

**Christina von Braun**  
**Sexual Images in Racist Anti-Semitism:**  
**Their Origin and Significance.**  
(English version)

Nations evoke love, according to Benedict Anderson, who adds that “the cultural products of nationalism—in poetry, prose, music, and the arts—show this love in thousands of forms. However, there are hardly any corresponding objects that express fear and disgust.”<sup>1</sup> And yet, in the germanophone world, not only did the “love of one’s nation”—but also the fear and disgust connected with the image of the Jew as a “foreign body”—find its expression. In some anti-Semitic texts of the nineteenth century, this fear was displayed in a direct manner, such as in the novels of Wilhelm Raabe or Gustav Freytag. In other texts, it appeared in an indirect way, such as in the idealization of incest between a brother and sister. The theme enjoyed much popularity among all of the German-speaking authors of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and it often barely concealed an anti-Semitic topos. These images of hate served to biologize or naturalize the Otherness of “Jewish body”; and on the other hand—in reverse fashion—it also furthered the materialization of the fantasy of an “Aryan collective body.” Owing to the images of the “Jewish race,” the “Aryan” fantasy increasingly assumed physiological, “natural” characteristics. As “assimilation” proceeded, the stereotypes of the “Jew” became more biological. That is a decisive difference from other forms of racism. In general, the hate of the foreign element recedes with the disappearance of difference; however, in the case of anti-Semitic racism, this only increased with the assimilation of the Jew. Also, one can clearly see a transfer of anti-Judaic images in Christianity onto the biological images of racist anti-Semitism. If “the Jew” embodied the “false faith” for the Christians, then in the eyes of the “Aryan,” the Jew had a “false” or “foreign” body. This transposition from religion to biology partially explains why the anti-Semitic images could exercise such a powerful attraction on many people. They touch upon long-existing visual “prototypes” and they seem to have to do with biological, sexual ‘reality’. The fact that of all people, a Jew—Otto Weininger—would be among those who most clearly formulated such anti-Semitic conceptions, shows that the Christian images of the body of the “Jew” not only influenced the Christian perception, but also Jewish self-perception. Weininger became the prime example of “Jewish self-hate” which Theodor Lessing has described. Paradoxically, it was precisely the so-called

“emancipation” of the Jew that would prepare the way for such an influence of anti-Judaic images on the Jews’ self-perception. The Jew’s equal status resulting from his emancipation did not result in the recognition of a “Jewish difference,” but rather in the bringing in line of Jewish thought. It led to the fact that many Jews—willingly or unwillingly—took on Christian patterns of thought and internalized them.

In the process of the biologization of Christian images, sexual images played an important role. This is shown in the case of Otto Weininger. Very early already, this young student of philosophy converted to Protestantism, and his fantasies of the body of the “Jew” illustrate a “symptom of conversion” in every sense of the word:

[S]ome reflection [on both the woman and the Jew] will lead to the surprising result that Judaism is saturated with femininity, with precisely those qualities the essence of which I have shown to be in the strongest opposition to the male nature. It would not be difficult to make a case for the view that the Jew is more saturated with femininity than the Aryan, to such an extent that the most manly Jew is more feminine than the least manly Aryan.<sup>2</sup>

Weininger was twenty-three years old when his book *Geschlecht und Charakter* (*Sex and Character*) appeared in 1903. It caused a sensation—especially following Weininger’s suicide which he committed a few months after the book was published—in Beethoven’s house in Vienna. On account of Weininger’s suicide, Adolf Hitler would later say of him that Weininger was the “only respectable Jew.”

The success of Weininger’s book, which appeared in numerous editions and was translated into many languages, is closely linked to his “theory of salvation” which satisfied both Christian and secular criteria. Weininger’s idea is that Man will find salvation when he has overcome all female- and Jewish- elements within himself. Both woman and Jew become the standard of the self-definition: the *Nicht-Ich* (“Non Ego”), against which the Ego measures itself, or, as Weininger writes, “the abyss over which Christianity is erected.”<sup>3</sup>

Weininger belonged to the few anti-Semites who point out how much Christianity requires Judaism for its own self-definition. While all other antagonists of the Jews attempted to establish a dependency of Judaism on Christianity, Weininger wrote that

[t]he one is the absolute negation of the other; the relation between the two is only that which exists between all pairs of direct opposites. Even more than in the case of piety and Judaism, Judaism and Christianity can be best contrasted by what each respectively excludes.<sup>4</sup>

It is for this reason that Weininger—in contrast to Houston Stewart Chamberlain, one of the most important theoreticians of the “Aryan religion”—did not attempt to free the figure of Christ from its Jewish context. On the contrary: for Weininger, Judaism represented the successfully overcome temptation that owes its greatness to the Christian Savior. “Christ was a Jew, precisely that He might overcome the Judaism within Him, for he who triumphs over the deepest doubt reaches the highest faith; he who has raised himself above the most desolate negation is most sure in his position of affirmation.”<sup>5</sup> According to Weininger, the next founder of a religion would also possibly have to first “pass through Jewry.”<sup>6</sup>

In Weininger’s work, the “meaning” or the function of the sexual images in anti-Semitism become very clear. Perhaps due to his Jewish background, Weininger was able to register the anti-Semitic projections in an especially precise manner. In addition to this, his work also hints at a very strong identification with the “feminine”. Therefore, in his “theory of salvation,” two succinct images of Christianity are united: female “materiality” marries what he himself describes as Jewish “multiplicity” (*Vieldeutigkeit*).<sup>7</sup> Weininger is a very interesting case to understand the interdependence between anti-Semitism and homophobia. When I speak of femininity in the following part, you must always add homophobia.

