid by the Roman Catholic Church, "upon which Luther built."<sup>103</sup>

In Wilhelm Marr's 1879 Pamphlet *Der Weg zum Siege des Germanentums über das Judentum* (The Path to the German Victory over Judaism) Marr introduced the concept that Germans and Jews were locked in a longstanding conflict, the origins of which he attributed to race — and that the Jews were winning. He then coined the racial term for *Judenhaß*, "anti-Semitism." Marr argued that Jewish emancipation resulting from German liberalism has allowed the Jews to control the German economy. Furthermore, this conflict could not be resolved even by the total assimilation of the Jewish people for Semites are racially incompatible with Aryans.

The concept of *Limpieza de sangre* or (Purity of Blood) and the beginnings of racial antisemitism originated in fifteenth-century Spain with the formulation of this doctrine which excluded from public office and any other position of honor all those who

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<sup>101</sup> Marc H. Ellis, "Hitler and the Holocaust, Christian Anti-Semitism", Baylor University Center for American and Jewish Studies, Spring 2004, slide 14.

<sup>102</sup> Book of Esther (Haman's goal is the complete eradication of the Jews).

<sup>103</sup> Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945*. First published 1975; (Bantam edition, 1986), 23.

were known to have an admixture of Jewish blood. This was done to stigmatize the recent Jewish converts for the Inquisitors were unsure if the forcibly converted Jews had truly accepted Christianity. This persecution gradually became extended to all of Jewish origin and their descendants, and thus became *de facto* a racist persecution with a racist vocabulary. It developed into a dogma that Jews, by virtue of their blood, were incapable of sincere conversion. This dogma differed from Nazi racism, since it regards the Jews as imbued with the sin of Judas from which they can never escape, because it is in their blood, rather than as creatures of subhuman status.<sup>104</sup>

According to Marr, the struggle between Jews and Germans would only be resolved by the victory of one and the ultimate death of the other. In 1879 Marr founded the League of Antisemites (Antisemiten Liga) the first German organization committed specifically to combating the alleged threat to Germany posed by the Jews and advocating their forced removal from the country.

This racial ideology contributed to a radicalization of existing antisemitic and homophobic ideas toward a new definition of "rational" ways of dealing with the question of "otherness" and "negative identity." Together with a radical political movement that recruited the masses followed by a regime that carried a revolutionary message for all of Europe and its own understanding of its apocalyptic mission, this ideology culminated in the annihilation of most European Jewry and tens of thousands of gay people.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Hyim Maccoby. *Antisemitism and Modernity: Innovation and Continuity*, London: Routledge, 2006, 31-32.

<sup>105</sup> Dalia Ofer, "Nazi Anti-Semitism and the 'Science of Race'", in *Race and Racism in Theory and Practice*, ed. Berel Lang (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000). 61-62.

It is also interesting to note that the persistent issue of German identity, which so concerned the Second Reich, was reinforced in Weimar Germany and in particular among right-wing parties that viewed Weimar as a degenerate regime. Thus long-standing racial anti-Semitism nurtured and invigorated the German search for self-definition and the creation of the mythologically superior, Aryan male.

Hitler stated that homosexuality was "degenerate behavior" which posed a threat to the capacity of the state and the "masculine character" of the nation. This is ironic since many people in Hitler's circle were in fact gay.<sup>106</sup> "Hitler Youth leader, Baldur von Schirach was bisexual; Hitler's private attorney, Reich Legal Director, Minister of Justice, butcher Governor- General of Poland, and public gay-hater Hans Frank was said to be a homosexual; Hitler's adjutant Wilhelm Bruckner was said to be bisexual;...Walter Funk, Reich Minister of Economics [and Hitler's personal financial advisor] has frequently been called a "notorious" homosexual ...or as a jealous predecessor in Funk's post, Hjalmar Schacht, contemptuously claimed, Funk was a "harmless homosexual and alcoholic;" ... [Hitler's second in command] Hermann Goering liked to dress up in drag and wear campy make-up...".<sup>107</sup>

