

Introduction

Jewish Orientalisms

Und ich baute Jehovah einen Tempel vom ewigen Himmelslicht.

—Else Lasker-Schüler, *Die Nächte der Tino von Bagdad*¹

At the end of the nineteenth century, Theodor Herzl proposed three different locations for the future Jewish state: Palestine, Argentina, and Uganda. While Herzl struggled to obtain a charter from the Ottoman Sultan for Palestine, the vast, apparently uninhabited tracts of land in Argentina and Uganda, which the British proposed, also appeared inviting. The discussion of the future homeland of the Jewish people in the Middle East, Africa, or South America in the first few years of the Zionist movement thus defied the Biblical connection between Jews and the Holy Land and instead geographically mirrored the sites of European colonial struggles.² The attempt to emancipate the Jewish people from oppression in Europe thus ironically followed in the footsteps of European imperialists. While the Zionist movement had set its sights on Palestine by 1905, Herzl's original plans reflect the inextricability of this *fleur de lis* of exotic locales from the European perspective, such that imperialist ventures and colonizing discourses could be as easily cast on the shores of Asia, Africa, or the Americas. This book travels with European-Jewish writers of the twentieth century to all three shores, tracing the tension embodied by Herzl's Zionism between resistance to oppression and complicity with orientalism.

This book responds to Edward Said's concept of a monolithic Christian "Orientalism" that justified European economic and political control of the Muslims and the Middle East by considering the role of European Jews in this discourse. Historically, Jews have been both participants in European culture and targets of stereotyping within Europe as "Orientals," and they have also been politically engaged in the Middle East through the Zionist movement. This positioning of European Jews between West and East complicates their

relationship with European discourse about orientalized locations. While previous scholarship has suggested that twentieth-century Jewish authors were complicit with orientalism,³ my work recognizes a simultaneous subversive tendency in German- and French-Jewish literature of the period that resists stereotyping and promotes solidarity with other groups subjected to European oppression both inside and outside Europe. The purpose of this book is to demonstrate the actual diversity of European-Jewish identity by specifically highlighting European-Jewish authors who have been critical of imperialism in any form and who have expressed possibilities of coalition between Jews and other peoples against oppression. While I have a particular interest in criticisms of orientalism from a European-Jewish perspective, this study illustrates how such texts are characterized by both an assimilation and a rejection of orientalist rhetoric to varying degrees.

The particular relationship between the Jewish people and orientalist discourse is only briefly mentioned in Said's own *Orientalism*, when he remarks obscurely:

. . . by an almost inescapable logic, I have found myself writing the history of a strange, secret sharer of Western anti-Semitism. That anti-Semitism and, as I have discussed it in its Islamic branch, Orientalism resemble each other very closely is a historical, cultural, and political truth that needs only to be mentioned to an Arab Palestinian for its irony to be perfectly understood. (28)

Said's own perspective as a Palestinian becomes evident in this comment and indicates his assumption of complicity between the Jews and orientalist discourse as a result of Zionism. As Ivan Davidson Kalmar and David J. Penslar have observed, Jews have been regarded as the "perpetrators of orientalism" because of Zionism, which has generally been understood as an "orientalist ideology in the service of Western colonialism" (xv). Kalmar and Penslar's objective in their edited volume *Orientalism and the Jews*, however, is to argue that orientalism has not just been directed against the Muslims, but also against the Jews, who have often stood in for Muslims as "Orientals" in European-Christian understandings (xi–xiv). They identify the close relationship between antisemitism and orientalism in European discourse, such that antisemitism can be seen as a form of orientalization of the Jews. Kalmar and Penslar, thus, are primarily interested in viewing Jews as "targets . . . of orientalism" (xv).

My approach, in contrast, is to recognize that European Jews have been problematically both "perpetrators" and "targets," not either/or, and that this

contradictory positioning is the basis for the dilemma facing European-Jewish writers. Rather than being limited to the depiction of Jews as oriental in the European context, this book focuses on the response of European-Jewish authors to the confluence of antisemitism and orientalism, and on their successful or unsuccessful attempts to challenge and complicate these discourses. Kalmar and Penslar delimit Jewish responses to “anti-Jewish orientalism” to two possibilities: firstly, the romanticization of the Orient and themselves as oriental; secondly, the transference of orientalization onto “traditional Jews” (xix). The defining of these two distinct tendencies, one positive and one negative, overlooks the simultaneity of contradictory trends in European-Jewish texts, that may romanticize the Orient, orientalize the Jews, and/or criticize antisemitism. I argue instead that European-Jewish writing is multifaceted and self-contradictory, including not only the construction of the Other for purposes of domination, but also approaches to the Other that are tolerant and self-critical. Drawing on Lisa Lowe’s understanding of heterogeneous “orientalisms,” I use the term *Jewish orientalisms* to acknowledge not only the multiplicity and diversity of this discourse due to national, ethnic, gender, and sexual difference, but also to refer to its internally complex and contradictory nature.

To investigate the tension within Jewish orientalisms, I focus specifically on European-Jewish authors who set fictional texts in orientalized locations—Palestine/Israel or the Caribbean—that the authors traveled to either before or after writing. These particular authors are therefore characterized by a geographical mobility between Europe and the orientalized spaces they depict that complicates their responses to orientalism. The discourse of orientalism, as constructed knowledge about the Orient, was disrupted by their own experiences in these locations, requiring them to modify and rethink their Eurocentric viewpoints. Martin Buber, Arnold Zweig, and Else Lasker-Schüler (Chapters 1 and 2) all fled to Palestine after the rise of the Nazis in 1933; Zweig’s novel *De Vriendt kehrt heim* (De Vriendt Returns Home) was particularly written in response to his initial two-month trip to the Middle East in early 1932. Anna Seghers and André Schwarz-Bart (Chapter 3) both spent time in the Caribbean prior to writing their Caribbean stories; Seghers fled through the islands on her way to Mexico City in the late 1930s, and Schwarz-Bart lived in Guadeloupe with his wife and her family in the 1960s while writing his first Caribbean novel. Jeannette Lander and Chochana Boukhobza (Chapter 4) are transnational, multilingual authors whose writing reflects their engagement with multiple national contexts. These authors were therefore not merely imagining fantasized, distant locations but were also engaged in the contemporary politics of these locations through

personal experience. The writers thus serve as agents of exchange between Europe and the Other, the Occident and the Orient, and the West and the rest, and as a result, their texts particularly demonstrate the complicated and at times ambiguous responses of Jewish writers in Europe to orientalism.

ORIENTALISMS

The exploration of a European-Jewish response to orientalism has its roots in modifications of Edward Said's original theory in *Orientalism*. Criticism of Said's text has addressed ways in which it fails to identify the complexity of the relationship between the West and the East. Critics have argued that Said's understanding of orientalism is limited in that it does not recognize national traditions other than that of France, Great Britain, and the United States, nor does it take into account differing perspectives based on gender, ethnicity, or sexual identification. My study of European-Jewish literature builds on critics' development and expansion of Said's monolithic "Orientalism" into more diversified "orientalisms."

Said's *Orientalism* (1978) encouraged the Western academy to study the connections between Eurocentric culture and Western political and economic power.⁴ Orientalism, according to Said, is a European-Christian system of knowledge about the Middle East and North Africa that has historically supported European economic and political influence over these regions (39–46). This discourse originated in philology, and specifically the distinctions that were made between Indo-European and Semitic languages beginning in the late eighteenth century (98). European domination has been implicitly justified by depictions of the "Oriental" as exotic, dangerous, and primitive in order to rationalize the need for European control of the Middle East. As a result, the orientalist's purported knowledge is actually an instrument of power that constructs the Orient in such a way as to justify domination (40–1, 94). Since this construct of the Orient was so widely distributed and accepted, Said even claims that "every European . . . was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric" (204). By the late nineteenth century, orientalist scholars and scholarship were critical to the formation of European imperialist policies, and American policies toward the Middle East since World War II have continued to further orientalist discourse, according to Said (203, 210–11, 285).

Said builds his thesis on the function of the discourse of Orientalism from the theory of Michel Foucault in particular.⁵ In his early work, Foucault conceptualizes power not as a repressive, singular force but as multiple forces operating by way of knowledge to control members of society.

Discourse is the means of exercising this power because it constructs this knowledge as reality. Said's orientalism is a discourse that functions in this manner, but Said diverges from Foucault's more "anonymous" understanding of power by identifying the importance of individuals and individual texts in contributing to this discourse. Said also relied on Antonio Gramsci's definition of cultural hegemony, in which cultural institutions such as universities promote certain ideas over others that are then accepted within society. The discourse of Orientalism has succeeded in becoming hegemonic, according to Said, because academic institutions have advanced the construction of European culture and thought as superior to that of the Middle East. Said therefore combines the work of two theorists, Foucault and Gramsci, on power and knowledge in order to explain how the discourse of orientalism functions.⁶

These two theories, however, are not entirely compatible, and the dissonance between them leads to flaws in Said's argument, according to Bart Moore-Gilbert. Foucault's concept of power, where power is disembodied and lacks direction, conflicts with Gramsci's Marxist view that resistance can come from below and lead to the overthrow of hegemonic discourse. One of the results of this tension is that Said fails to explain the origins of orientalist discourse. While Said criticizes the totalizing discourse of orientalism, his own theory of orientalism is itself an essentializing master narrative that makes vast, unsupported generalizations about Europeans and their belief systems, such as his statement that "every European . . . was . . . a racist." Said does not explain how orientalism as a hegemonic discourse emerged in the first place or what discourses were already in place that orientalism replaced or defeated, so it would appear impossible to escape from the hold of this world-view. At times, Said claims that the discourse preceded colonization, such that theories of the Orient actually instigated European domination, and at other times, he suggests that European policies led to the creation of a discourse to justify itself after the fact. Furthermore, actual resistance to orientalist discourse, whether from Europeans or the colonized peoples themselves, is negated in *Orientalism*. The concept of a totalizing discourse of orientalism prevents variation among Europeans writing about the Orient, and Foucault's definition of power particularly undermines the potential for the colonized to resist the power wielded by dominant discourses. And, while Said's later text *Culture and Imperialism* (1992) actively criticizes this problem in Foucault's concept of power and argues that there is resistance within and against the European discourse of orientalism, Moore-Gilbert claims that Said returns repeatedly to his characterization of all Europeans as complicit with orientalist discourse.⁷

The implication of these criticisms of Said's characterization of orientalism as an omnipotent and unchanging discourse, which essentializes all Europeans as simultaneously racists and imperialists, is that such a monolithic discourse does not and could not exist. Rather than viewing orientalism as a single, overpowering force that dominated European ways of thinking and acting, Moore-Gilbert's criticisms suggest the functioning of multiple discourses within European society. The themes in European scholarship and writing that subjugate the people of the Middle East may not be a consistent, organized discourse but simply points of similarity between texts that are actually internally and intertextually diverse. As a result, Said's claim that orientalist discourse was systematically and deliberately the cause (or effect) of European imperialism is brought into question. While Said does provide evidence for some such connection, European representations of the Middle East may not be entirely or only interested in justifying colonization. If texts are necessarily varied because of the diversity of the authors and their particular contexts, interests other than support for colonization may inform these texts. Recognizing that representations of the Orient may be motivated by other interests besides the celebration of successful imperialist ventures makes it possible to explore the greater diversity and multiplicity of European texts on the Orient.

One of the key dilemmas for critics is that Said ignores the diversity of differing national traditions of orientalism, particularly that of Germany. As a result of his assumption that orientalist discourse is always linked to imperialist motives, Said can only address literature that emerges from nations that were active and successful participants in colonization, Moore-Gilbert argues. The orientalism of a nation that was unsuccessful at colonization would be impossible, according to those terms, so Said focuses on French and British scholarship. The existence of German orientalist scholarship is therefore particularly problematic for Said, since Germany was neither a unified nation nor a successful colonizer. Said dismisses the problem of German orientalism by stating that the Orient was never "actual" for German authors, but merely an object of their fantasies. Furthermore, Said essentializes distinctions between French and British orientalism, such that French is considered to be "aesthetic" while British is "scientific." Said attributes these differences to British successes in the Middle East in comparison to French failures, but in fact, the French were quite successful at colonizing the Maghreb.⁸ Said appears to oversimplify variations between national traditions of orientalism and ignore the existence of others.