### *Doubt and Carnality*

The “Jew” has always embodied the figure of doubt for Christians. This was connected to the relegation of the Christian’s own doubt in faith to the Jew. However, it was also a result of the Jewish religion itself, which could be described as an “exercise in patient expectation”—in contrast to the Christian religion, which understands itself as a religion of “fulfillment.” For Weininger, “the Jew” embodied doubt itself. He saw in the Jew the clearest contrast to the Aryan’s “unequivocal nature” or “simplicity” (*Eindeutigkeit*). In so thinking, Weininger helped replace the Jewish religion by the fictitious idea of a “Jewish race”, and this occurred because feminine elements were assigned to the “Jew.” In this manner, what differentiated the “Jew” from the Christian—from the Aryan, the biologically defined Christian—

appeared as a *physiological and visual* difference. If the discussion about the *Hexenhammer (Malleus Maleficarum)* revolved around the “insatiability of the desires of the flesh” in *woman*, then, according to Weininger,

[m]en who are match-makers have always a Jewish element in them [, and herein lies the greatest concurrence between femininity and Jewry]. The Jew is always more absorbed by sexual matters than the Aryan [(this is possibly related to his essentially anti-moral nature)], although he is notably less potent sexually and less likely to be enmeshed in a great passion.<sup>8</sup>

The equation of “the Jew” with “femininity” has a long history that extends back to the Middle Ages. At that time, legends purported that male Jews suffered from menstrual periods.<sup>9</sup> These legends would then ‘explain’ the ‘ritual murder’ Jews were accused of: Due to their monthly loss of blood, male Jews supposedly had an increased need for blood. In a few legends—later, even in “scientific” theories of the nineteenth century—circumcision was also compared to castration.<sup>10</sup> Being circumcised, the Jew was considered to be an “incomplete man” and consequently “feminine.” In keeping with this social codification, not only was “Jew” a common expression for the clitoris, but female masturbation was also called “playing with the Jew” in turn-of-the-century Viennese slang.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to this, there were also other reasons for the sexualization of the Jewish “foreign body.” These reasons also differentiate anti-Semitism from other racist ideologies. In racial discourse, the “black man” or the “Arabian” is described as being sexually insatiable and possessing a “masculine” virility. However, in anti-Semitic theories, the Jew was portrayed as a sex offender *and* as impotent. Such attributions of a paradoxical sexual drive can only be compared with the contradictory late-nineteenth-century conceptions of “femininity.” While for one theoretician—e.g., the German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing—“the woman who seeks sexual pleasure” was an “abnormity,”<sup>12</sup> the other—such as the English sexologist Havelock Ellis—proclaimed that the entire female body represented an erogenous being. As Ellis puts it, compared to the “female’s extensive sexual apparatus,” the male counterpart is “downright stunted.” He also added that for this reason, the amputation of the clitoris has been done away with in many countries: due to the erogenous predisposition of the whole female body, the amputation of the clitoris had proven to be useless.<sup>13</sup>

At first glance, these late-nineteenth-century theoretical positions of female sexuality seem to be irreconcilable. However, a closer look reveals that both theories ultimately merge in a *single* conception. Woman *has* no libido: rather, she *is* the libido. Precisely this point is stated by Otto Weininger, who compares the sexuality of both sexes as follows:

Woman is only sexual, man is partly sexual: [. . .] And so it happens that a man can know about his sexuality, whilst a woman is unconscious of it and can in all good faith deny it, *because she is nothing but sexuality, because she is sexuality herself*. [. . .] To put it bluntly, man possesses sexual organs; her organs possess woman.<sup>14</sup>

Weininger again deduces from this female condition that the “absolute woman” does not have an Ego. He claims precisely the same thing for the Jews: “[The true Jew], like the woman, is wanting in personality [and therefore lacks an intrinsic value].”<sup>15</sup>

However, at this point a contradiction becomes apparent. Weininger explains the fact of the woman’s lack of Ego with the fact that “women, because they are only sexual, [cannot] recognize their sexuality, because recognition of anything requires duality”—a duality that they supposedly lack.<sup>16</sup> That of the Jew, however, is explained by Weininger in exactly the opposite manner:

The psychological contents of the Jewish mind are always double or multiple. There are always before him two or many possibilities. [. . .] I think that the idea of Judaism consists in this want of reality, this absence of any fundamental relation to the thing in-and-for-itself. He stands, so to speak, outside reality, without ever entering it. [. . .] Internal multiplicity is the essence of Judaism, internal simplicity that of the Aryan.<sup>17</sup>

The woman therefore has no consciousness at her disposal, because she cannot split herself into the duality of the observer and the observed. However, the Jew appears to lack an Ego, *because* his psyche is characterized by precisely this duality. This contradiction also resolves itself if one conceives “the woman” and “the Jew” as a pair of opposites of the same construction. On the one hand, Weininger and his age gradually become skeptical of the “reality” of woman or of biology: with the so-called female emancipation, the gender norms becoming fluid and blurred. On the other hand, however, the Jew became the *incarnation* of doubt in the fantasy of the Aryan: a duality which, due to Jewish “visuality,” was considered a “reality”—biologically

determined and consisting of blood and race. The doubt in faith that the Jew once only *symbolized* therefore took on a corporeal form in this imagination of the Jewish body.