## **4.2 Jews and gays as the foundational bearers of negative identification**

It appears that Jews and Gays became the foundational bearers of negative identification, in particular, stereotyped as incurably "effeminate", in the constitution of the modern German nation-state. For Bunzl, "The German nation-state was invented in the late nineteenth century as an ethnically homogenous and intrinsically masculine entity, a

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<sup>106</sup> Frank Rector, *The Nazi Extermination of Homosexuals*, (Stein and Day Publishers, 1981), 57.

<sup>107</sup> Frank Rector, *The Nazi Extermination of Homosexuals*, 57.

narrative whose cultural coherence depended on the systematic abjection of Jews and homosexuals.”<sup>108</sup> Through the discourse of antisemitism and homophobia, these group became the outsiders of respectable "Germanness." The need for ethnic and sexual purity became the rallying call for the emerging nation-state. "Jews and queers, thus figured as symptoms of modernity, abject by-products whose irreducible *Otherness* underwrote the fictions of the modern nation-state.”<sup>109</sup> Bunzl considers, "the Holocaust in this analytic context as a quintessentially modern event, taking the exclusionary principles of German nation-building to its catastrophic conclusion.”<sup>110</sup> "The nation had been imagined in constitutive opposition to Jews and queers; the Holocaust was designed to effect their complete eradication from the German (and Austrian) public sphere.”<sup>111</sup> At a recent conference on Jewish Masculinities in Germany, Gilman argued that, Jewish identity, like other ethnic and national identities, was racialized in the latter half of the nineteenth century, meaning it was understood as having an underlying and immutable biological basis, and the same applied to sexual identity, concerning which no ambiguity could be tolerated in Nazi Germany.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Matti Bunzl, *Symptoms of Modernity: Jews and Queers in Late-Twentieth-Century-Vienna*, (University of California Press, 2007), Preface

<sup>109</sup> Matti Bunzl, *Symptoms of Modernity*, Preface.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., Preface.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., Preface.

<sup>112</sup> Sandor Gilman. 2005. "Sexual Identity and Jewish Identity in Modern Germany: The Case of N. O. Body". Paper was presented at the Second International Workshop on Gender in German Jewish History, Jewish Masculinities in Germany, The University of California at San Diego.

## 5. Regeneration

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, European Jewry seemed to be exploring five major options or strategies in their struggle to define themselves in a quickly changing European landscape. Firstly, assimilation; secondly, a return to a pious, orthodox Jewish life; thirdly, Jewish national or cultural autonomy, fourthly, Marxism and Socialism and finally, Zionism. Those who championed Social Democracy and Marxism, focused on the concerns of the proletariat at the expense of their fellow Jews. Unceasingly, they identified wealthy Jews with capitalism. Social Democrats such as Victor Adler and communists like Rosa Luxemburg shared with antisemites the common conviction that “Jewish” capitalism was a corrupting influence throughout Central Europe. “At the 1897 Austrian Social Democratic Party Congress there were even protests that too many bourgeois Jews were entering the workers’ movement. Victor Adler himself preferred to put up ‘Christian’ candidates in the elections and, if possible, to restrict the number of Jewish intellectuals- a policy of *numerus clausus* that remained informal and failed to prevent the Party from being dominated largely by Jews. Nevertheless, the Jewish leaders of the Austrian Social Democrats went to great lengths to dissociate themselves from capitalist Jewry and even to justify anti-Semitism.”<sup>113</sup>

### 5.1 Zionism

In 1891, Theodore Herzl became the Paris correspondent for the influential liberal newspaper *die Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna. Herzl was in Paris when a wave of

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<sup>113</sup> Robert Witrich, *Leo Beck Institute Year Book Vol. XXX*, “Socialism and Judeophobia-Antisemitism in Europe before 1914”, (London, 1992), 144.

antisemitism broke out over the court martial of Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish army officer. Dreyfus, falsely accused of espionage, was banished to a lifetime of imprisonment on Devil's Island. Herzl watched and, was forever changed, as Dreyfus was humiliated in a public ceremony in January 1895. All the while long, the mob kept shouting "Death to the Jews." Herzl became convinced that the only solution to the Jewish problem was the mass exodus of Jews to their own homeland.<sup>114</sup> Inspired, Herzl wrote the *Judenstaat*, and proposed, for the first time, a program for immediate political action.