Nina Berman and Todd Kontje both yet differently address the potential for understanding German intellectual production in the context of

orientalism. Berman responds to Said's limited definition by arguing that while Germany was unsuccessful in obtaining colonies in the Middle East, the German-speaking lands have had a long history of economic and political "interdependence" with the Middle East (18). She states, "Diese anderen Formen der Abhängigkeit und Dominanz produzierten und produzieren kulturelle Diskurse, die strukturelle und funktionale Ähnlichkeiten zu der Art des kolonialistischen Orientdiskurses, den Said analysiert, aufweisen" (18).⁹ In other words, Berman builds upon Said's definition of orientalism to include forms of domination other than colonization that create a body of orientalist literature similar to what Said observes in the French, British, and American literary traditions. Berman sketches the changing relationship between German-speaking territories and the Middle East from the Crusades in the Middle Ages, to racist theories in the nineteenth century, and to the relationship with Israel in the later twentieth century (19–33). Berman's analysis thus provides a redefinition of orientalism that recognizes any sort of political, economic, or ideological interdependence as a potential basis for an orientalist discourse, hence allowing for German or other national orientalisms. Kontje's approach in *German Orientalisms* is to argue, in contrast, that the very fact that Germany lacked both nation and empire until the end of the nineteenth century was actually the source of Germany's creation of a discourse on the Orient. German orientalism thus took the form of an attempt to define Germany as part of the European civilizing mission and, simultaneously, to extricate Germany from the sins of imperialism by affiliating the German people with the Orient itself (2–8). Kontje's study encompasses canonical German literature from the medieval period to the present, indicating the centrality of various "Orients" to the shaping of a German national consciousness. The motivation for an orientalist discourse in a particular context thus may be discursive support for an existing colonial or political relationship or may alternatively serve as a compensation for the lack thereof. Kontje's work hence opens the way for studying the orientalism of ethnic groups such as the European Jews, whose own relationship with nationhood and imperialism has been even more problematic than for the Germans.

In addition to the diverse forms of orientalism created by various national cultures, individual identity differences are also influential in shaping portrayals of the Orient. Lisa Lowe redefines Said's "Orientalism" into a heterogeneous set of discourses called "orientalisms," thus taking into account the diversity within orientalism. Lowe characterizes Said's "Orientalism" as a "monolithic, developmental discourse that uniformly constructs the Orient as the Other of the Occident" (4). She views this generalization

of orientalism as limiting because it does not allow for resistance from the Orient nor heterogeneity within and between orientalist texts (5, 9). Thus, Lowe argues that orientalism should not be viewed as monolithic, but as “an uneven matrix of orientalist situations across different cultural and historical sites” (5). Lowe offers not only an opening for exploring orientalisms in various literary traditions, but also suggests that each text may be molded by a number of different factors, including “not only . . . nation and race but also . . . gender, class, region, and sexual preference” (29). Joseph Boone further contributes to the discussion of identity difference as an influence on orientalism by focusing specifically on sexual identification. He criticizes Said’s gendering of the Orient as feminine and submissive and the Occident as masculine and dominating, suggesting that Said’s placement of a heterosexual construct onto Orient and Occident does not completely reflect the content of orientalist literature. He argues instead that the association of the Orient with the availability of sexuality has often dealt with homosexuality rather than heterosexuality. The appeal of the Middle East to many Western men was most importantly the possibility of male-male relationships, which were forbidden in the West (90–2). Interestingly, this expansion of *Orientalism* to include homosexuality still follows Said’s notion of sexuality in the Orient as both promising and threatening (188). Homosexuality in orientalist texts is, according to Boone, depicted as a “contagion” coming out of the Orient that threatens to contaminate and destroy the West. While this contagion emerges from the Orient, these sexual desires are “uncannily familiar” to Westerners, which makes the danger to the West ever greater (93–4). The view of homosexuality as a contagion reveals the Western repression and demonization of homosexuality as well as the labeling of the Orient as uncivilized and threatening. Lowe and Boone’s redefinition of Said’s orientalism suggests that since texts vary across gender, ethnicity, and sexual identity, representations of the Orient should be read with a sensitivity to those differences.

A final important modification of Said’s *Orientalism* observes that an orientalist text may involve both orientalist and non-orientalist viewpoints. Lowe argues that every version of orientalism may be seen as “internally complex and unstable” (5). She claims that an author’s work or a single text may include both orientalist discourse, by which she means an othering of the Oriental through racism and stereotyping in order to support colonial domination, as well as challenges to orientalist discourse (4, 9). Lowe thus provides a framework for analyzing the contradictions within orientalist texts themselves, such that both resistance to and complicity with orientalism may be observed in the work of one author. In her analysis of the letters of the British

Lady Montagu, for example, Lowe reveals that the writer expresses a sense of identification with upper-class Turkish women, hence undermining male travelers' misogynist fantasies about the Orient, but that she also participates in orientalist discourse by applying English concepts and prejudices to Turkish women and Turkish culture in general (43–50). Lowe's modification allows for the assumption that representations of the Orient may include both orientalist and non-orientalist perspectives, so analyses should attempt to articulate elements of resistance and contradiction within the texts themselves.

My reading of Jewish orientalisms draws on these modifications of Said's theory that recognize the possibility of orientalism without imperialism, the influence of identity formation and identity difference in orientalism, and the internal complexity of orientalist texts. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of "nomad thought" serves as a further potential model for the multiple tendencies within Jewish orientalisms. Deleuze and Guattari argue that Western philosophy, including philology and linguistics, has imposed a hierarchical or "arborescent" structure onto the Western conceptualization of the world. Nomad thought undermines this tradition in the form of the rhizome, a tuber that sends out multiple shoots in myriad directions underneath the ground, thus burrowing into the dominant culture and ways of thought.¹⁰ Nomad thought is characterized by deterritorialization, an appropriation of language or ideas, but may also have lines of reterritorialization; thus, the resistance represented by nomad thought may at times return to assimilation of arborescent thought.¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari's concept is particularly relevant for this book not only because it serves as a model for resistance to orientalism, the offspring of philology, but also because of the recognition of the simultaneity of contradictory lines of thought within this resistance. Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari also focus particularly on European-Jewish literature as representative of rhizomorphic thinking. Their book *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* is a study of the deterritorialization of German by Prague-born Jewish author Franz Kafka, for "strange and minor uses" (17). Thus, while Deleuze and Guattari's theory needs to be expanded to recognize the diversity of Jewish writing, particularly in the latter part of the twentieth century, their model serves as a foundation for understanding the functioning of Jewish orientalisms.

GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND REVOLUTION

The multiple Jewish orientalisms that are the subject of this book are closely connected with issues of gender and sexuality. Resistance to oppressive forces is often embodied in these texts by figures who are in between different cultures,

nations, ethnicities, genders, or sexualities. Historically, Jews, in particular, have been said to occupy these spaces in-between, not just between Europe and the Orient, but also between male and female. Jews have been feminized, or constructed in opposition to the masculine norm, by European cultures at least since the Middle Ages, if not since the Roman occupation of Palestine.¹² The feminization of the Jews culminated in discussions of sexuality in late nineteenth-century Vienna, where Otto Weininger's theory of gender and Judaism influenced both Sigmund Freud and Theodor Herzl.¹³ Weininger's equation of Jews with women and the resulting accusation that the Jews were not "manly" enough to found a nation served as a motivation for the Zionist movement to reclaim masculinity for Jews.¹⁴ While Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau attempted to reassert Jewish masculinity through Zionism, as discussed in Chapter 1, Jewish responses to this stereotyping have in fact been more diverse. Daniel Boyarin points out that the designation of femininity was often coopted by Jewish men in rabbinical tales as a form of resistance against Roman imperial authority. Their "gender bending," he argues, "thus mark[ed] their own understanding that gender itself is implicated in the maintenance of political power."¹⁵ Effective resistance, in other words, must acknowledge the investment of gender and ethnicity in power and authority. The literary characters studied in this book follow the lead of the rabbis by breaking down these categories to elicit change in power structures.

The power of the gender-bending figure to undermine authority has been recognized by Marjorie Garber, who coined the term "transvestite" to refer to a "third" category that calls into question stable binary constructions such as male/female, Jew/Christian, black/white (11–16). For Garber, "transvestism" does not actually constitute a third sex but signifies a "space of possibility structuring and confounding culture: the disruptive element that intervenes, not just a category crisis of male and female, but the crisis of category itself" (11, 17). The metaphor of the transvestite is thus not limited to sexual difference but serves to represent any figure who destabilizes binary categories, whether related to gender, ethnicity, religion, or class, and who thus challenges "vested interests" in cultural authority. Cross-dressing as a form of resistance is also suggested by Katrin Sieg's concept of "ethnic drag," which she defines as "the performance of 'race' as a masquerade" (2). This performance may be used to support "hegemonic racial discourses" but may alternatively "self-consciously . . . challenge essentialist notions of identity" (3). Sieg traces stage performances of ethnic cross-dressing in Germany, including the tradition of Jewish impersonation, and demonstrates either their confirmation of racist or antisemitic constructs or their reappropriation by those subjected to racial impersonation.¹⁶

The subversive, cross-dressing characters that Garber and Sieg describe appear in the European-Jewish literature addressed in this book, but they serve particular purposes. As in Sieg's definition of ethnic drag, the figures who occupy the borders of cultures, nations, ethnicities, genders, or sexualities discussed in this book always serve to challenge, but may replicate, racial or gender prejudices. Their liminality is however the basis for their disruptive potential. Furthermore, in Chapter 2, Isaac Josef de Vriendt and Tino von Bagdad use their positioning as a means not only to disrupt binary categories but also to unify the categories by offering mediation between Orient and Occident, Muslims and Jews. Michael Nathan and Jean Saspertas, discussed in Chapter 3, also vary Garber and Sieg's concepts by taking advantage of their intermediary positions between Europeans and Africans to facilitate revolutions in the Caribbean. As a result, Jewish drag comes to symbolize the struggle for solidarity between Jews and other peoples, which always underlies the orientalisms presented in this book. In Chapter 4, the cross-dressing figure is shattered outward onto multiple female personas, each of whom represents a different national perspective and engages in challenging racism, antisemitism, political oppression, and/or orientalism. The border figures and the voices of multiple women, who overlap in the form of the Muslim heroine Tino von Bagdad (Chapter 2), displace the heterosexual, male European subject assumed by Said's orientalism. Hence, the reappropriation of gender and sexual identity for subversive purposes is intimately connected with the critique of European oppression expressed through these Jewish orientalisms.

The first half of the book (Chapters 1 and 2) considers the German-Jewish discourse on Palestine and Zionism prior to the formation of the state of Israel in 1948. The first chapter, titled "Zionism, the Oriental, and the *Ostjude*: Theodor Herzl, Max Nordau, and Martin Buber," considers the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century work of these Zionist writers. The origins of the Zionist movement are situated in the context of trends that excluded the Jewish people from European society yet also influenced the development of Zionism, including German nationalism, racial and political antisemitism, theories of degeneracy and sexuality, and the stereotype of the Eastern European Jew, or *Ostjude*. Their writings illustrate differing ways in which Zionism employed antisemitic and imperialist rhetoric even as it undermined this discourse in the name of the emancipation of the Eastern European Jews. The first chapter thus establishes the foundation for these contradictory trends characterizing Jewish orientalisms, but also illustrates a failed negotiation between orientalism

and antisemitism that is rejected by the European-Jewish authors discussed in the following chapters.