And yet, the fear of the “spiritual Jew” was still hidden behind racial theories. Thus, the term *Entartung* (“degeneration”)—much like the term *Assimilation*—is taken from the terminology of biologists; however, it denotes and defames a *spiritual attitude*, especially in the arts. The terms “Semitic” and “Germanic” are symptomatic of a similar process: both terms denote a *realm of language*. However, among racist anti-Semites, these terms became racial terms. In this manner, a *bodily* Other emerged from the *spiritual* Other, the “Jew.” The fact that femininity, i.e., female “materiality” and woman’s biological “difference” were ascribed to him, contributed to this materialization of the fiction of the Jewish body. However, this alone does not suffice as an explanation for the function and efficacy of the sexual images in secular, racist anti-Semitism.

#### *The Secularization of the “Sacrifice”*

Secularization freed European society from the Christian ideal of asceticism. This ideal was never known to the Jewish religion: “Jewish civilization does not bestow orders of merit for celibacy,” writes David Biale (1992: 217) in his book *Eros and the Jews*. While a Catholic priest was forbidden to marry and sexual abstinence assumed greater value than sexual satisfaction even among Christian laymen, an unmarried rabbi has always been the exception. Following the secularization and its accompanying “emancipation of the flesh,” the non-Jew also laid claim to sexual satisfaction and desire. This was not only the case for those who turned their backs to the church. In Christianity itself, secularization brought about a change that granted the believer “sexual redemption.”

As a result of this process, a secular, sensual conception of sacrifice rituals emerged that was, for its part, coded as feminine.<sup>18</sup> The literature and visual arts of the nineteenth century are interspersed with that which Elisabeth Bronfen has so appropriately designated as the “beautiful, alluring corpse.” This “corpse” is embodied by female characters who show a striking resemblance to the character of the Savior, and who are sacrificed or who sacrifice themselves so that a man might find redemption. If the Christian is entitled to eternal life via the Savior’s sacrificial death,

then the secular Christian—as poet, artist, or scientist—acquires an earthly, artistic immortality via the death of his Beloved. The figure of the Savior who sacrifices himself for others increasingly takes on feminine attributes from 1800 on.<sup>19</sup> Jochen Hörisch writes that “[a]ll of Novalis’s *Abendmahlstexte* (*Eucharist texts*) have this striking similarity: they feminize and eroticize the Christian sacrament.”<sup>20</sup> This is also the case with other authors: “[i]n an odd concurrence, Goethe, Novalis, and de Sade transcribe the story of the sacrifice of a godly son into the story of the sacrifice of women.”<sup>21</sup> In the case of the poet Georg Trakl, the topos of the female sacrifice is additionally associated with incest. Not only an imagined, but also a real incestuous love affair connected Trakl to his sister. He calls her *Karfreitagskind* (“Child of Good Friday”) in his poem *An die Schwester* (“To My Sister”), and in the drama fragment *Offenbarung und Untergang* (*Revelation and Downfall*) he writes: “O, the sister, singing in the thorny bush, and the blood flows from her silvery fingers. Sweat from her waxy brow. Who drinks her blood?”<sup>22</sup>

This topos of a feminized sacrifice plays a central role in racist anti-Semitism, and is reflected, for example, in the accusations of ritual murder that swept through Europe like an epidemic in the second half of the nineteenth century. While in the legends of the Middle Ages only murdered boys are mentioned, in the “racist” accusations of ritual murder, mostly young girls were the victims of these allegations.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, Jews were increasingly being accused of raping Christian—here: Aryan—woman and of being involved in prostitution. The accusations of ritual murder reveal a paradox that is particular both unto Christianity and to racial anti-Semitism. In both “religions”—the Christian as well as the Aryan religion<sup>24</sup>—the sacrifice of one’s life is a central component of redemption. Without sacrifice there is no “redemption.” However, just as with the Crucifixion of Christ in the New Testament, the Jew is “guilty” of the “death” of the woman.<sup>25</sup> What exactly does this indicate in the anti-Semitic context? To put it briefly: in racial anti-Semitism, the “sexual crime” or the “*Rassenschande*” (“racial defilement”) took the place of the Crucifixion metaphor. And this is the actual key to the meaning of sexual images in secular anti-Semitism. The *Volkskörper* (“aryan body politic”) emerged from the *corpus dei*, and its signifier was not an allegorical female body (Ecclesia), but rather, the biological body of the “Aryan” woman. As in the Passion, it became the role of the Jew to incur the “sacrifice” of the “*Rassenschande*” and therefore to “crucify” on a secular level.

The role of “sacrifice” and “redemption” that has been ascribed to woman since the secularization revealed itself on many levels and played an important role not only in Germany. This role came to light both in the ideal of the “self-sacrificing mother” and in the motif of the “fragile woman”; in the ideal beauty of an ethereal and consumptive female body. It has also contributed to the transformation of the self-image and desire of many women who sought or who seek fulfillment of love and sexual satisfaction in the role of the “sacrifice.” This shift can be found in the source of pleasure that many women find when they encounter a sinister or violent quality in a relationship. In National Socialism, this conception of a “self-realization” via “self-sacrifice” was clearly manifested in such women as Lydia Gottschewski, who fought for the “rights of women” and thereby went to battle (albeit in vain) against the ideal of chastity of the Männerbünde (“male bonding societies”).<sup>26</sup> Gottschewski transcribed the role of woman under the swastika with words that strongly call to mind the Savior’s “self-sacrifice”: “The deciding characteristic of these women is their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the whole, a capability for incessant performance of one’s duty that is won from the power of the new faith.” In this manner, as she continues to write, women belong to “a very quiet, very still and unpronounced reign whose meaning time and again remains ‘service.’ It is most splendidly realized whenever the ‘I’ steps back behind the ‘You’ and the ‘We’; whenever it sacrifices itself and lavishes itself on something much greater—on Child, Family, and Nation.”<sup>27</sup>

The image of woman as society’s “redeemer” might explain the enthusiasm that many women showed for National Socialism. However, this means that the actual answer to the much discussed question of female “complicity” in National Socialism<sup>28</sup> can be primarily found in the eroticisation of the female “self-sacrifice”. By taking on the “role of the redeemer” via their efforts for “self-realization,” women considerably contributed to the result that the secularization of the crucifixion metaphor could be executed—a process that for its part formed the core of racist anti-Semitism.