Yet, despite the Dreyfus Affair and the election of Lueger as mayor of Vienna, most Jews ignored the signs of things to come and convinced themselves that first and foremost, they shared a common bond with their fellow countrymen.

Early Zionists agreed that to root European Jewry in the soil of Zion, a major transformation would need to occur. The stereotype of the emasculated, hysterical, mad and inbred Jewish male would need to be reinvented into a masculine tiller of the soil.

These Zionists wanted to totally change the essence of the Jew and dedicate themselves to fighting antisemitism in all its forms. Some Zionists believed that antisemitism would never disappear and therefore Jews needed to conduct themselves with this in mind while others perceived Zionism as a vehicle with which to end antisemitism.

Zionism served as one of the major strategies in recreating the gender-neutered or gender-feminized, European, male-Jew into a "muscle Jew". "Zionism was considered by many to be as much a cure for the disease of Jewish gendering as a solution to the economic and political problems of the Jewish people."<sup>115</sup> Exemplary in this regard is

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<sup>114</sup> Theodore Herzl, *The Jewish State*, originally published in 1896, (London: Filiquarian Publishing, LLC., 2006).

<sup>115</sup> Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 277.



Max Nordau. The question bothering Nordau was the same one that had bothered Herzl as well as Pinsker and Lilienblum. “Why is it that in the era of Emancipation and liberalism, there has arisen a new kind of political Jew-hatred, an anti-Jewishness no longer derived from old religious prejudices but grounded in the new liberal atmosphere, which was supposed to cure the traditional hatred of Jews?”<sup>116</sup>

Biale contends that “one of the central claims of Zionism was that the Jews lived a disembodied existence in exile and that only a healthy national life could restore the necessary measure of physicality or materiality. This political ideology was not only based on the body as a metaphor; it sought, in addition to transform the Jewish body itself, and especially the sexual body. Zionism meant to both the physical rooting of the “people of the air” *Luftmenschen*<sup>117</sup> in the soil of [British mandate] Palestine and the reclamation of the body.”<sup>118</sup>

Zionism also challenged Eastern European, rabbinic Judaism’s discomfort with eroticism and the body and sought to transform the European Jew, who in their eyes, had degenerated in exile, was self-hating and exiled from his own body, into a “new Jew”, at home in both his body and in his land.

### 5.1.1 Turnvereinen- national gymnastic movements

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<sup>116</sup> Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish*, (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 102.

<sup>117</sup> “Luftmensch” - an impractical contemplative person having no definite business or income. An adaptation of the Yiddish “luftmentsh,” <http://powerwords.tribe.net/thread/3662e9dd-b2a1-4be7-b1ad-89e462b7d957> “Luftmensch” was first introduced to English prose in 1907, when Israel Zangwill wrote “The word ‘Luftmensch’ flew into Barstein’s mind. Nehemiah was not an earth-man .... He was an air-man, floating on facile wings.” In the heyday of Zionism, the term was used by Zionists to denigrate European Jews.

<sup>118</sup> Biale, *Eros and the Jews*, 176.