The second chapter, “The Orient, Homosexuality, and the Allure of the Transvestite: Arnold Zweig and Else Lasker-Schüler Rewrite Zionism,” concentrates on the pre-1933 writings of these two German-Jewish authors. While other German-Jewish writers of the time, such as Franz Kafka, imagined orientalized spaces and expressed an interest in Zionism,¹⁷ these two authors knew Martin Buber, engaged with Zionist ideology in their work, and visited and later settled in Palestine in the 1930s and 1940s. Their pre-1933 work includes visions of harmony between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, contesting the imperialist tendency of Zionism in favor of cultural and/or political coalition. Zweig rewrites Jewish nationalism in his novel *De Vriendt kehrt heim* (1932) by challenging the masculinist, orientalist inheritance of political Zionism with an unconventional gay Zionist hero. De Vriendt serves as an intermediary figure between Jews and Arabs, and Western and Eastern European Jews, and offers mediation between opposing sides. The analysis of this character as a Zionist hero is supported by research in unpublished materials held at the Arnold-Zweig-Archiv at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, Germany. Lasker-Schüler also attempts to erase boundaries between “oriental” peoples by cross-dressing as Tino, a Muslim princess, in her narrative *Die Nächte der Tino von Bagdad* (1907; *The Nights of Tino of Baghdad*). Her privileging of a Muslim woman’s voice further allows her to disrupt the orientalist authority of European-Christian male authors. Tino’s rebellion against her society represents Lasker-Schüler’s desire for the freedom of expression for women in Europe, the end of European imperialism, and the possibility of uniting all “oriental” cultures.

The second half of the book (Chapters 3 and 4) provides a comparative analysis of French- and German-Jewish orientalisms after World War II. The third chapter, “*Le Parfum des Antilles*: The Caribbean Revolutions in the Works of Anna Seghers and André Schwarz-Bart,” traces a transfer of interest onto the Americas, rather than the Middle East, shortly after the war. German-Jewish author Anna Seghers and French-Jewish author André Schwarz-Bart adopt the setting of the Caribbean in their narratives to associate the European-Jewish experience with that of the African slaves of the Caribbean and to offer models of coalition between Jews and other oppressed peoples. In their texts, both Seghers and Schwarz-Bart place revolutionary power in the hands of black women, hence foregrounding women’s experience and genealogy. Seghers often links these women with Jewish characters, such as Michael Nathan and Jean Sasportas, whose intermediary positioning between blacks and whites in the Caribbean at the time of the revolutions

around 1800 affords them the possibility of infiltrating the white colonizers on behalf of the black revolutionaries. The analysis of the development of Jewish, black, and female characters in Seghers' Caribbean stories is supported by unpublished drafts held in the Anna-Seghers-Archiv at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, Germany. Schwarz-Bart, in contrast, focuses his Caribbean novels on the trauma and rebellion of two black women, Mariotte and her great-grandmother, the legendary Guadeloupean revolutionary Solitude, and carefully connects their experiences with those of the Jews during the Holocaust. Schwarz-Bart thus not only addresses Jewish history through the distance of the Caribbean setting but also expresses his sense of solidarity with the people of the Caribbean.

The final chapter, "Gender, Judaism, and Israel: The Nomadism of Chochana Boukhobza and Jeannette Lander," focuses on the representation of Israel in the works of two late twentieth-century transnational Jewish women. Both Chochana Boukhobza, a writer of Tunisian-Jewish descent who lives in France, and Jeannette Lander, an American of immigrant Polish-Jewish parents who lives in Germany, explore the relationship between Jewish identity and oppression after the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948. The heroine of Boukhobza's novel *Un été à Jérusalem* (1986; *Summer in Jerusalem*) is a French-Tunisian-Jewish woman visiting her family in Jerusalem who has conflicted connections to her multiple homelands. Lander's novel *Die Töchter* (1976; *The Daughters*) follows the scattering of three Polish-Jewish sisters to Atlanta, Berlin, and Israel, each of whom attempts to come to terms with the complexity of her own identity as well as the ethnic tensions of her land of choice. Both novels challenge the possibility of Israel as the solution to the Jewish diaspora as a result of the violence and oppression that has resulted from the state. Instead, both embrace a multinational, multicultural Jewish identity that facilitates a "nomadic" resistance to imperialism and oppression.

Chapter One

Zionism, the Oriental, and the *Ostjude*: Theodor Herzl, Max Nordau, and Martin Buber

Zionism, emerging with *Der Judenstaat* (The Jews' State) in 1896, was simultaneously an emancipationist movement in response to antisemitism and a colonizing venture in the Middle East. The contradiction in these two goals is the subject of the following chapter, which discusses the orientalizing of both Eastern European Jews, the subjects of emancipation, and the Arabs of Palestine, the objects of colonization, in early Zionist texts. The Zionist movement was a response to Western European prejudices and fears regarding both of these groups, since a Jewish state in Palestine would provide a home for the displaced, Eastern European Jewish immigrants in the West and would also, as Theodor Herzl expressed it, protect against the supposed "barbarism" of the Arab world (149). In this way, the Zionist movement in its beginnings aimed to free Jews of antisemitism, but at the same time drew on orientalist understandings of the world and Western Europeans' place in it. This chapter's focus on the functioning of orientalism within Zionism provides not only a historical basis for investigating the development of Jewish identity in relationship to imperialism and revolutionary struggles, but also marks a starting point for the contradictory division in European-Jewish writing of the twentieth century between complicity with orientalist discourse and criticism of oppression.

This chapter first provides an overview of the major trends in thought in late nineteenth-century Europe that influenced Zionism: nationalism, philology, antisemitism, theories of degeneration and sexuality, and the stereotype of the Eastern European Jew, or *Ostjude*. These ideas not only contributed to the exclusion of Jews in Europe, hence leading to the Zionist call for emancipation, but were also appropriated by early Zionist thought in

complex ways. The chapter then considers the work of three major figures in the early Zionist movement in light of these various intellectual forces. Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), the recognized founder of political Zionism, responded to the injustices caused by antisemitism and called for the rescue of oppressed Eastern European Jews, but he also drew on prejudices against Eastern European Jews and orientalist rhetoric to appeal to his Western European audience. Max Nordau (1849–1923), the other influential leader of early political Zionism, relied on antisemitic and *völkisch* conceptions in his call for *Muskeljuden* (muscle Jews) to lead the Zionist movement and presented Zionism as a civilizing mission to the Arabs of Palestine. Representing a second generation of Zionists, known as cultural Zionists, Martin Buber (1878–1965) contrasted Western and Eastern European Jews and made use of the distinctions between Semites and Europeans created by philologists; however, Buber transferred the positive value onto Eastern European Jews and Semitic peoples, hence revising Western European orientalist conceptions. Furthermore, Buber resisted imperialist rhetoric used toward the Arabs of Palestine and called for the protection of Arab rights.¹

NATIONALISM

The Zionist movement was shaped not only by the development of many nationalisms in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but also most specifically by the German nationalist tradition. The rise in nationalism at the time has been attributed to the rush of modernity and urbanization, increasing migrations of populations, and economic depression. As opposed to the nationalism of the nineteenth century, which promoted expansion and unification of many different small national or ethnic groups into one larger nation, the nationalism of 1870 to 1914 effectively broke apart these unifications. The economic problems facing Europeans led them to blame their difficulties on the governments of these larger nations as well as other groups within their own nations, thus fostering small nationalist movements. Ethnicity and language grew in importance in determining independent nationhood. A national language, however, did not need to be the one spoken by members of the national group for communication; rather, debates over choosing or creating a national language became part of the politics of nationalism. The splintering of larger nations based on ethnic or linguistic divisions occurred throughout Europe: Turkey, Austria-Hungary, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Sweden. Zionism was part of this pattern of development and based its understanding of the nation on the new nationalist movements of the time.²

Since Zionism originated in the German-speaking milieu, however, it was particularly imprinted by German nationalism. The concept of a distinctly German ethnic and linguistic group has its roots in German writing of the late eighteenth century. Johann Gottfried Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte both contributed to the idea of a German nation or *Volk* as distinct from other peoples. While German nationalism can not be defined merely in terms of these two writers, their legacy is particularly relevant in the development of Zionism.³ Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784; *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*) established the concept that a *Volk* develops uniquely as a result of the particular climate, geographical location, and historical situation of the people, and that the national character of a people is based on its racial distinctiveness (507–11). He refers to each nation as a “menschliche Nationalpflanze” that has grown up in a specific place and time with distinctive customs and character (509). He lauds the German *Volk* in particular as an unusually strong, heroic, and bold people (690). The Germans were responsible for defending Europe from barbarian invaders and for developing Europe itself, Herder argues, and as a result, their great character and military prowess established the “Kultur, Freiheit und Sicherheit Europas” (695–6). Herder similarly describes the Jewish people as possessing “kriegerische[n] Mut” in “die Zeiten Davids und der Makkabäer,” but he criticizes the result of the Jewish diaspora in Europe since Biblical times. He argues that the Jewish people “. . . ist . . . fast seit seiner Entstehung eine parasitische Pflanze auf den Stämmen andrer Nationen; ein Geschlecht schlauer Unterhändler beinah auf der ganzen Erde, das Trotz aller Unterdrückung nirgend sich nach eigner Ehre und Wohnung, nirgend nach einem Vaterlande sehnet” (492).⁴ In other words, Herder labels the Jews as parasites because of their apparent lack of interest in creating their own nation on their own soil, and the lack of this foundation has contributed to their degeneration as a *Volk*. The praise of the heroic origins of the Jews, in contrast to their weaker, rootless descendants, was internalized by the Zionist movement, which mined Biblical history for masculine icons like the Maccabees who could lead the Jewish people.⁵ Furthermore, the Zionist movement developed in reaction to claims about the Jews' inability to found a nation. Herzl and Nordau's plan to create a strong, independent Jewish people as the basis for a Jewish nation thus responded to Herder's ideas about *Völker* and the Jews specifically.

Fichte's *Reden an die Deutsche Nation* (1806; *Lectures to the German Nation*) furthered Herder's argument about the German people, but he was responding to the new situation of the Germans as subjects of the French empire under Napoleon. Fichte's *Reden* attempted to reassert the greatness of the German *Volk* and to call for a regeneration of German culture in the face of this

occupation.⁶ Fichte claimed that the German people are unique because they have remained in their original geographical location and retained their original language, which means that the language has developed naturally through the experiences of the generations. A living language unites the realm of the senses and of the mind in such a way that speakers of this language are uniquely suited to developing culture and intellectual thought. In contrast, a people that adopts a foreign language, such as Latin, separates this language from the original experiences which shaped it, so it is no longer a living language (60–74). Fichte's argument therefore suggested that Germans are superior to other peoples because of their capacity for intellectual and cultural development, and that this culture should be regenerated through a rejection of French influences in particular. While the idea that a *Volk* required purification and regeneration contributed to antisemitism in Germany, Herzl himself adapted this concept for Jewish nationalism, claiming the need for the Jews to separate from other cultures in order to establish their own identity and culture.⁷

Fichte's emphasis on the German language and the rejection of other cultures in developing a German national identity was already apparent in the late eighteenth-century debate over German national literature. Gottfried Ephraim Lessing and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe were among the German intellectuals at the time who argued for the development of a German national literature. Lessing (1759) similarly directed his attack on French influence, claiming that French dramatists are inferior to the English. Goethe (1795) recognized the problem facing German writers of his time, who lacked a unified nation and national spirit as the basis for a German literary tradition. Goethe encouraged young authors to build upon existing German writing to create a national literature, but also indicated the need for a national literature in forming the German national spirit.⁸ The importance of a national language and of the development of a national literature in order to create a Jewish national spirit was also central to debates at the Zionist congresses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hence reflecting the influence of German writers such as Fichte and Goethe. The debate focused on adopting a modernized Hebrew as the Jewish national language, but Eastern European factions favored Yiddish, a language which, as opposed to Hebrew, was spoken on a daily basis. Buber, a cultural Zionist and Hebraist, played a central role in encouraging the development of a national literature.⁹

PHILOLOGY

The importance of rejecting other cultures in order to foster one's own, an important thread in Fichte's *Reden*, developed a more scientific basis in

discussions of German nationalism through the course of the nineteenth century. This scientific grounding appeared in the newly conceived, interlinked fields of philology, biology, and Social Darwinism, which also influenced Herzl's conceptions of the Jewish nation.¹⁰ Significantly, this intellectual and ideological context supported and initiated not only nationalist movements, and Zionism specifically, but also orientalism, according to Edward Said. This overlap in ideologies represents one of the ways in which the origin of Zionism is connected to orientalist thought.