### *The Secularization of Christian “Purity”*

The assignment of the role of sacrifice and redemption to women comes about at the same time as the secularization process takes place in all European countries. Chateaubriand’s *René* and *Attala* are exemplary for France. The literature of English

Romanticism is also interspersed with such conceptions which were literarily staged in part by women themselves. In the German creation of myth, an intensified relation to “purity” was added to this idealization of the female sacrifice. This relation played a lesser role in the art and literature of other countries, and is an indication of the fact that “secularization” in Germany consisted less of a rejection of the church than of a secularization of religious images inherited from Christianity.

The Christian ideal of sacrifice and redemption was closely tied to the ideal of “purity.” This can be seen in a passage from St. Augustine’s *On the Trinity* that elucidates not only the connection between the cult of sacrifice and the ideal of purity, but also the connection between the cult of purity and sexuality. Around 400 AD, St. Augustine writes that only a sacrifice “that was taken from material of that for which it is given” could serve to “purify the defiled”:

And what could be so filly chosen by men to be offered for them as human flesh? And what so fit for this immolation as mortal flesh? And what so clean for cleansing the faults of mortal men as the flesh born in and from the womb of a virgin, without any infection of carnal concupiscence? And what could be so acceptably offered and taken, as the flesh of our sacrifice, made the body of our priest?<sup>29</sup>

During the secularization, this ideal of purity and redemption in Christianity that underlay the concept of redemption from “original sin” transformed itself into a secular ideal that, in the same manner, declared the “purity of the blood” to be the highest rule. This was especially the case in the German-speaking world. However, this purity was now separated from the context of chastity and transferred to sexual intercourse itself. Theodor Fritsch named securing the purity of the blood as the most important of the *Ten German Commandments (Zehn deutschen Gebote)* in his *Anti-Semitic Catechism* from 1887:

The first commandment: You should keep your blood pure. – Consider it a crime to spoil the noble Aryan character of your people with the Jewish character. For you should know that Jewish blood is resistant and shapes body and soul according to the Jewish character on through future generations.<sup>30</sup>

In the “Aryan religion,” the *sexual* “communion” of the sexes took the place of the union with the Lord during the Holy Communion. The equation of the Holy Communion with an “act of love,” which is particular unto Christianity, was thus

transferred onto sexuality itself. In this manner, the ideal of matrimonial symbiosis that underlies the Christian commandment of the insolubility of marriage was sexualized and biologized. The process becomes especially clear in the shift of the meaning of the term *Blutschande* (“defilement of the blood”). Whereas this had once designated the “sin” of intercourse with one’s blood relatives, i.e., incest, precisely the opposite meaning took hold in the German-speaking world: the incestuous *Blutschande* became the “sin” of intercourse with the *other*, foreign blood. Wherever the term *Blutschande* was used in this sense of the word, it always designated the “foreign blood” of the Jew.

Parallel to the segregation from the *foreign* blood of the Jew, a revalorization of the “Aryan’s” blood took place—even that mirrors the history of the *Blutschande*—that is reflected in an idealization of intercourse with women “of one’s own blood.” This allows for the interpretation that the literary topos of intercourse between brother and sister, which appeared in various forms,<sup>31</sup> was often connected with anti-Semitic images, even if this was not always explicit. The siblings/lovers are often described as the “chosen ones” which calls to mind the traditional aspiration of Christianity to supercede the Jewish people as the “chosen people.” However, the Jews’ secular enemies are not concerned with creating a “chosen people of faith”, but rather to *embody* the “chosen people” or a “chosen nation” (*das “erwählte Volk”*). This means that in its secular context, incest served the “deification” of the “body of the Aryan nation” (*des “arischen Volkskörpers”*). This becomes especially clear in the works of Richard Wagner, in which incest emerges as a sort of Aryan messianic cult. In the *The Ring of the Niebelungen*, the siblings Siegmund and Sieglinde commit incest in order to protect the endangered Volsung blood. As stated in the *The Valkyrie*: “Wife and sister / You’ll be to your brother. / So let the Volsung blood increase.”<sup>32</sup> The highest deity, Wotan, tolerates the incestuous relationship because the “hero” Siegfried, who possesses semi-godly powers, can only be conceived in this way.

Among other authors, the motif is suggested in a more secular context than in Wagner. Just the same, one can still strongly sense the religious dimension. This is completely blatant in Thomas Mann’s novel *Der Erwählte* (*The Chosen One*). However, it can also be seen in Robert Musil’s *Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (*Man Without Qualities*), in which the siblings Ulrich and Agathe hope to find the *unio mystica*<sup>33</sup>—or, “the other

condition” of the mystics—that Ulrich had once sought in vain in religion and mathematics. In Frank Thiess’s trivial novel *Die Verdammten* (*The Damned*), the motif emerges in a much similar manner. Only the siblings’ union would enable the people to be “chosen” and “very near to God.”<sup>34</sup> In short: the “Aryan” conception of “purity” implies that sexual union with the sister took the place of a communion with God. She is the signifier of a communal body that consists of “communal blood.” Stated in other words: in the secular discourse, the body of the “sister” takes the place of the Host, and instead of the *Hostienschändung* (“defilement of the Host”), Jews would now be accused of *Rassenschande*, racial defilement.