In 1898, the Zionist leader, Dr. Max Nordau, during the Second Zionist Congress in Basle warned: "The history of our [Jewish] people relates to the fact that we were once strong physically but today that is not the case. Others succeeded in degenerating us physically. They made the ghetto Jews of the Middle Ages into sorrow weaklings, haggard and unable to defend ourselves in the narrow alleyways of the Ghetto?"<sup>119</sup>

This transformation would begin with the creation of the Zionist gymnastic movement, or *Turnverein* based on Friedrich Ludwig Jahn's idea of creating a nationalist gymnastics in Berlin in 1811. Jahn excluded Jews from the German *Turnvereinen*. Jews then simply created their own sports clubs and modeled them on the very German organization which had barred them. The idea for the founding of Jewish National sports organizations, gained momentum in 1898, following Dr. Max Nordau's speech, previously quoted. In that same speech Nordau continued, "Nobody can deny us the necessary physical activity needed to make our bodies healthy again. We will renew our youth in our aging years: We will develop wide chests, strong arms and legs, a brave look. We will be warriors. What is lacking physically, we will develop through exercise. But our recovery to health is not only through the body, but also in the spirit, for as Hebrews will attain more achievements in sport, so will our self-confidence improve. Long lives Sports! Hebrew Sports clubs go forward and blossom". In the editorial written in the first edition of the Jewish Sport Monthly, published May 1900, (in time renamed "Maccabi"), summarizes the aims and ambitions of the movement in the phrase "A healthy mind in a healthy body".<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Michael, Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin-De-Siecle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 89.

<sup>120</sup> Maccabi World Union, Jewish Sport Monthly (renamed "Maccabi") May 2, 2009. <http://www.maccabiworld.org/nconfigout.asp?psn=306&tc=60> (accessed March 13, 2009)

Following Herzl's and Nordau's call, many clubs were quickly organized. This nascent movement received an immeasurable boost with the appearance in 1900 of the first periodical dedicated entirely to Jewish sports, *Die Juedische Turanzeitung*. Jewish gymnastic clubs banded together in 1903 under the umbrella organization of *Die Juedische Turnerschaft* (Jewish Gymnastic Association) with headquarters in Berlin. The constitution of *Die Juedische Turnerschaft* permitted membership to every Jewish gymnastic club that accepted that "the aim of the society is to foster gymnastics as a medium to build up physical fitness as part of the Jewish National Idea."<sup>121</sup>

In 1906 the first Jewish Gymnasts club was formed in former Palestine. In 1912 all Jewish sport associations were joined together under one umbrella organization named the *Maccabi* World Union. Its aims were clearly defined: "To foster physical education, belief in Jewish heritage and the Jewish nation, and to work actively for the rebuilding of our own country and for the preservation of our people."<sup>122</sup> The very name *Maccabi* pointed the new Zionist orientation of the World Union. The saga of the ancient Maccabees celebrated at Chanukah signified the courageous fight for freedom of conscience and religion, for autonomy and sovereignty - the very goals toward which modern Zionism strove.<sup>123</sup>

## 5.2 Magnus Hirschfeld

“Mein Feld ist die Welt”—nicht Deutschland, nicht Europa allein.”

—Magnus Hirschfeld

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<sup>121</sup> Michael, Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin-De-Siecle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 94.

<sup>122</sup> Maccabi World Union, Jewish Sport Monthly (renamed “Maccabi”) May 2, 2009.

<sup>123</sup> Maccabi World Union, Jewish Sport Monthly (renamed “Maccabi”) May 2, 2009.

Oscar Wilde merely lamented the persecution of homosexuals, Magnus Hirschfeld organized and fought it. Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, 1868-1935, was a gay, German-Jewish physician and sex researcher who launched the world's first gay rights organization in Berlin.

His Scientific Humanitarian Committee pioneered the struggle for homosexual emancipation. A similar movement did not emerge in the USA until the late 1960s, over half a century later. He truly was a man ahead of his time.

Hirschfeld was also an outspoken advocate of women's and transgendered rights. He worked with the famous Dr. Warnekros of the Dresden Women's Clinic, a pioneering gynecologist, on the first sex-change operation of Lili Elbe.