In *Orientalism*, Said identifies the source of the discourse of orientalism in philology of the late eighteenth century and notes that all orientalists, by his definition, were originally philologists (98). According to Michel Foucault, the European episteme transformed suddenly at the end of the eighteenth century, whereby modern philology, or linguistics, as well as natural science and economics, changed dramatically. These fields began to focus on the organization of knowledge according to internal structure or characteristics and relied on history, rather than taxinomia, to analyze these structures. The German linguist Franz Bopp initiated the new field of philology in the early nineteenth century by identifying roots of words as the essential mode of differentiation between languages and by categorizing languages into families according to the nature of these roots.¹¹ The categorization of languages, however, was not an indifferent endeavor, but rather one which purposefully made a distinction between the European and the Oriental. One of the influences on this trend of thought can be traced to Friedrich Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808; *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*). Schlegel, who, like Bopp, was clearly imprinted by Herder's ideas, named Sanskrit the mother language of German and considered all other language families in the Middle East, Africa, and Far East Asia to be unattractive and undeveloped. Schlegel thus contrasted the Indo-European family, which includes Latin, Greek, and Germanic languages as descendants of Sanskrit, with the Semitic family. His distinction between the people of India and their heirs (associated with the "Aryans") and the "Semites" served as the basis for modern philology and later led to the association of language family with race.¹²

Said indeed identifies this trend in philology as mirrored in developments in biology at the time, such that claims by linguists about the inferiority of Semitic languages and peoples were buttressed by racial classifications in biology and Social Darwinism (206). One of these prominent biologists of the mid-nineteenth century was Arthur de Gobineau, who claimed that certain racial groups were physically superior to others, and he particularly praised the Germanic tribes. Social Darwinism transferred Charles Darwin's biological theories onto the social realm and claimed that there was a struggle between

nations in which only the fittest would survive. In order for a nation to compete in this struggle, the nation must purify itself through the elimination of foreign elements and selective breeding. In other words, a “race” could become degenerated by foreign influences, so they must therefore be removed.¹³

While these trends justified the removal of any “foreign” elements, Said emphasizes that there was a distinction made between the inferiority of the racial group called “Oriental-African” and the superiority of the “European-Aryan” (206). In the mid-nineteenth century, philologist Ernst Renan wrote a companion text on Semitic languages to Bopp’s on Indo-European and presented Semitic as an inferior, “degraded” variation of Indo-European. Renan associated the Semitic language family with the anatomy, intelligence, history, politics, culture, and anthropology of “Semitic” peoples. Differences in languages corresponded to differences in the “language users” and their societies. Renan constructed Semitic peoples and their languages as “inorganic” and “ossified” as opposed to the “organic,” developing languages and peoples of the Indo-European family. Semitic peoples thus became “monstrous,” inhuman creatures who only existed in the “laboratory” of the scientist. Since science was apparently being used to clarify these distinctions between peoples, the distinctions were considered to be unchanging and unavoidable: an “Oriental” is always an “Oriental.” By the late nineteenth century, philology and biological racial theories were working in conjunction with nationalism, imperialism, and the discourse of orientalism.¹⁴

Philology and Social Darwinism appealed to proponents of German nationalism. Schlegel, Bopp, and Renan’s work appear to have further developed Fichte’s arguments about the superiority of certain peoples and their languages by providing a supposed scientific basis for this superiority. Schlegel connected German specifically with Sanskrit and argued that this lineage is superior to the “Semitic” language family, an argument supported by Bopp and Renan’s work. The exceptional status of the German language is matched by the physical superiority of the German race, according to Gobineau, and these ideas reinforced German nationalist claims to ethnic and linguistic uniqueness. However, German cultural critics began to warn that the German people were endangered by racial mixing, which was leading to the degeneration of German society. And the concern about racial mixing naturally began to focus on the “Oriental” within Europe: the Jews.¹⁵ However, these trends did not only influence Zionism because of their racial justification of antisemitism, but also because Zionist leaders relied on these ideologies in their own thought. Social Darwinist conceptions of fitness and strength are apparent in Nordau’s call for *Muskeljuden*, while Buber’s philosophy further developed distinctions between Semites and Europeans created

by philologists, and hence, orientalists. In other words, early Zionist thought was both a part of and a response against contemporary intellectual trends that were implicated in antisemitic and orientalist rhetoric.

ANTISEMITISM

The emergence of race theory in the late nineteenth century led to the transformation of antisemitism from a religious, moral, or cultural prejudice into one with racial and biological bases. But antisemitism also became political, as the economic depression of the 1870s and the pressures of urbanization and industrialization led to a backlash against capitalism, liberalism, modernity, and foreigners. Antisemitism became a part of this swell of xenophobia, anticapitalism, and fear of urbanization.¹⁶

Racial and political antisemitism was associated with a fear of the spreading power of the Jews within German society, a concept known as *Verjudung*, or Judaization. This fear focused not only on the idea that Jews were gaining influence in economics, politics, and culture, but also on the belief that a Jewish “spirit” was seeping into the German people and causing its degradation. The Jews’ growing assimilation and long-awaited emancipation in Germany in 1871 was often identified by antisemites as the problem. The solution to *Verjudung*, according to antisemites, was the removal of Jewish influences, both material and spiritual.¹⁷ Proponents of this *Entjudung* in the mid- to late nineteenth century included Richard Wagner, who explained that the inferiority of French art and music resulted from the Jewish influence in French society. Thus, Wagner conveniently linked the German disdain for French culture voiced earlier by Fichte and Lessing with a fear of Jewish control. Later influential critics, such as Eugen Dühring and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, provided a more racial basis for the threat of “foreigners” such as the Jews, claiming that Jews were polluting the German people and culture. Race theory and Social Darwinism therefore helped to shape the form of antisemitism that developed in German writing in the late nineteenth century: Jews, the argument went, were racially inferior and their presence was causing the degeneration of the German people and culture. The second and political element to antisemitism stemmed from antisemitic attitudes extending back to medieval times, which associated Jews with money-lending and materialism. The tendency to blame Jews for the problems of capitalism and urbanization in the late nineteenth century continued this long antisemitic tradition.¹⁸

Two important German cultural critics of the time, Paul de Lagarde and Julius Langbehn, provide useful illustrations of the formulations of

antisemitism, xenophobia, and nationalism popularized in the late nineteenth century. Their philosophies are part of a trend known as *völkisch* or Germanic ideology. Lagarde attacked both liberalism and modernity, as well as the current political state of Germany. His first concern was with modernity and urbanization; he saw this force, supposedly brought about by Jews, liberals, and academics, as leading to the spiritual decay of the German people. He called for a return to rural life and hard work to reinvigorate the Germans. Lagarde connected the city with all of the supposedly negative forces in society—capitalism, liberalism, modernity, and *Verjudung*—which led him to propose that Germans flee the city and adopt a peasant lifestyle. Lagarde was disillusioned by Bismarck's creation of the German Empire in 1871, and he dreamed of expanding Germany throughout all of the German lands, removing liberals and Jews in order to make way for the true German nation. Lagarde claimed that the presence of the Jews made German unification difficult because of their supposed connection to capitalism and liberalism.¹⁹ Lagarde thus presented an antisemitism that viewed Jews as both religiously different and threatening but also as politically dangerous because of their alleged connection to capitalism. Since he believed Jews were a separate race who needed to be evacuated from Germany, and called for a spiritual reinvigoration and purification of the German people through an escape from urban centers, his argument also clearly relies on the popular Social Darwinist philosophy of his time.

Langbehn, who also wrote in the late nineteenth century, focused particularly on an ideology of art as the means for transforming German society. He believed that only through the cultivation of true German artists and German art could a national German culture be saved from these forces. He also felt that the emphasis on training at the university was a negative force in society, and that the young should instead be encouraged to develop their physical strength and endurance. Like Lagarde, Langbehn embraced the ideal of the hard-working peasant, an idealized archetype of the German. Part of Langbehn's philosophy was that it was only the *Volk*, or the German people, who could develop this great art. As a result, Jews were seen as an enemy to the development of artistic creativity, but not Orthodox Jews, who had their own unique tradition. Rather, it was the assimilated Jews whom Langbehn saw as threatening, because they were infiltrating German society, and they needed to be removed.²⁰ Langbehn's philosophy differs from Lagarde's in that he emphasized the importance of Germanic art and differentiated between assimilated and Orthodox Jews, viewing the latter as admirable.

Völkisch ideas were adopted by antisemitic movements, Pan-Germanism, and youth movements, which were on the rise in the late nineteenth

century. Langbehn's notions of Germanic art, the importance of nature and physical strength, and the need to separate the Jews from the German *Volk* provided a model for future social movements. For example, the anti-intellectual nature-loving German Youth Movement, later known as the *Wandervögel*, clearly had its roots in Langbehn's philosophy. The youth movements were supplemented by a general institutionalization of the *völkisch* ideology developed by critics like Lagarde and Langbehn within German schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The curriculum emphasized Germanic legends, German literature, history and philosophy, and physical fitness.²¹ Young Germans attending schools and social organizations in the late nineteenth century therefore assimilated the antisemitic, antimodern, and nationalist teachings of *völkisch* ideology. The spread of racial and political antisemitism throughout German and European society led to a reaction by Jewish writers such as Herzl, who founded Zionism in response to growing antisemitism. At the same time, elements of *völkisch* ideology permeated early Zionist thought: both Nordau and Buber emphasized the importance of physical rejuvenation through agricultural labor, hence creating a Jewish version of the idealized German peasant, and Buber further praised the *Ostjuden* in particular as models for the assimilated Jews, as did Langbehn.

DEGENERATION

One of the central ideas within the developing nationalism of Europe in the late nineteenth century was degeneracy, since "foreign" elements supposedly needed to be removed in order to regenerate the people and form a strong nation. Degeneracy was also at issue within orientalist discourse, since oriental or Semitic people were presented as linguistically and racially inferior to Europeans. Antisemitism of the time also relied on the concept of degeneracy because Jews in particular were blamed for causing degeneracy within German society. This idea, which was clearly a central concern of late nineteenth-century Europe, therefore profoundly shaped the development of Zionism. One of the best-known works on the concept of degeneracy was, in fact, written by one of the first leaders of the Zionist movement, Max Nordau.²²

Nordau, a doctor and cultural critic of Jewish heritage, wrote his widely influential and seminal work *Entartung* (Degeneration) in 1892. As a result of his medical training, Nordau's approach to cultural criticism was scientific. A positivist, Nordau emphasized the importance of scientific progress, order, duty, rationality, discipline, self-restraint, and hard work.²³ Like other intellectuals of his time, Nordau was also influenced by Darwinist notions of the struggle for life, and he applied these ideas in his cultural criticism. As

a result of these ideological influences, Nordau's *Entartung* criticizes *fin-de-siècle* artistic and literary movements that he calls decadent, frivolous, and fantastical because, he believed, they threatened rationality and progress.²⁴ Among his targets are irrationalists and romantics like Wagner, Ibsen, and Nietzsche (2–15). Nordau claims that these artists suffer from degeneracy, which is expressed through abnormal physical and mental characteristics. Mental degeneracy is apparent through writing or other artistic expression that is characterized by immorality, insanity, emotionalism, or mysticism (16–22). Nordau therefore refers to late nineteenth-century art schools such as impressionism and symbolism as “association[s] of neuropaths,” rather like bands of deranged criminals. The public then becomes hysterical and obsessed with these new trends and the work of these bands of neuropaths proliferates (30–3).