Just how closely this ideal love of incest among siblings was connected to the image of the enemy, the “Jew,” is illustrated in some of these literary works. Jews very often appear as foils to the “chosen” siblings, within whom the unequivocal simplicity—the freeing from ambiguity and doubt—is described as “purity,” or rather, as being freed from “original sin.” “The sin against blood and race,” writes Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, “is the original sin of this world and the end of a humanity that has taken to it.”<sup>35</sup> Therefore, it is no coincidence that this topos does not emerge in the German literature written by Jews—except for one or two examples. In 1905 for instance, the author Kurt Münzer published a very successful trivial novel entitled *Der Weg nach Zion* (*The Road to Zion*) in which he draws a parallel between sibling incest and German-Jewish “symbiosis” and assimilation showing that both have to end in catastrophe.

If in the shift of the term *Blutschande*, the historic-political power and effect of anti-Semitic sexual stereotypes particularly comes to light, then the question presents itself whether this topos did not also play a certain role in the rise of psychoanalysis. Perhaps it is also due to these images—which idealized and made use of incest in the anti-Semitic discourse—that around the end of the nineteenth century, a doctrine emerged whose core is formed by the necessity *to overcome the desire of incest*. The universality of the desire of incest that is presupposed by Freud is often contested. However, the question lends itself whether one can speak of a “general acceptance” that refers to this time and place.

#### *The Twofold “Assimilation”*

With the secularization, a shift therefore took place in which the Christian conception

of purity would become an insistence on intercourse with one's own blood. Paradoxically, an approximation of the laws of the Jewish religion took place in which—at least in the rabbinical interpretation that developed in the second to sixth century AD (i.e., after the beginning of the Diaspora)—a “Jew” is defined as someone whose mother is Jewish. In that the “Aryan” now made sanctified the *Volkskörper* and declared the female body to be the signifier of this *Volkskörper*, the Christian “community of faith” was also carried over to a hereditary or nationalistic community. This superimposition of imagined community and “blood community” that emerged with the secularization strengthened the incompatibility of the Jewish community and the secular-Christian “collective body.”

In general, the term “assimilation” refers to the enormous efforts made by Jews within the German society to adapt – a process which implied acculturation at the same time. In actuality, however, an “assimilation” of the Christian religion into the laws of the Jewish religion took place precisely because of the process of secularization. This assimilation considerably stepped up the rivalry between this new “nationalistic” religion and the Jewish people for the status of the “chosen people.” At the same time, an “assimilation” of the sexes took place that is reflected in the ideal of sibling love as well as in the supposed “masculinization” of woman. The fear of German-Jewish “assimilation” intermingled with the fear of the “assimilation” of the sexes. It was not the Orthodox , but rather, the “invisible Jews” who were seen to be a “danger” to the Aryan *Volkskörper*: these “foreigners,” whose “foreignness” could no longer be easily detected because they had given up the caftan, beard, and the side-curls, and had mixed among with the ‘host people’ (*Wirtsvolk*). This representation of a Jewish threat was for its part interspersed with sexual images. The anti-Semitic clichés of the “invisible Jew” were mixed with the images of an indefinable enemy who was represented by a new “type” of woman and man. This new “type” resisted the traditional biological definition of the sexes. Otto Hauser, the *Rassenforscher* (“racial scientist”) whose work *Geschichte des Judentums (History of Jewry)* would later be referenced by the National Socialists,<sup>36</sup> wrote in his essay *Juden und Deutsche (Jews and Germans)*:

In no other ethnicity does one find so many feminine men and masculine women as among the Jews. For this reason, so many Jewesses race to enter professions of men: studying every subject imaginable from law and medicine

to theology and becoming representatives of groups and of the people. If one observes these Jewish women on the basis of secondary sexual characteristics, then one can determine this ambiguity among two-thirds of them. The pronounced hint of a beard is extremely common; in contrast, the breasts remain undeveloped and the hair short.<sup>37</sup>

The conception of an *erasure of the biological sexual difference* overlapped with the conception of the German-Jewish “assimilation”: the blurring of boundaries between men and women was equated with the blurring of boundaries between Jews and Germans. Assimilation itself was compared with the act of intercourse. The economist Werner Sombart uses the term *Paarung* (“mating,” “copulation”) in order to speak of the “Jewification [. . .] of our public and spiritual life” and to push for a release from the “envelopment of our German national soul by the Jewish spirit.”<sup>38</sup>

Because the concept of sexual ambiguity (which was expressed in the defamation of the “nervous type”) was connected to the image of the assimilated “Jew” (who was alleged of having the same “ambiguity”), the same images of illnesses played a role. Hysteria, neurasthenia, and nervousness were not only seen as typical illnesses of women on the road to emancipation, but also as typically Jewish illnesses. If intellectual activity among females was said to lead to a “nervous disorder” in the female body, then the predisposition of the Jew was traced back to a supposed “strain and exhaustion of the brain.”<sup>39</sup>

In order to counteract such racist definitions of their bodies, many women and many Jews advocated a non-biological definition of their body. Women hoped that in overcoming biological models of derogation, they would have access to higher education and better occupations that had been previously denied to them. For the Jews, it implied the freedom from the clichés that the racist anti-Semites attempted to attach to the image of the Jew.