Hirschfeld's *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft* (The Institute for Sexual Research) promoted sex education, contraception, marriage guidance counseling, advice for gay and transgender people, the treatment and prevention of sexually-transmitted diseases, gay law reform and women's rights. It saw over 20,000 people a year.

To find a way to combat Paragraph 175, Hirschfeld needed to find a rational, scientific case for law reform. He proceeded with his medical research into the causes and nature of homosexuality, in the hope that understanding would discourage prejudice and promote acceptance. Far in advance of others, he concluded that homosexuality was innate and deeply embedded in the constitution of the individual and that everyone is a mixture of male and female. He identified both male and female homosexuals as "sexual intermediaries" along a continuum from male to female. But this perceptive analysis led him to erroneously advance the idea that lesbian and gay people were an "intermediate sex" that was biologically predetermined at birth. In his view, male homosexuals

possessed a "woman's soul trapped in a man's body".<sup>124</sup>

Such theories that linked male homosexuality to femininity were directly challenged by a small number of Hirschfeld's homosexual contemporaries, the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* (the Community of one's Own) who were inspired by classical Greek ethical writings in their claim that male-male eroticism was the province of the social elite and therefore more, not less, masculine.

Magnus Hirschfeld was the first to outline a non-Eurocentric critique of culture from a sexological perspective in his book *Weltreise eines Sexualforschers* (The World Journey of a Sex Researcher—hereafter *Weltreise*).<sup>125</sup> This may be attributed to his secular Jewish perspective of Christianity, sex, himself and the world at large. Generally considered one of the grounding texts of sexual ethnology, *Weltreise* is the report of a trip the sexologist made between 1930 and 1932.

### 5.2.1 Magnus Hirschfeld, Ahasuerus

Hirschfeld's interest in the role religion plays in the sexual cultures of Asia is hardly surprising if one recalls that, since childhood, the Jewish sexologist had to deal with the religious and racial bias of his Christian surroundings. Hirschfeld—unlike many Jews of his generation—remained to the end an opponent of baptism as a means of social integration. Far from seeking assimilation with the Christian majority, Hirschfeld openly admitted that his own advocacy of sexual minority rights was largely a struggle against

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<sup>124</sup> [www.magnus-hirschfeld.de/insitute](http://www.magnus-hirschfeld.de/insitute)

<sup>125</sup> Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Weltreise eines Sexualforschers*, (Brugg ,Switzerland: Bözberg-Verlag, 1933).

An English translation, Magnus Hirschfeld, *Men and Women: The World Journey of a Sexologist*, with an introduction by A.A. Brill, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1935, reprint: New York: AMS, 1974).

the age-old sexual ideology of Christianity. Hirschfeld stressed that Jews and homosexuals were “the world's scapegoats, who, since the introduction of Christianity, have been held responsible for all the suffering and misery in this world.”<sup>126</sup> His unambiguous rejection of Christianity, however, never led Hirschfeld to accept Jewish religious orthodoxy or political Zionism as possible solutions of the heatedly debated question of Jewish identity. Instead, he opted for a secular understanding of Judaism focused on the realization of universal humanness as the true and final aim of history.<sup>127</sup> In *Weltreise*, Hirschfeld also addresses the issue of Jews as a cosmopolitan people. Hirschfeld refers to “the destiny of this ‘restlessly and hastily’ roaming nation that finds nowhere a true home, but nonetheless achieves everywhere a great human mission.”<sup>128</sup>

When Hirschfeld embarked for America, he had no inkling that his trip would mark the beginning of his personal exile. When he was told that the American newspapers were hailing him “the Einstein of sex”, he replied that he would feel much happier if they called Einstein “the Hirschfeld of physics”.<sup>129</sup>

Becoming only gradually aware of the threats the pre-1933 developments in Germany meant to his life and work, Hirschfeld began to reflect on the link between nomadic existence and freedom at the beginning of Jewish history. Recalling “that the currently sedentary nations, before finding home and stable, wandered around without

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<sup>126</sup> Magnus Hirschfeld, *Von einst bis jetzt. Geschichte einer homosexuellen Bewegung. 1897-1922*, Herausgegeben und mit einem Nachwort versehen von Manfred Herzer und James Steakley, (Berlin: Verlag rosa Winkel, 1986), 126.