According to Nordau, the greater prevalence of degeneracy in society at his time resulted from the exhaustion caused by the sudden acceleration of life under industrialization. Nordau argues that progress in the nineteenth century has overtaken humanity, and only the strongest have been able to adapt to this new and rapid pace; the rest have sunken into degeneracy. The increase in crime, insanity, and suicide indicate the greater stress in society as a result of industrialization (36–40). Nordau therefore views the artistic schools of the late eighteenth century not as “outbursts of gushing, youthful vigour” but rather the “convulsions and spasms of exhaustion” (43). The loss of “vital energy” is thus the cause of degeneration.²⁵ However, Nordau does have hope for the future; his Social Darwinist influences become evident in his claim that the healthy and normal individuals will recover from their fatigue and will persevere while the true degenerates will die out. Decadent art forms will fade out with the end of the degenerates, and classical artistic, poetic, and musical forms will be recognized as perfectly sufficient for self-expression (540–5).

While Nordau never addresses Jews or antisemitism in *Entartung*, his Jewish heritage may have influenced the position he took against modernism. Nordau embraced bourgeois values of normalcy and rationality, leading to the popularity of his book, but this tendency in his work has been attributed to his desire to be accepted into bourgeois society, in spite of being Jewish. Nordau's attack on modernism may have had other motives related to his Jewish heritage. He attempts to undermine antisemitic, *völkisch* claims that Jews are the cause of degeneracy within Germany by shifting the focus away from Jewish influences and onto decadent artistic movements. Furthermore, he recognizes these art movements as a “religious renaissance,” in which “mystical self-abandonment” was the goal. Nordau treated such ideas

with suspicion because they meant an end to the rational, Enlightenment ideals that would allow for an acceptance of the Jews into society, according to his view.²⁶ In other words, Nordau specifically feared the influences of religious mysticism, and his later Zionist writings actually transfer this dangerous mysticism onto the Eastern European Jews, or *Ostjuden*.

MASCULINITY AND THE JEWS

The Zionist movement reacted to perceptions of the Jewish people within European culture, including not only the designation as degenerate, but also the antisemitic understanding of the Jews as feminine. The idea of a masculine nationalism, while already evident in Herder's writings of the late eighteenth century, gathered in importance in the late nineteenth century with the birth of new nationalist movements, which adopted the masculine ideal of self-control, moderation, strength, and virtue as the basis for their ideology. The Jews continued to be viewed as incapable of masculine nationalism, and the Zionist movement therefore was a struggle to recuperate both masculinity and nationhood for the Jews.²⁷

The association of Jews with femininity has deep roots in European culture, but it became prominent in the late nineteenth century as part of the discussion of gender and sexuality in Vienna. One of the main figures in the debate on Jews and sexuality in Vienna was Otto Weininger, a Jewish cultural critic whose book *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Sex and Character) was published in 1903. Weininger viewed the forces of femininity and Jewishness, which he abstracted from actual women and Jews, as dangerous elements in society as a result of their uncontrolled passion. According to Weininger, Jews, by which he meant Jewish men, are thus incapable of fulfilling masculine roles, from agricultural work to military service, a stereotype which developed out of the exclusion of Jews from these roles in European society since the Middle Ages. Thus, Weininger argued, the Jews were incapable of forming their own nation or even participating as citizens.²⁸ David S. Luft argues that the intent of Weininger's writing was actually to achieve emancipation for all from the threats to rationality he saw embodied in femininity and Jewishness, but his views did not avoid an assimilation of antisemitic stereotypes of the time (46, 81–7). Herzl, who attended university in Vienna in the late nineteenth century prior to formulating his Zionist ideas, was susceptible to the discourse on Jews and sexuality in Vienna in the 1890s.²⁹ The Zionist movement can then be seen as both a response to and an internalization of this intellectual milieu.

Daniel Boyarin's reading of Zionism establishes the influence of discussions of gender and Judaism on Herzl. Boyarin argues that the Zionist

movement was an attempt to create a Jewish counterpart to masculine, German nationalism, and thus, a form of assimilation in which Jews could overcome their supposed degeneracy and femininity to become a nation.³⁰ Herzl's response to the feminization of the Jews was thus to try to posit Jews as the opposite of the stereotype. In order to be accepted as equals in European society, he felt, the Jews must prove their manhood by forming their own nation which, simultaneously, meant becoming colonizers, resulting in "masquerade colonialism, parodic mimesis of colonialism, Jews in colonialist drag, Jewish 'women' dressed up like 'men'" (309). This struggle to assimilate to European nationalist ideals led to the resurrection of strong, Biblical warriors, who had been generally ignored by rabbinical tradition, as leaders of the Zionist movement (273–4). The stereotypes of Jews as passive and feminine were thus transplanted onto the *Ostjuden* in the vocabulary of Herzl and Nordau. In fact, the tactic of the political Zionist movement was to shift negative characterizations of the Jews, such as physical weakness and femininity, onto the Eastern European Jews, in order to reclaim masculinity for the Western European Jews, who were then designated as "Zionists" (296). Hence, the creation of a masculine Jewish nationalism inherently required the negative stereotyping of the *Ostjuden*, as Herzl and Nordau's writings exemplify.

THE *OSTJUDE*

While the antisemitic stereotype of femininity was shifted onto the *Ostjuden*, the supposedly "oriental" nature of the Jews was also central to German-Jewish perceptions of *Ostjuden* and hence part of Zionist thought. Langbehn distinguished between Western, assimilated Jews and Orthodox Jews, arguing that the latter were superior because of their traditional religious practices. German Jews' impressions of their Eastern European counterparts, on the other hand, was complex and constantly developing and changing, depending on the societal circumstances of the German Jews.

The initial impression, during most of the nineteenth century, was that the *Ostjuden* were unenlightened, poor, and foreign. In the nineteenth century, many German Jews were striving for assimilation and emancipation in Germany through education in German literature and culture. As a result of their desire to be accepted into German society, German Jews began to distinguish themselves from the Jewish people of Poland and Russia, who were generally poorer and unemancipated. The Eastern European Jew thus became associated with the image of the ghetto, which was seen as dirty, poor, and overcrowded with Yiddish-speaking, religious Jews. German Jews wanted to disassociate themselves from these negative stereotypes in order to support

their own assimilation into German society. While the image of the ghetto was a stereotype of Eastern European Jewish life encouraged by German literature of the time, many of these Jews did live in poor, overcrowded conditions and suffered from religious oppression.³¹

In fact, pogroms spread across Russia in the 1880s, forcing almost three million Eastern European Jews to flee westward by 1914. Many of them came through Germany, where they received food, medical care, and sometimes employment from German-Jewish communities. While some Jewish immigrants settled in Germany and in Berlin in particular, Vienna had the largest Jewish population of any city in Central Europe by 1910 as a result of Jewish immigration from the East. The fact that these immigrants maintained their traditional style of the dress, with black caftans and hats, meant that they were recognizably different from other populations and in enough numbers that Adolf Hitler himself recalled encountering them as a young man in Vienna. The poverty and foreignness of this mass of Eastern European Jewish immigrants reinforced European stereotypes of Jews, and German Jews began to resent their presence. German Jews' attitudes towards Eastern European Jews worsened, and they blamed the *Ostjuden* for threatening their social position and for causing the rise of antisemitism.³²

This negative image of the *Ostjuden* was not only associated with poverty and lack of education, but also with an alien, oriental culture. Paul Mendes-Flohr argues that the stereotype of Jews as Asiatic, not European, appeared throughout Western European culture in the nineteenth century. The term antisemitism itself, he notes, which was coined in 1879, came from an attempt to label Jews as stemming from "oriental" origins. The writer Karl Emil Franzos (1848–1904), who was himself a Jew from Eastern Europe, played an active role in shifting the stereotype of the Jews as oriental and strange onto the *Ostjude*.³³ Franzos referred to the Eastern European ghetto as "*Halb-Asien*," which Mendes-Flohr describes as "an exotic world characterized by squalor, ignorance and superstition, and ruled by a fanatic mystical sect known as Hasidim."³⁴ According to this myth, the ghetto borrowed some Western aspects but was truly based in the Asian, uncultured, barbaric way of life. Franzos' novels were very popular and spread this stereotype of the *Ostjuden* and the ghetto throughout Europe. According to these accounts, Western Europeans began to view the *Ostjuden* not merely as uneducated and adverse to assimilation, but rather, as fundamentally different, oriental, exotic, and, most importantly, mystical and religious. These characteristics of the *Ostjuden* take a central role in the permutations of the *Ostjude* stereotype to follow. However, unlike other objects of exoticization, *Ostjuden* were living among the Western European Jews at the same place

and same time, which means that a great amount of energy was devoted to creating and maintaining this orientalized image of the *Ostjuden*.³⁵

While the German Jews were blaming the *Ostjuden* for antisemitism, the immigrants from the East were probably not the principal cause of rising antisemitism at the end of the nineteenth century. Although antisemitic propaganda did attack the *Ostjuden*, the modern, assimilated, local German Jews were ultimately viewed as a threat, because they were the ones who were seen to have economic and academic power and to be infiltrating German society.³⁶ The writings of *völkisch* thinkers de Lagarde and Langbehn illustrate this, since they associate assimilated Jews with capitalism, liberalism, and urbanization, which they blame for the economic downturn. The religious Jews of the East were even praised by Langbehn because they maintained their own customs, had “character” and deserved respect, while the assimilated Jews were “rootless” and lacked “integrity.”³⁷ While Eastern European Jewish immigrants may have contributed to negative attitudes towards Jews by World War I because of their association with socialist worker parties,³⁸ proponents of antisemitism in the late nineteenth century clearly focused their attacks on assimilated Jews. Thus, German-Jewish fears of the *Ostjuden* were most likely misplaced and instead seem to reflect a desire to disassociate themselves from negative characterizations of the Jews. These Western European Jewish prejudices formed the basis of early Zionist thought, as can be seen in the work of Herzl and Nordau. Interestingly, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the second generation of Zionists, such as Buber, adopted a more positive conception of the *Ostjuden* which comes closer to Langbehn’s own admiration of them.

THEODOR HERZL

The first prominent leaders in the Zionist movement were Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau. Herzl, who was born in Hungary but later settled in Vienna, worked as a playwright and a journalist, and became the Paris correspondent for the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse* (New Free Press) in 1891. With this new perspective, at a distance from his home city, Herzl began work on his treatise, *Der Judenstaat* (1896). The text established the foundation for a concept of a Jewish state and presented suggestions for how to proceed in creating this state. Herzl also served as the organizer and key-note speaker at the First Zionist Congress in 1897 in Basel, Switzerland. He was viewed as the figurehead of the movement, the great leader who could rally his followers with rousing speeches. Nordau, who also came from Hungary and worked as a journalist in Paris, met Herzl in the 1890s and joined his cause. Already known for books

like *Entartung*, Nordau complemented Herzl by representing the intellectual, scientific, rational, and moral ideals of the movement. Nordau addressed the Zionist Congresses from 1897 through 1911 on the state of world Jewry, and these speeches, along with his essays on the subject of Zionism, established him as an important leader in the early Zionist movement.³⁹

The concept that the Jewish people are a *Volk* and should form a state originated in Herzl's thought, which he based on European understandings of the nation, such as in Fichte. Under Herzl's leadership, the Zionist movement quickly took on the shape of other nationalist movements of the time. Herzl had conceived of a "Society of Jews" to serve as a decision-making body for the Zionists, but Nordau encouraged him to transform this concept into the more democratic notion of a representative assembly. The first few congresses (1897–1899) thus succeeded in creating all of the essential elements of a nationalist movement: national heroes (Herzl and Nordau), a national anthem (*Hatikvah*), a flag, humanitarian goals, a sense of unity, and cultural celebrations. This program established the "normalcy" of Jewish nationalism as one of the many other nationalisms in Europe at the time, and thus earned Zionism legitimacy.⁴⁰

Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* (1896) presents the initial justifications for the Zionist movement and provides an interesting characterization of the place of Jews in the world. The book begins with a recognition of the problem that all Jews face: antisemitism (123, 129). He claims that emancipation and assimilation, in spite of its promise for the future of the Jewish people in Europe, has failed and has only served to suppress antisemitism, which, when it breaks out in full force again, will be much worse (129–131). Herzl goes so far as to say that "[t]he peoples with whom Jews live are all antisemites, without exception, discreetly or brazenly" (140). Antisemitism has actually succeeded in keeping the Jews together as a unified group, and therefore, assimilation is not possible, Herzl argues. The Jewish *Volk* "cannot perish, because external enemies hold it together" (132). On the other hand, there may be Jews in Western European countries who are comfortable and "assimilated," and from these people he asks nothing. Rather, his goal is to unite the "Jewish proletariat" who are landless and poor, and relocate them to a new country that they can call their own. They will build up the infrastructure of the nation, tilling the soil and building the roads and railways. The assimilated Jews need not relocate, and in fact, will benefit from not having these poor Jewish immigrants entering their countries and causing prejudice against Jews. He suggests, therefore, an emigration of the poorest Jewish populations; then the educated and wealthier Jews can decide if they also want to emigrate (133–5, 146–7). This "transformation will be gradual . . . and . . . will mark the end of antisemitism" (135).