For women, the reliance on cultural factors had as a consequence that some champions of the women’s movement, such as Henriette Schrader-Breymann and Helene Lange, led the fight for women for higher education with the slogan of “intellectual motherliness.” This is tied “not only to the children’s room itself, nor only to the physical motherliness,” but comes into force where “the woman [is] also called to motherly action outside of the home.”<sup>40</sup> The education of girls, as they called for it,

should take this “psychical motherliness,” which contributed to the promotion of the national morality, into account. Since they were convinced of the concept of “spiritual motherliness,” Helene Lange and her comrades-in-arms also affirmed the celibacy that was imposed on all women who held the office of teacher. The being of the woman, according to Helene Lange, distinguishes itself anyway via “a more intellectual conception of sexuality.”<sup>41</sup> Such images of a less biological rather than “intellectual” womanliness contributed to assigning the goal for the social-pedagogical, educational- and occupational branches, which even today shape the educational- and occupational branches of women and have also often been experienced as a limit to the emancipation of women.

Jews also—most especially assimilated Jews—strove for a “culturally” defined “Jewish identity.” It has already often been pondered why, as Erwin Haeberle writes, “the overwhelming majority of the sexological pioneers were Jewish.”<sup>42</sup> One answer to this question might lie in the fact that the “Jewish body” had become a construct of racist ideologies. Since the sexual sciences stressed the *cultural* codification of the body, they also offered the chance to extract the physiological basis from this construct, or rather, to “deconstruct” the racist image of the Jewish body. Even Georg Simmel, who also had to suffer due to anti-Semitism—he was one of Berlin’s most innovative social scientists around 1900, but a professorship remained denied to him—also Georg Simmel’s interest for the issue of the sexes can be understood in this sense: in that he spoke about the “foreign body” of woman, he simultaneously focused on the “foreign body” of the Jew without explicitly naming the latter. Whenever he writes about female poets, one could replace the word “woman” with the word “Jew”:

Without question, the extraction of the female nuance—its objectification—is very difficult. This is true even in the literary culture, because the general form of poetry, within which this process occurs, is of course the product of men. As a result, it most probably reveals a slight inner contradiction against its completion with a specifically feminine content. Between personal content and artistic form, I often sense—namely in women’s poetry, and especially in very masterful works—a certain duality, a subterranean unease, as if the creative spirit and its expression did not have quite the same style.<sup>43</sup>

With the “assimilation,” the sense rose among Jews as well as among women that they were a “foreign body”: a foreign body for the others, but also a body that was estranged from the Ego. This feeling corresponded to the attributions of the

surrounding culture: to the degree that Christians and Jews and women and men began to resemble one another, the need also grew to redefine women and Jews as “Others”; as the “anti-Ego” that delineates the Ego, thereby assuring the necessary self-affirmation.

Many stereotypes of Jewish “difference” touched upon this need: through them, the “assimilation” was to be rescinded, and the “Jew” was to again be made “visible.” The concept of a physical persecution of the “Jew”—which is already evidenced in a few texts at the end of the eighteenth century, concurrent to the first emancipation laws—was closely related with this phantasm of a “being made visible.” Via physical persecution, the anti-Semite hoped to transform the imagined “Eternal Jew” into a figure made of flesh and blood. For the “Aryan,” death became the *only certain* means of differentiation because it was a *real* means of differentiation. The “Aryan” could only first be certain that “the Jew” is different (*verschieden*) if in the end all Jews were “different” (*verschieden* in the sense of ‘departed’). In this conception of “redemption,” one can already clearly recognize one of the strands that would lead to the “final solution.” Of course, by this I do not mean to say that the phantasms of racial anti-Semitism necessarily had to lead to the realization of the “final solution.” In addition to the factors that I have discussed, there are naturally many other factors—and these have also been analyzed by distinguished scholars. The aspect that I tried to present refers more to the collective, unconscious images of anti-Semitism and their historical power of influence.

**Deutsche Veröffentlichung:**

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Notes

<sup>1</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Die Erfindung der Nation. Zur Karriere eines folgenreichen Konzepts*, erweiterte Ausgabe, übers. v. Benedikt Burkard u. Christoph Münz, Berlin (Ullstein) 1998, S. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, Wien, Leipzig (16) 1917, S. 415f. All English translations of Weininger have been taken from Otto Weininger, *Sex & Character*, Authorised Translation from the Sixth German Edition (London: William Heinemann, New York; G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1906). This quote p. 187.

<sup>3</sup> Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, S. 449f; *Sex & Character*, 200.

<sup>4</sup> Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, S.449; *Sex & Character*, 200.

<sup>5</sup> Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, S.450; *Sex & Character*, 200.

<sup>6</sup> Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, S.450; *Sex & Character*, 200.

<sup>7</sup> Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, S.443; *Sex & Character*, 197.

<sup>8</sup> Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, S.423; *Sex & Character*, 189.

<sup>9</sup> Léon Poliakov, *Geschichte des Antisemitismus*, Bd. 2: *Das Zeitalter der Verteufelung und des Ghettos*, übers. v. Rudolf Pfisterer, Worms (Georg Heintz), 1978, Bd. 2, S. 67f.

<sup>10</sup> Sander L. Gilman ist ausführlich auf den Zusammenhang von Beschneidung, Weiblichkeit und Antisemitismus eingegangen, in: ders. *Freud, Race and Gender*, Princeton, N.J. (Princeton University Press) 1993.

<sup>11</sup> zit. n. Sander Gilman, *Freud, Race and Gender*, in: Jonathan Magonet (Hg.), *Jewish Explorations of Sexuality*, Providence, Oxford (Berghahn) 1995, S. 135-156, 149.