<sup>127</sup> J. Edgar Bauer, “Ahasverische Unruhe” und “Menschheitsassimilation”: Zu Magnus Hirschfelds Auffassung vom Judentum,’ in *Der Sexualreformer Magnus Hirschfeld. Ein Leben im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft, Politik und Gesellschaft*, ed. Elke-Vera Kotowski & Julius H. Schoeps, (Berlin: Be.Bra Wissenschaft Verlag, 2004), 271-91.

<sup>128</sup> Hirschfeld, *Weltreise*, 390: “...das Schicksal dieses “unstet und flüchtig” herumwandernden Volkes, das nirgends eine eigentliche Heimstätte finden kann und doch überall eine große menschliche Mission erfüllt.”

<sup>129</sup> [www.magnus-hirschfeld.de/institute](http://www.magnus-hirschfeld.de/institute)

any restrictions,”<sup>130</sup> Hirschfeld first ponders over the question of “whether it is not an evolutionary throwback, as a consequence of which the drive toward freedom—combined with a certain unrest—is so deeply rooted in all human beings, this longing for distant places that is so difficult to check in the long run?”<sup>131</sup> Against this backdrop, Hirschfeld then focuses on the origins of the Jews as going back to the “nomadic tribes, which thousand of years ago roamed between the river-basins of the Nile, the Euphrates and the Jordan.”<sup>132</sup> More importantly, Hirschfeld suggests that there is a link between these tribal wanderings and the inherited Jewish character by asking, “whether the Ahasueric restlessness of the Jews is ... an heirloom from their immemorial nomadic past.”<sup>133</sup> As *Weltreise* distinctly conveys, Hirschfeld attained in this decisive period of his life a deeper understanding of the Jew as the “eternal Wanderer,” whose ancestral history of nomadic freedom belies the inveterate Christian misconception of the eternally doomed “Jewish Ahasuerus.”<sup>134</sup>

Hirschfeld also asserted that politics and the love life of nations are intimately connected because they are both rooted in the sentiment of freedom.<sup>135</sup> He argued that the potential the individual receives from Nature could only be actualized and deployed within the framework of a socialist and libertarian politics. “Sexual human rights’ would

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 329: “...daß die jetzt seßhaften Völker...bevor sie Heimat und Stall fanden, ausnahmslos freizügig...herumschweiften.”

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 329: “...ob es nicht doch dieser atavistische Urgrund ist, als dessen Folge der Drang nach Freiheit, verbunden mit einer gewissen Unruhe, noch jetzt so tief in allen Menschen wurzelt, dieser Zug ins Weite, der sich so schwer auf die Dauer eindämmen läßt?”

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 329: “...die vor Jahrtausenden zwischen den Stromgebieten des Nil, Euphrat und Jordan...herumschweifenden Nomadenstämme ..”

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 329: “Ob...die ahasverische Unruhe der Juden...ein Erbstück aus ihrer nomadischen Urzeit ist?”

<sup>134</sup> J. Edgar Bauer, “Magnus Hirschfeld: Panhumanism and the Sexual Cultures of Asia,” in *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 14, November 2006.

<sup>135</sup> Hirschfeld, *Weltreise*, 348-49.

have to begin with the acknowledgment that sexualities—in accordance with the doctrine of sexual intermediaries—are as diverse as the number of sexed individuals.”<sup>136</sup>

But his work bought him into conflict with the Nazis. They ranted against his "perversions", attacking his public meetings and beating up Hirschfeld and his life-long partner Karl Giese. While away in the US lecturing in 1933, Nazi storm troopers attacked and ransacked the Institute for Sexual Science, destroying its priceless research archives. The Nazis also seized the Institute's huge list of names and addresses. These were later used by the Gestapo to compile their notorious "pink lists", which identified homosexuals and led to their arrest and deportation to the concentration camps.