The significance of these opening passages lies in his distinction between Eastern European Jews, who are implied by the term “landless proletariat,” and Western European Jews, who are the assimilated Jews. Herzl clearly establishes from the beginning that the goal of his proposal is to deal with the Eastern European Jewish immigrants who have been perceived as reflecting negatively on Western European Jews. He carefully distances himself, however, from Western European Jewish philanthropic efforts to transplant the immigrants to small, agricultural colonies in Palestine, and calls these people “antisemite[s] of Jewish background in disguise” (134). His intentions differ because he wants to create a nation where the poor immigrants could build a new foundation for their lives. Ostensibly, his own project is a charitable one, which could save the persecuted masses of Jews, but Herzl appeals to prejudices against Eastern European Jews to sway his readers.

Interestingly, however, his distinction between Eastern and Western European Jews varies as the text continues. While he initially claims that the goal is to establish a nation for the Jews, and that the Eastern European Jews in particular will create this nation with their own labor, his chapter on the cause of antisemitism points to the emancipation of the Jews as the problem. He claims that the sudden entry of the Jewish population into the bourgeoisie threatened the Christians and created unwanted competition, and the success of Jewish businesses made it impossible for Christians to challenge Jewish emancipation (143–5). This explanation of the cause of antisemitism conflicts with his earlier statements about the need for poor immigrants, not assimilated Jews, to emigrate to the new land. If the reason for Zionism is antisemitism, then Herzl implies in this passage that the assimilated Jews are actually in greater need of emigrating than the poor laborers. Herzl’s blurring of the differences between Western and Eastern European Jews reproduces the widespread attempt by Western European Jews to place the burden of antisemitism onto the Eastern European Jewish population. Herzl propagates this viewpoint even as he seemingly contradicts it.

Conflicts between Western and Eastern European Jewish perspectives are also central to the question of a national language, which Herzl addresses in *Der Judenstaat* and which significantly divided Western and Eastern European Jewish interests in the Zionist Congresses. Herzl embraces the idea that the Jewish state will have several national languages, just as Switzerland does. He rejects Hebrew as a common language, which European Jews generally could not speak. Furthermore, he states, “We will accustom ourselves to drop the stunted and oppressed jargons, these ghetto-languages, which we use at present. They were the secretive languages of captives” (196). He implies that Yiddish, rather than being a language unique to the Jewish people, represents

the suffering of the Jews in antisemitic lands, and is in fact an inferior “jargon,” not even a language. This characterization of Yiddish as a malignant form of German reflects antisemitic conceptions of Jews as incapable of speaking German correctly but as rather speaking in a secretive, abnormal discourse called “mauscheln.” Herzl’s condemnation of Yiddish was tied to his critique of what he called the “Mauschel,” the supposedly weak, effeminate Eastern European Jews, who needed to be replaced by the manly Zionists, based on the Germanic model. The fact that Herzl preferred German as the language of Zionism was thus not accidental. In spite of Herzl’s dismissal of Hebrew and Yiddish, the national language of the Jewish state became a highly contested issue during the Zionist Congresses.⁴¹

A second important issue in Herzl’s *Der Judenstaat* is the relationship between Jews and the native peoples of the land where the Jews’ state would be established. Herzl proposes the formation of the Jewish Company to raise money for purchasing the land. The purchase of the land is of great importance to Herzl, because he dislikes the notion of “gradual infiltration” of Jews into a country, such as the philanthropists are doing, which may cause antisemitism and resistance. Instead, Herzl would like the Jews to be granted sovereignty of a tract of land, according to the decision of governing nations (147–8). In *Der Judenstaat*, he proposes two possibilities: Argentina and Palestine. The advantage of Argentina, according to Herzl, is its size and sparse population; Herzl asks for a portion to be ceded to the Zionists for building a nation. Alternatively, he proposes Palestine, with its clear historical significance. He would request sovereignty over the land from the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, and in return the Jews would “put . . . the finances of Turkey completely in order” (148–9). The further justification for granting Palestine to the Jews would be that the Jewish nation would provide Europe with “a part of the barrier against Asia” and “would serve as the outpost of civilization against barbarism” (149). In this way, European nations would benefit from allowing the Jews to build their nation there. Furthermore, the Jewish state would be responsible for guarding “the holy places of Christendom,” which would further benefit European travelers (149).

Herzl’s comments about the settlement of Palestine have elicited negative responses in later scholarship, undoubtedly for their racist and orientalist implications. By referring to the peoples of the Middle East and Asia as barbarian hordes, Herzl adopts orientalist rhetoric in order to justify the need for a Jewish state to a European audience. Furthermore, he focuses on the protection of locations in the area that are sacred to Christians but fails to mention what will become of places holy to Muslims. In his diary entries that record his one and only trip to Palestine, Herzl further describes the

Arab native population as merely laborers for building the Jewish state. Herzl may have been aware of the racist implications of these statements, and that antisemitism was closely related to orientalist attitudes, but these words appealed to European audiences.⁴² Nina Berman recognizes Herzl's adoption of the role of a colonizer as problematic and points out that this tendency probably results from his desire to create a blueprint of modern, European society and politics in the Jewish state (287). Berman notes, "Juden werden hier in europäische Traditionen gestellt, als Alliierte der Christen gegen die Muslime" (288).⁴³ The Zionism of Herzl, in other words, develops out of the European concepts of nationalism, imperialism, and orientalism, and bases its legitimacy on this vocabulary.

Other passages in Herzl's diaries and works, however, suggest greater sensitivity toward native populations. Herzl considered many different locations for the Jewish state, and by the time of his death in 1904 he had not determined that Palestine was the best place to establish the nation. It was the Zionist Congress, in fact, that rejected his various suggestions, and the congress after Herzl's death, in 1905, firmly decided that Palestine was the only option. Furthermore, Herzl's writings after *Der Judenstaat* suggest an increasing concern about not disrupting the rights of the native populations, wherever the Jewish state was formed.⁴⁴ Since Herzl was not convinced that Palestine was the correct choice of a location for the Jewish state, and since he apparently was concerned about the rights of native populations, his position as merely one of the many would-be colonizers of the Middle East is questionable. However, Herzl's adoption of orientalist and imperialist discourse to explain and justify the right of a Jewish state can not be denied.

Herzl's reliance on his intellectual context in the writing of *Der Judenstaat* is evident in his adoption of German nationalist ideals, prejudices against Eastern European Jews, and orientalist rhetoric. His idea of creating a Jewish national state was clearly inspired by the development of many nationalisms in the late nineteenth century, and Zionism thus responded to antisemitism by proposing a means to transform the Jewish people into one of the many European nations. His understanding of the Jewish people as a *Volk* and a nation specifically developed out of the definition of these concepts within the German nationalist tradition. In this way, Herzl used the European, and specifically German, model of a nation when envisioning Zionism. Herzl presents his Jewish nationalist movement as a way of saving oppressed Eastern European Jews, but he tries to convince his Western European audience of this by relying on stereotypes of poor Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Furthermore, Herzl's adoption of orientalist rhetoric becomes clear when he explains that a Jewish nation in Palestine would benefit European imperialism

and would protect against the dangers of the Arab world. Herzl's Zionism thus laid out a self-contradictory program of colonization/emancipation and assimilation/self-determination that mobilized the very antisemitic and orientalist rhetoric that also justified the liberation movement.

MAX NORDAU

Nordau, while coming out of his own unique program of cultural criticism, as represented by *Entartung* (1892), similarly sets up a distinction between Western and Eastern European Jewish experience in his Zionist writing. Nordau's presentation of the *Ostjuden* differs from Herzl's, however, because he relies on the vocabulary of his own work on degeneration. The connection between Nordau's cultural criticism and Zionist writing has long been debated. Nordau himself attributed his sudden interest in the situation of the Jews to the rise of antisemitism, presumably in relation to the Dreyfus Affair. Nordau came from an Orthodox Jewish family in Pest, Hungary; his father was a rabbi. But he rejected this identity and moved west, changing his name from Simon Südfeld to Max Nordau and embracing assimilation, liberalism, and Enlightenment principles. While his liberal viewpoint influenced his attack on modernism in *Entartung*, Nordau suddenly criticized these principles in his address at the First Zionist Congress in 1897, claiming that the emancipation of the Jews has not been successful because it was based on rational principles rather than the true feelings of the Europeans.⁴⁵ P. M. Baldwin argues that Nordau's switch from liberalism to nationalism was a conscious abrupt switch, and that Nordau realized the incongruence between the two phases of his thought (108–9). He maintains that Nordau viewed Zionism as a solution to the degeneration of emancipated, Western European Jews and that he felt that Zionism could return lost “vital energy” to the Jewish people (112–3). While the idea that the Jews needed to be reinvigorated appears in his Zionist writings, I argue that Nordau's references to degeneration in these Zionist works do not identically match his definition in *Entartung* and that his concerns for revitalization focus not on the Western European Jews but on the Eastern European Jews.

Nordau's speech on the state of world Jewry at the First Zionist Congress in 1897, published in his *Zionistische Schriften* (Zionist Writings), establishes his conception of the very different situations of Western and Eastern European Jews. He describes the Eastern European Jews as relegated to the ghetto as a result of antisemitism and argues that their poverty and lack of civil rights justify the need to save them through a nationalist movement.⁴⁶ Nordau's later essay “Der Zionismus” (1902) makes further distinctions between

Western and Eastern European Jews that associate his earlier work on degeneration with his Zionist thought. He explains that solutions to the problem of the Jewish diaspora have changed over time, but that political Zionism provides a concrete, rational answer to the problem of the diaspora. At first, religious messianism instilled the belief that Jews would one day return to the homeland through the coming of the Messiah. In the late eighteenth century, Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn encouraged assimilation, which eventually led to the creation of Reform Judaism. According to Nordau, this second trend erased the idea of Jews as an ethnic or national group in order to justify assimilation (19–21). Political Zionism responded to both of these trends and specifically rejected religious messianism because political Zionism “aller Mystik entsagt” and “die Rückkehr nach Palästina nicht von einem Wunder erwartet, sondern sie durch eigene Anstrengung vorbereiten will” (22).⁴⁷ Hard work will bring the Jews out of the diaspora, not religious fanaticism. Nordau continues this criticism of mysticism when he discusses the situation of most Jews in the world. He notes that the “ungebildete, an alten Traditionen hängende Menge” is ruled by “mystischen Tendenzen” and “religiösen Emotionen” (24–5). Their understanding of the Zionism introduced by the “gebildeten und freien Juden” is therefore tainted by these messianic beliefs, which he attributes to their suffering under antisemitism and poverty (24–5).⁴⁸ Nordau clearly distinguishes between the educated, rational Western European Jews who created political Zionism and the poor, religious Eastern European Jews.⁴⁹ While Herzl appeals to prejudices against the *Ostjuden* to justify his cause, Nordau’s repetition of mysticism in connection with the Eastern European Jews implies his own criticism of this group. In *Entartung*, Nordau attacks artistic and philosophical trends that are based on irrationality and emotionalism, and by labeling Eastern European Jews with the same tendencies, he links the Eastern European Jews with degeneracy.