<sup>12</sup> Richard v. Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis I*, 1886, (Reprint) München, 1984 S. 12f.

<sup>13</sup> Havelock Ellis, *The Mechanism of Detumescence*, in: ders., *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Kingsport/Tenn. 1942, Bd. 2, Teil 1, S. 132.

<sup>14</sup> Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, S.114ff; *Sex & Character*, 54-55.

<sup>15</sup> Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, S.418; *Sex & Character*, 188.

<sup>16</sup> Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, S.116. Hervorhebungen im Original; *Sex & Character*, 55.

<sup>17</sup> Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, S.442f. Hervorhebungen im Original.

<sup>18</sup> Der Prozeß ist eine genaue Umkehrung der mittelalterlichen ‚Erotisierung‘ der Askese. Nunmehr wird die Erotik ‚verklärt‘, indem sie Gesetzen der Askese und der ‚Reinheit‘ unterworfen wird.

<sup>19</sup> Man könnte dem entgegenhalten, daß eines der ersten literarischen Werke, in denen dieses weltliche ‚Selbstopfer‘ auftaucht, nämlich Goethes *Werther* gerade kein ‚weibliches Opfer‘ inszeniert. Allerdings ist dem entgegenzuhalten, daß es sich auch hier um eine Aneignung von Weiblichkeitsmustern handelt, wie sie sich sowohl in der Literatur der Empfindsamkeit als auch später in der Aneignung ‚hysterischer‘ Symptome durch Schriftsteller und Künstler zeigen wird. „Die Aneignung des weiblichen Todes als eines letzten Stabilisierungsentwurfes Werthers, der Versuch also, sich das Andere, *Weibliche* einzuverleiben, mißlingt und entlarvt ebenfalls lediglich die Diskursivierung des *Weiblichen*.“ Susanne Komfort-Hein, „Phantasmen empfindsamer Suche nach dem ‚reinen‘ Selbst. Zu einer literarischen Initiationsgeschichte des modernen Subjekts im 18. Jahrhundert“, in: *Metis*, Sonderheft: ‚Reinheit‘, 6. Jg., 1997, H. 11, S. 78-89, S. 88.

<sup>20</sup> Jochen Hörisch, *Brot und Wein. Die Poesie des Abendmahls*. (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1992), 180.

<sup>21</sup> Hörisch, *Brot und Wein*, 180-81.

<sup>22</sup> Georg Trakl, *Dichtungen und Briefe*. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe, hg. v. Walter Killy, Hans Szklenar, 2 Bde. Salzburg 1987, Bd. I, S. 455. An einer anderen Stelle heißt es: „Sterbende brachen sie mit wächsernen Händen das Brot, das blutende. Weh der steinernen Augen der Schwester, da beim Mahle ihr Wahnsinn auf die nächtliche Stirn des Bruders trat, der Mutter unter leidenden Händen das Brot zu Stein ward. O der Verwesten.“ Ebda. S. 150.

<sup>23</sup> So etwa in den beiden berühmtesten Ritualmordprozessen: dem vom Tisza-Eszlar in Ungarn (1882) und dem von Polna in Böhmen (1899). Vgl. Christina von Braun, Ludger Heid (Hg.), *Der*

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*Ewige Judenhaß*. Bonn, Stuttgart 1990, Berlin (Philo) 2000, S. 169ff.

<sup>24</sup> Eric Voegelin hat als einer der ersten den Nationalsozialismus als ‚politische Religion‘ bezeichnet. Berücksichtigt man die Verweltlichung der christlichen Metaphern in der arischen Heilslehre, so erscheint es gerechtfertigt, von einer ‚arischen Religion‘ zu sprechen. Diese Bezeichnung überdeckt viele Unterschiede zwischen den säkularen ‚Heilsbewegungen‘ und den tatsächlichen Religionen. Aber der Begriff ist dennoch brauchbar, weil er die Anziehungskraft erklärt, die die arische Heilslehre auf viele Menschen ausgeübt hat. Vgl. Eric Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 1938, (Reprint) München 1992.

<sup>25</sup> Von diesem Paradoxon leitet sich wiederum die seltsame Doppelbedeutung des Wortes ‚Opfer‘ in der deutschen Sprache ab: Einerseits ‚opfert‘ der Herr seinen Sohn zur Erlösung der Menschheit; andererseits ist der Heiland das ‚Opfer‘ eines ‚jüdischen Verbrechens‘. Im Englischen und Französischen wird zwischen *sacrifice* und *victim/victime* unterschieden.

<sup>26</sup> Lydia Gottschewski, *Männerbund und Frauenfrage. Die Frau im neuen Staat*. München 1934, S.41f.

<sup>27</sup> Gottschewski, *Männerbund und Frauenfrage*, S. 37f.

<sup>28</sup> Vgl. z.B. Lerke Gravenhorst, Carmen Tatschmurat (Hg.), *Töchterfragen NS-FrauenGeschichte*, Freiburg i.Br. (Kore) 1990.

<sup>29</sup> Aurelius Augustinus, *Über die Dreifaltigkeit*, IV. Buch, II. Teil, 4. Abschnitt: XIV, 19. Der Text ist nicht ins Deutsche übersetzt, liegt aber in einer deutsch-französischen Ausgabe vor: „La Trinité“, in: *Oeuvres de Saint Augustin*, Texte de l'édition Bénédictine, traduction et notes de M. Mellet, Th. Camelot, Brügge 1955, Bd. 4, S. 386ff. English translation: [http://ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF1-03/npnf1-03-10.htm#P934\\_360132](http://ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF1-03/npnf1-03-10.htm#P934_360132)

<sup>30</sup> Theodor Fritsch, *Antisemiten-Katechismus. Eine Zusammenstellung des wichtigsten Materials zum Verständnis der Judenfrage*, Leipzig 1887, S. 313.