The Nazis publicly denounced Hirschfeld as one of the country's leading "Jewish criminals", which was effectively a death sentence. His friends advised him not to return to Germany. He went to the south of France instead, where he died suddenly of a stroke in 1935. His lover Karl Giese committed suicide in 1938, while on the run from the Nazis.<sup>137</sup>

### 5.3 Conclusion

**Did medieval stereotypes that emasculate the Jewish male destine Jews and gays to share a similar fate?**

Firstly, we need to delineate the medieval stereotypes that emasculated the Jewish male. It was alleged that the male Jew was diabolic, in that he had committed deicide, exiled from his homeland to eternally wander, engaged in non-productive work,

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<sup>136</sup> Magnus Hirschfeld, "Was will die Zeitschrift 'Sexus'?" in *Sexus. Internationale Zeitschrift für die gesamte Sexualwissenschaft und Sexualreform*, Herausgegeben vom Institut für Sexualwissenschaft, Berlin I (1933), 4-5

<sup>137</sup> [www.Magus-Hirschfeld.de/Institute](http://www.Magus-Hirschfeld.de/Institute)



and was accused of blood related afflictions such as menstruating and hemorrhaging. These stereotypes about the Jewish male appeared around the same time sodomites were beginning to be persecuted. Both were small minorities, defenseless and were unlikely to find any support or potential adherents. The sodomite pursued a strategy of remaining as invisible as possible, a strategy that must have been used by Jews or there would not have been the need for Jews to wear something that would indicate they were Jews.

Jeffrey Richards calls our attention to those people who did not fit neatly into the grand, medieval scheme. He identifies six minorities- Jews, witches, heretics, sodomites (homosexuals), prostitutes, and lepers- who were singled out as undesirable during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These groups were religious or sexual minorities, linked to sex and the devil. “But one common factor links them all- *sex*.”<sup>138</sup> It was the stereotype of the lustful deviant closely linked with the devil that was used to demonize them all. The devil is the ultimate “other”, the inspirer of evil, and the antithesis of the Christian God.<sup>139</sup>

Increasingly, each group tended to be scarred with the stigma of the others. Physical persecution followed the increase in intolerance. The burnings began when the secular lawmakers took up the ecclesiastical themes.

Both groups fared better under the crescent of Moorish Spain than the under the cross of Catholic Europe. There was Muslim tolerance of homosexuality and there appeared, for the first time in Hebrew literature, Sephardic-Jewish, homoerotic poetry.

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<sup>138</sup> Jeffrey Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 21.

<sup>139</sup> Jeffrey Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation*, 21.

In the nineteenth-century the male Jew was further emasculated and appeared as the hysterical Jew whose body was unfit for military service and is eventually accused of cowardice.

In the 1890s there was a shift in the discourse of sexuality. Increasingly, homosexuality became identified as a Jewish problem- not least via Magnus Hirschfeld's prominence. With growing homophobia and antisemitism, he became a favorite target of the Nazi propaganda machine. Fout observed that one of the leading exponents of the "moral purity" (family values) movement in Germany, "Adolf Stoecker was a rabid anti-Semite, and many of the moral purity attacks on Hirschfeld were of a fundamentally anti-Semitic character- homosexuals were always depicted as outside the bounds of society."<sup>140</sup>

The stereotype of the homosexual Jew can be found throughout European culture, even on the fringes of the European continent, namely, Ireland. In James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Mulligan characterizes Bloom, the main character and a Jew as a homosexual who is "greeker than the greeks."<sup>141</sup> When he sees Bloom again he comments: "the wandering Jew...did you see his eye? He looked upon you to lust after you. Bloom's "eye" here neatly captures his "greekjewish" doubleness as it refers equally to his supposed "greek" homosexual advances to Stephen as well as the Jew's hypnotic eye usually associated with Ahasuerus, the wandering Jew.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> John C. Fout, "Sexual Politics in Wilhelmine Germany: The Male Gender Crisis, Moral Purity, and Homophobia." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2.3 (1992), 388-421.