Nordau does point out, however, that the Eastern European Jews have already been organizing themselves, beginning with the outbreak of pogroms in the 1880s. Leo Pinsker, a Russian-Jewish doctor, responded to this catastrophe by writing *Autoemanzipation* (1882), generally regarded as the first Zionist text (26). Pinsker recognized the persecution of Jews everywhere, and he proposed that the Jewish people should form their own nation to end the oppression. Young Jews in Eastern and Western Europe alike rose to his words, forming Zionist societies and establishing small settlements in Palestine.⁵⁰ However, Nordau returns to his criticism of these uneducated masses by explaining that these groups had little understanding of the significance of their own movement, which was based on “dunklen Gefühle” such as “Frömmigkeit” and “archäologisch-historische Sentimentalität,” and a leader like

Herzl was needed to voice the call for a state (27).⁵¹ Ultimately, like Herzl, Nordau stresses that the Eastern European Jews need to be rescued by the Western European Jews. He states toward the end of “Der Zionismus” that some 2 million of the Jews in Europe are assimilated and may be happy where they are, but 10 million “fühlen sich in ihrem Aufenthaltsorte sehr unglücklich” (36). The Zionists “wollen acht bis zehn Millionen ihrer Stammgenossen aus unerträglicher Not retten” (37),⁵² hence supporting Herzl’s claim that Zionism is only striving to rescue the Eastern European Jewish population.

In addition to connecting Eastern European Jews with mysticism and a lack of education, Nordau also expresses a concern about physical regeneration. He stresses the importance of a reinvigoration of Jews in the ghettos through physical labor.⁵³ His famous call for *Muskeljudentum* (muscle Judaism) at the Zionist Congress of 1898, and recorded in an essay in 1900, laments the supposed destruction of Jewish bodies in the ghettos. He argues that the ghetto has prevented freedom of movement and access to light, air, water, and ground (424). Jews were once strong and brave, he states, and he refers to the Bar Kochba revolt, which he sees as representative of the last Jewish warriors (425). Nordau therefore views physical exercise as necessary for Jews to return to this ideal. He praises the rise of Jewish athletic clubs and presents them as models for all Jews (426). Zionism specifically offers this return to health through the hard labor needed to build the Jewish nation.⁵⁴ While Nordau refers to Jews in general, he implies that his concern is for those Jews who are continuing to live in ghettos in Eastern Europe. The idea that Eastern European Jews have little energy because they live in the oppressive, constrained atmosphere of the ghetto interestingly resembles his discussion in *Entartung* of *fin-de-siècle* Europeans who have lost their vitality. However, ghetto Jews are not “degenerate” in the same way as Europeans who have been exhausted by industrialization and modernization. Therefore, Nordau may be similarly stressing the importance of revitalization, but the *Ostjuden* are not “degenerate” in the way Nordau defined it earlier. Rather, Nordau’s conceptions of the importance of exercise for the Jews relate to Herder’s own account of the Jews as a degenerate group with an admirable history in the Bible.

In a 1902 essay entitled “Was bedeutet das Turnen für uns Juden?” (“What Does Gymnastics Mean for the Jews?”), Nordau reaffirms antisemitic stereotypes of Jews as he further develops his program of physical activity. He recognizes that antisemites view Jews as physically weak and incompetent, and he states that Jews have internalized these beliefs about themselves. However, Nordau claims, Jews simply lack physical training. In fact, they are more capable of becoming greater athletes than non-Jews because intelligence,

which is a trait always attributed to Jews by antisemites, truly controls muscle activity, and therefore Jews have the potential. As a result, the added benefit of the physical regeneration of the Jewish population would be improved self-esteem, since athleticism is valued in European society (428–32). As Ingrid Spoerk has noted, Nordau's argument remains entirely within the framework of antisemitism even as he attempts to undermine it. While Nordau identifies that the conception of Jews as weak is part of antisemitic rhetoric, he seems to be accepting this as truth. He also concedes that Jews have great intelligence, and that this is even an innate, natural characteristic.⁵⁵

Nordau's argument for physical regeneration not only confirms antisemitic views of the Jews as weak and sickly but also draws on German nationalist discourse of his time. The achievement of spiritual improvement through physical improvement had been promoted by Friedrich "Turnvater" Jahn, but with specifically antisemitic overtones.⁵⁶ The Jewish *Turnvereine* (gymnastics clubs) that Nordau promoted, named after historical Jewish heroes like Bar Kochba, thus created the Jewish equivalents of the virile, athletic German-Christian ideal man.⁵⁷ Nordau's argument also has affinities with the work of *völkisch* philosophers Lagarde and Langbehn. Both Lagarde and Langbehn rejected the stifling city in favor of labor on German soil, just as Nordau claimed that Jews must return to physical labor in the creation of the Jewish state. Lagarde considered the Germans to be spiritually decaying and in dire need of revitalization, which Nordau similarly claimed for the Jewish people. Hence, Nordau's association of the Jewish people with a loss of vitality is informed by antisemitic thought and conceptions of degeneration in *völkisch* philosophy.

Nordau's claim that ghetto life causes the loss of energy, implying that Eastern European Jews are particularly susceptible to physical weakness, contradicts the fact that the impoverished Eastern European Jews would have been more likely to be manual laborers than the assimilated Jews of the West.⁵⁸ Herzl himself recognizes that the concept that Jews are only fit to work in finances is untrue: "[i]n the countries of Eastern Europe there are large masses of Jews who are not merchants and who do not recoil from hard physical work" (185). Eastern European Jews were therefore perhaps less likely to be physically degenerate than their Western European counterparts. Furthermore, Nordau's adoption of this direction leads him to diverge from his earlier work. While *Entartung* suggests that the industrialized, fast-paced Western European milieu is degenerate, by 1902 Nordau seems to be pointing to Jews isolated in the Eastern European ghettos as the ones in need of revitalization. This line of thought may be explained by the fact that it supports Herzl's own argument that the purpose of Zionism is to save the

Ostjuden. The logical progression of Nordau's thought, that the degenerate, assimilated Western European Jews need to be reinvigorated by their Eastern European counterparts, was actually disseminated by the later generation of Zionists, as represented by Martin Buber.

The second significant issue in Nordau's thought, as in Herzl's, is his attitude toward the Arabs of Palestine. Similar to Herzl, Nordau's speeches and writings use orientalist rhetoric in relation to Palestine. In his speech at the Eighth Zionist Congress in 1907, Nordau clarified that the Jewish settlement of Palestine would bring European culture and civilization to the "inferior" Middle East:

Wir würden uns bemühen, in Vorderasien zu tun, was die Engländer in Indien getan haben,—ich meine die Kulturarbeit, nicht die Herrschaft;—wir gedenken, nach Palästina als Bringer von Gesittung zu kommen und die moralischen Grenzen Europas bis an den Euphrat hinauszurücken. (176)⁵⁹

Nordau's clarification of various colonized peoples as "uncivilized" embraces categorizations of Europeans by philologists of the nineteenth century as superior to other peoples. Furthermore, Nordau likens Zionism to European imperialism; he aspires to the model that the British have already provided. The Jews, like other European colonizers, would civilize the world with European morals and culture. Nordau augments Herzl's offer for the Jewish state to serve as a European outpost in the Middle East in a later speech in Great Britain after the Balfour Declaration in 1917, in which he assured the British that the Jews will protect the Suez Canal for them, thus indicating that the Jewish state would further not only European culture but also European imperialist control of the region. Nordau's position, which was to be the Zionist standpoint until World War II, was that the Arabs of Palestine had their own individual civil rights, but they had no collective rights as a people to their homeland.⁶⁰ Herzl and Nordau's writings may merely reflect the orientalist vocabulary in Europe at the time, but their language is at odds with Zionism's emancipationist intent.

Nordau's grounding in the intellectual tradition of his time is apparent in several significant ways. While Herzl makes statements that reflect the reported Western European Jewish dislike for the Eastern European Jewish immigrants, Nordau specifically adopts the stereotype of the *Ostjuden* as religious and mystical, which he views unfavorably. He also expands on this stereotype by presenting Jews in ghettos as physically weakened. Nordau's solution for the physical degeneracy of the Jews, and Eastern European Jews

in particular, relies on antisemitic notions of Jewish capabilities and *völkisch* programs of revitalization. The author of *Entartung* makes use of concepts of degeneracy in these Zionist works, but he appears to transfer the location of degeneracy away from industrialized centers and into the isolated world of the Jewish ghetto. Finally, Nordau, like Herzl, uses imperialist rhetoric in his Zionist writings, suggesting his similar recognition of the importance of appealing to Western European audiences. Both Nordau and Herzl intended to promote a movement to emancipate the Jews, and *Ostjuden* in particular, from the bonds of antisemitism, oppression, and poverty. However, the anti-semitic and orientalist intellectual climate that catalyzed the Zionist movement also ironically permeated the vocabulary of political Zionism.

MARTIN BUBER

Martin Buber is representative of a shift in Zionism toward cultural Zionism in the early 1900s, which moved the focus away from a secular, nationalist program to a cultural reawakening through exposure to the Eastern European Jewish lifestyle and the land of Palestine. The rise of cultural Zionism transformed the stereotype of the *Ostjude* into a positive, spiritual model who could help assimilated Western European Jews return to their religious roots. Cultural Zionism's desire for a return to an "authentic" Judaism corresponded with a general increase in interest in irrationality, romanticism, and fascination with the Orient and Eastern religious teachings at the turn of the century, the same trends that Nordau resisted in *Entartung* and his Zionist writings. The development in interest in the Orient thus allowed Western European Jews the chance to rediscover their relationships with the *Ostjuden* and their "oriental" heritage. This emphasis, however, existed simultaneously with Herzl and Nordau's political Zionism, and was one of many factions working together to promote Zionist ideology through the Zionist congresses.⁶¹

Buber's writings and addresses on the reinvigoration of Jewish spirituality led him to appear at the forefront of the cultural Zionist movement. Born in Vienna in 1878, he was raised by his grandparents in Lvov in Galicia, where he was greatly influenced by his grandfather, a well-known Jewish scholar. In the early 1900s, Buber rewrote Hasidic tales in German in which he glorified Eastern European Jewish mysticism, spirituality, and myths, hence modifying Jewish religion by rejecting rabbinical rules and celebrating a fundamental, Jewish spirituality. The idealized and mystical figures of Buber's tales had little to do with Eastern European Jews in reality, but Buber created an association between the Eastern European Jews and this religious authenticity that appealed to intellectual, Western European Jews. In the

1910s, Buber delivered a series of addresses in Prague and Berlin that called upon Western European Jews to become conscious of their inner spirit and restart the struggle for unity between God and the world. These addresses profoundly influenced young Jews at the time, including Franz Kafka, who heard him speak in Prague, as well as Arnold Zweig.⁶²

Buber's address from 1912 "Der Geist des Orients und das Judentum" ("The Spirit of the Orient and Judaism") in particular, explains his understanding of the importance of the Jew as oriental, the *Ostjude*, and the Orient in the renewal of Judaism. This lecture explains the "oriental" nature of Jews and the Jewish religion, as well as identifying what factors led to an apparent stagnation of Judaism and what can be done to reactivate it. From the beginning of the address, Buber clearly identifies Jews as "Oriental types" like the people of India or China. He characterizes the "Oriental type" as one ruled by his "motor faculties" rather than the "sensory faculties" of the "Occidental type," which means that an Oriental's physical actions connect his soul, his body, and his natural surroundings seamlessly without the mediation of sensory perception.⁶³ Secondly, the Oriental "carries . . . truth in the essence of his being, finding it in the world by giving it to the world" (60). Thirdly, the Oriental understands that the world is not yet unified, but rather is in a "state of duality," and the Oriental must make use of his motor faculties in the struggle for the unification of the spiritual and the physical worlds. Buber claims that, while the Jewish people flourished both spatially and temporally between the Orient and the Occident, the Jew is the epitome of the "Oriental type," and Judaism expresses the most advanced form of the Asiatic religions, which teach how to strive for unity. Since Jews contain the duality of the world within themselves, they have the power to bring about change in the world through the decision to do so (60–5).

Buber also addresses how the spiritual process of Judaism was hindered, and how the struggle for unity can be reactivated. He explains that the fall of the Second Temple forced the Jewish people into exile, tearing them from their homeland and ending their spiritual progress (71). Since Judaism was originally an agrarian religion, which "taught rootedness in one's native land . . . and the building of a model human community on the scanty Canaanite soil," Buber argues that detachment from the native land, the soil, and agrarian life stunted religious development (72–3). The religion became fossilized in rabbinical laws, he states, which try to preserve Judaism rather than promote creativity and change. Despite this repressive force, original, natural Judaism has appeared in religious movements like Messianism, mysticism, and Hasidism (74–5). Hence, Buber claims that the key to reinvigorating Jewish spirituality is within the Jews themselves. "For the Jew has remained

an Oriental,” and thus continues to embody the motor faculties and the drive for unification (75–6). Interestingly, Buber offers the *Ostjuden* as proof of this continuity in the Jewish soul: “. . . all these traits still live, and can be recognized from afar, in Eastern Europe’s Jewish masses, who are . . . rich in the power of an original ethos and a spirit of immediacy” (76). He characterizes a Hasidic Jew at prayer: “to watch him as he prays to his God, shaken by his fervor, expressing with his whole body what his lips are saying—a sight both grotesque and sublime . . . here, stunted and distorted yet unmistakable, is Asiatic strength and Asiatic inwardness” (76). The *Ostjude* as the embodiment of a foreign, mystical religious power is an important image in the characterization of the *Ostjuden* as “oriental.” Furthermore, this oriental spirit, which is still within all Jews, will benefit from reaching its homeland: “[o]nce it comes into contact with its maternal soil, it will once more become creative” (77). Buber further proposes the promotion of understanding between Orientals and Occidentals, and he identifies the Jews as the ultimate mediators between Orient and Occident, and Jerusalem as the location for the meeting of East and West (78). Hence, Buber is not only pointing out the centrality of Jerusalem and Palestine in Jewish spiritual development, but also that the solution of the Jewish people’s dilemma may solve long-term conflicts between the Orient and the Occident.

Buber’s lecture, which is representative of his ideas expressed during this period, identifies three key elements—Jewish people’s inner “oriental” nature, the Eastern European Jewish model, and the Jewish settlement of the land of Palestine—in the struggle for the reawakening of Jewish spirituality. The Jewish people, he claims, are fundamentally an oriental people and their religion is of oriental origin. Their “oriental” character is marked by an inner spirituality and connection with nature which, when reactivated, could spur the unification of the spiritual and the physical, God and the world. The Eastern European Jews have clearly maintained this “oriental” nature, as evidenced in their practice of mysticism and Hasidism, but this spirituality still exists in assimilated Western European Jews, as well, and must simply be rediscovered. The settlement of Palestine and the renewal of agrarian life would be essential in the reinvigoration of Jewish spirituality, since the separation of the Jewish people from their homeland led to the stagnation of Judaism, according to Buber. Hence, Buber sees the future of Jewish religiosity in the labeling of Jews as Orientals, in the model of the *Ostjuden*, and in the reconnection of Jews with their homeland in the Orient.

Buber’s choice of the *Ostjuden* as the model for Jewish spirituality relies on the nineteenth-century stereotyping of Jews, and particularly Eastern European Jews, as “oriental,” as previously discussed.⁶⁴ Buber, in contrast

to Herzl and Nordau, represents the next stage in the development of the *Ostjude* stereotype, where the *Ostjude* comes to represent the more authentic Jew who serves as a model for assimilated Western European Jews. Nordau's critique of *Ostjuden* as religious and mystical becomes a positive quality for Buber that can help reinvigorate the spirituality of the Jews of the West, and Nordau's call for the physical rejuvenation of the Jews is particularly focused, for Buber, on the return to agricultural work in Palestine, which will in turn positively affect Jewish spirituality. Thus, Buber does accept the oriental nature of the *Ostjuden*, but he does not embrace the stereotype of femininity, instead also focusing on the development of strength through physical labor. This continuity between Nordau's *Muskeljude* and Buber's *Ostjude* suggests that Buber is still accepting antisemitic perceptions of Jews as lacking vitality. As Sander Gilman states, Buber's depiction of Jewish identity is "the standard paradigm of Jewish uniqueness presented by racial anti-Semites given a positive value."⁶⁵ In this way, Buber reverses the political Zionist critique of the *Ostjuden* as the problem that must be solved through Zionism, by instead arguing that the *Ostjuden* are actually the solution to the problems facing the assimilated Western European Jews, but Buber has simply reorganized the same antisemitic stereotypes of Jews as oriental, mystical, and degenerate used by political Zionism.

Furthermore, Buber's characterization of "Orientals" and "Occidentals" mirrors the distinction made between Semites and Europeans by the philologists who were the source of orientalist discourse. Although Buber again reverses the value of this dichotomy, he furthers the orientalist claim that the Orientals have fundamental, biological differences from the Occidentals. Buber's considerations of the Orient were particularly influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche, whose mark appears on Buber's writings from this period.⁶⁶ Cultural Zionism in general was shaped by Nietzsche's ideas of cultural regeneration and creative renewal, hence transforming Nietzsche's plan for a German renaissance into a Jewish one.⁶⁷ In 1903, Fabius Schach's submission to the Zionist journal *Ost und West* (East and West) explained the potential for rejuvenation through the following distinction between the *Ostjuden* and the Western European Jews:

"Der Osten hat einen Schatz von Wärme, Kraft und Leidenschaft. Er kann auf den Westen erfrischend und verjüngend wirken. Er kann die noch vorhandenen Keime zu neuem Leben erwecken und neue Kräfte entfalten. Der Westen hat eine harmonische, gediegene Bildung, einen Sinn für Ordnung und Organisation, für gesellschaftliches und soziales Leben. Er kann auf den Osten regulierend, zähmend und erziehend

wirken. Er kann die hier brach liegenden Kräfte nutzbar machen, die Leidenschaften in den Dienst der Vernunft stellen.”⁶⁸

Gert Mattenklott has identified the exchange between the passionate *Ostjuden* and the organized, educated Western European Jews as resembling the mutually beneficial coexistence of the Dionysian and the Apollonian in Nietzsche’s thought (296). In contrast, Buber’s application of the Dionysian/Apollonian distinction does not encourage mutual exchange between the Eastern and Western European Jews. The Oriental, for Buber, is the active, life-giving force, while the Occidental is ruled by the senses, which does indeed mirror the Dionysian/Apollonian distinction, but the two forces interact differently in his thought.⁶⁹ Buber’s criticism of rabbinic Judaism as destroying the life-giving quality of original Jewish spirituality, which he sees as still embodied in Hasidism, has been read as the problem of the triumph of the Apollonian over the Dionysian.⁷⁰ The crushing of the Dionysian by the Apollonian is similarly depicted in Buber’s presentation of all Jews as embodying the spiritual, reinvigorating Dionysian element and his argument that this force must be released from the hardening caused by Western European assimilation. Thus, Buber participates in an orientalist distinction between an irrational, life-giving East and a rational West through the filter of the Nietzschean concepts of the Dionysian and the Apollonian. His valuing of the Semitic peoples and the Orient, however, does not significantly challenge the orientalist dichotomy.

While Buber’s positive depiction of the *Ostjuden* attempted to counteract political Zionist perspectives with questionable results, his struggle for the rights of Arabs in Palestine represents an open criticism of orientalist thought. His addresses in the 1910s were a call to assimilated Jews to rediscover their oriental roots, but he became increasingly concerned with the fate of the Arabs after World War I. The intent of Buber’s ethical and socialist nationalism, which he called Hebrew humanism, was to integrate both his spiritual and political goals. In 1919, Buber wrote an essay entitled “Vor der Entscheidung” (“Before the Decision”) in response to negotiations about the future of Palestine at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.⁷¹ In the essay, Buber voices his concerns that Zionism is becoming implicated in the imperialist enterprise of the European nations negotiating at the conference, and he argues that “[w]e must . . . make it clear that we have nothing to do with [the League of Nations’] present system of values, with imperialism masquerading as humanitarianism.” He instead calls for a recognition of the rights of all peoples: “Can Jewry be truly liberated so long as Judaism’s unswerving demand for justice and truth for *all* nations is shouldered out of the way?” Furthermore, he specifically addresses the need to recognize the rights of the

Arabs in Palestine in the formation of a Jewish settlement, calling for “a lasting and amicable agreement with the Arabs in all aspects of public life” and “an all embracing, fraternal solidarity with the Arabs.”⁷² Buber’s clear message in the essay is that Zionism must not participate in the nationalism and imperialism of Europe and that a Jewish settlement of Palestine must involve the interests of the Arabs as well.

In the 1920s, Buber struggled to convince the Zionist movement to recognize his concerns about the rights of Arabs. In March 1920, Buber founded the *Hitachdut*, a world union of socialist Zionist organizations, and in 1921, on behalf of *Hitachdut*, he proposed a resolution on the Arab issue at the Twelfth Zionist Congress, which had particularly come to the fore as a result of the Arab uprising of May 1920. Buber strove to establish a clear link between the development of socialist, communal settlements in Palestine and cooperation with the Arabs in Palestine.⁷³ Buber’s resolution set forth socialist goals for Zionism, that of allowing for the “productive work of free individuals upon a commonly owned soil,” and denied any imperialist, oppressive, or capitalist intentions. He called for “a just alliance with the Arab peoples” and the possibility for their “unhampered independent development” in the land of Palestine.⁷⁴ While the Congress agreed to sign such a resolution, they did so only after Buber’s original statement was revised and diluted to the point that the resolution became more of an indictment of the recent Arab violence. In 1925, Buber became a part of *Brit Shalom* (Covenant of Peace), an organization that focused on the promotion of Jewish-Arab understanding and a binational state. Only lasting from 1925 to 1933, the organization included prominent Jewish philosophers and Zionists such as Ahad Ha’am and Gershom Scholem. While *Brit Shalom* was criticized in the Hebrew press in Palestine, leaders of the political Zionist movement such as Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion also advocated binationalism in the early 1930s, but the idea was never seriously pursued. Toward the end of the 1920s, Buber became increasingly disenchanted with Zionist politics and instead preferred to focus on the question of Arab and Jewish peace in the Middle East through organizations such as *Brit Shalom*.⁷⁵ Buber’s devotion to these issues continued after he settled in Palestine in 1938.

As George Mosse and Daniel Boyarin have remarked, the choice facing those stereotyped as unmanly is to either define themselves in opposition to the stereotype or to recuperate the stereotype and give it a positive value. One can never escape from the confines of the stereotype, but as Boyarin suggests, one can make the “ethically superior” choice.⁷⁶ The early Zionist movement exemplifies not only this negotiation between masculinity and femininity, but also between orientalism and antisemitism. Herzl and Nordau

responded to the feminization of the Jews by attempting to assimilate to the masculine ideal and by shifting the stereotype onto the *Ostjuden*, who then became the objects of the re-masculinization project. Simultaneously, Herzl and Nordau had to contend with the antisemitic stereotyping of the Jews as oriental, but their response was again to adopt orientalist rhetoric in their portrayal of both the *Ostjuden* and the Arabs of Palestine. The political Zionist movement thus failed to recognize the inextricability of orientalism and antisemitism. Instead, Herzl and Nordau's nationalist program attempted to separate orientalism from antisemitism, Jews from Arabs, and Western European Jews from Eastern European Jews. They did not identify the contradiction in responding to the injustices of antisemitism by adopting European imperialist rhetoric. Buber's response in some ways represents the opposite, and perhaps "ethically superior," approach, by recasting the stereotype of the Jews as oriental with a positive value, and furthermore, by rejecting an imperialist stance towards the Arabs of Palestine. Buber, however, resembles Herzl and Nordau in his acceptance of the masculine ideal, although he infuses the *Ostjuden* with this manly potential. The following chapter addresses two German-Jewish authors who responded to the Zionist movement by further developing Buber's ideas, not only insisting on the connection between orientalism and antisemitism, but also rejecting the masculine *Muskeljude* in favor of ambiguously gendered figures associated with the *Ostjude*.