<sup>141</sup> Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of "the Jew" in English literature and Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 222.

<sup>142</sup> Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of "the Jew" in English literature and Society*, 221-222.

In 1928 a typical Nazi newspaper referred to the “indissoluble joining if Marxism, pederasty, and systematic Jewish contamination”<sup>143</sup> and in 1930 Wilhelm Frick, soon to be minister of the interior of the Nazi government, called for the castration of homosexuals, “that Jewish pestilence.”<sup>144</sup>

The persistent association of Jews with homosexuals and homosexuals with Jews was to turn not a half a century later into the most murderous practice against both that the world has ever known.

### **Why did strategies differ for early twentieth-century Jews and gays in the creation of their new identities?**

Jews had a “diaspora” therefore, a physical place to return to and call “home”. Not so with gays. There is no such thing as a physical “gay, homosexual or queer nation.” For many, “home” was a conscious decision to either remain invisible or to fight for the right to be “different” in the anonymity of the urban setting. In many ways, this anonymous urbanity was also used by Jews to help protect themselves, throughout the centuries, from Judeophobia, *Judenhaß*, and antisemitism.

One can argue that there is no need for gay socio-political entities, such as political organizations, communities and/or a nation. Hannah Arendt might argue that queer politics opposes society itself. Arendt, along the lines of Foucault, describes the social as a specifically modern phenomenon “...and found its political form in the nation-state.”<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> *Voelkischer Beobachter*, quoted in Moeller, “Homosexual Man,” 400.

<sup>144</sup> George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 158.

<sup>145</sup> Michael Warner, “Introduction” in Michael Warner (ed.), *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), xxix.

Warner continues, “the social realm, in short, is a cultural form, interwoven with the political form of the administrative state and with the normalizing methodologies of modern social knowledge. Can we not hear in the resonances of queer protest an objection to the normalization of behavior in this broad sense, and thus to the cultural phenomenon of societalization?”<sup>146</sup>

Therefore, the gay man, like Hirschfeld’s Jew, becomes the “eternal Wanderer,” whose ancestral history of nomadic freedom belies the inveterate Christian misconception of the eternally doomed “Jewish [and gay] Ahasuerus.”<sup>147</sup>

## Future Research

This study poses questions for future research. If gay men are “wanderers” are they capable of building committed, personal relationships and nurturing communities? Since gay men, for the most part, do not reproduce themselves, how is a sense of history and tradition passed on to the next generation or is there even a need for gay history? Without having the ability to reproduce must the following generation of gay men completely recreate itself? What are the lessons the gay community can learn from the Jewish experience and visa versa.

## The final word

Michael Kimmel argues that “homophobia, men’s fear of other men, is the animating condition of the dominant definition of masculinity in America, and that the reigning definition of masculinity is a defensive effort to prevent being emasculated. In

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<sup>146</sup> Michael Warner, “Introduction” in Michael Warner (ed.), xxix.

<sup>147</sup> J. Edgar Bauer, “Magnus Hirschfeld: Panhumanism and the Sexual Cultures of Asia,” in *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 14, November 2006.

our efforts to suppress or overcome those fears, the dominant culture exacts a tremendous price from those deemed less than fully manly: women, gay men, nonnative-born men, men of color”<sup>148</sup> and I will add, Jews.

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<sup>148</sup> Michael Kimmel, “Masculinity and Homophobia,” in *Reconstructing Gender: A Multicultural Anthology*, (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 104.

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