<sup>31</sup> Vgl. Christina von Braun, *Die ‚Blutschande‘ – Wandlungen eines Begriffs. Vom Inzesttabu zu den Rassengesetzen*, in: dies. *Die schamlose Schönheit des Vergangenen*, Frankfurt/M. (Neue Kritik) 1989, S. 81ff.

In der Literatur vor 1800 taucht die (asexuelle) Geschwisterbeziehung oft als eine Art von Schutz vor den Gefahren und der Gewalt der Sexualbeziehungen auf. In der serbischen Literatur und in serbischen Ritualen hat sich diese Tradition bis ins 20. Jahrhundert erhalten (vgl. Inge Vielhauer, *Bruder und Schwester. Untersuchungen und Betrachtungen zu einem Urmotiv zwischenmenschlicher Beziehung*, Bonn (Bouvier) 1979). Sie taucht in diesem Sinne auch in den Werken von Franz Kafka oder von Ingeborg Bachmann auf. Im ‚arischen‘ Kontext wird das Motiv jedoch mit erotischen Konnotationen versehen, die das Gegenteil von ‚Schutz‘ implizieren: Der Bruder, der als ‚Beschützer‘ vor der Gewalt der Sexualität gegolten hatte, wird zum Begehrenden selbst. Diese ‚Umfunktionierung‘ des Motivs läßt sich mit der des ‚gelben Sterns‘ durch die Nationalsozialisten vergleichen, die das christliche Symbol des gelben Flecks, durch das der Jude als ‚Ausgeschlossener‘ gekennzeichnet wurde, mit der Form des Davidssterns verbanden. Das heißt, der Jude wurde durch eben jenes Symbol ausgesondert und der Verfolgung ausgeliefert, das für ihn traditionell Heimat und Geborgenheit symbolisierte.

<sup>32</sup> Richard Wagner, *Walküre*, 1. Aufz./3.Sz. English translation: <http://www.rwagner.net/e-frame.html>

<sup>33</sup> So wird die Vereinigung mit der Schwester als eine Art von Gotteserfahrung beschrieben bei Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, in: *Gesammelte Werke*, hg. v. Adolf Frisé, Reinbek b. Hamburg (Rowohlt) 1952, S. 761.

<sup>34</sup> Frank Thiess, *Die Verdammten*, Berlin, 1922, S. 410f.

<sup>35</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Ungekürzte Ausgabe, München 1940, S. 272.

<sup>36</sup> Otto Hauser, *Geschichte des Judentums*, Weimar (Verlag Alexander Duncker) 1921.

<sup>37</sup> Zit. n. Gottfried Feder (Mitglied des Reichstags), „Die Judenfrage“, in: *Der Jud ist schuld...?*, S. 53-68, 61.

<sup>38</sup> Werner Sombart, „Artvernichtung oder Arterhaltung“, in: *Der Jud ist schuld...?*, S. 249-253, 252.

<sup>39</sup> Martin Engländer, *Die auffallend häufigen Krankheitserscheinungen der jüdischen Rasse*, Wien (Pollak). 1902, zit. n. Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology. Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness*, Ithaca u. London (Cornell University Press) 1985, S. 156.

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<sup>40</sup> Henriette Schrader-Breyman, *Zur Frauenfrage*, Wolfenbüttel 1865, S. 11. In dieser Schrift führte Henriette Schrader-Breyman den Begriff der ‚geistigen Mütterlichkeit‘ ein.

<sup>41</sup> Helene Lange, *Lebenserinnerungen*, Berlin 1921, S. 159f.

<sup>42</sup> Erwin J. Haeberle, „The Jewish Contribution to the Development of Sexology“, in: *The Journal of Sex Research*, Vol. 18, No. 4, November 1982, S. 305-323, 307.

<sup>43</sup> So beschreibt Simmel am Beispiel der Sprache von Lyrikerinnen, wie sehr sich das ‚Weibliche‘ – vergleichbar dem Jüdischen – in der bestehenden Kultur als ‚Fremdkörper‘ erfahre: „Gewiß ist das Herausbringen der weiblichen Nuance, ihre Objektivierung, auch in der literarischen Kultur sehr schwierig, weil die allgemeine Form der Dichtung, innerhalb deren es geschieht, eben männliche Produkte sind und daraufhin wahrscheinlich einen leisen inneren Widerspruch gegen die Erfüllung mit einem spezifisch weiblichen Inhalt zeigen. Namentlich an weiblicher Lyrik, und zwar gerade an sehr gelungener, empfinde ich oft zwischen dem personalen Inhalt und der künstlerischen Form eine gewisse Zweiheit, eine unterirdische Unbehaglichkeit, als hätte die schaffende Seele und ihr Ausdruck nicht ganz denselben Stil.“ Georg Simmel, „Weibliche Kultur“ (1902), in: ders., *Schriften zur Philosophie und Soziologie der Geschlechter*, hg. v. Heinz-Jürgen Dahme und Klaus Christian Köhnke, Frankfurt/M. (Suhrkamp) 1985, S. 166. Eine solche Beschreibung von Fremdheit entspricht genau dem antisemitischen Klischee vom Juden, etwa bei Weininger: „Des Juden psychische Inhalte sind sämtlich mit einer gewissen Zweiheit oder Mehrheit behaftet; über diese Ambiguität, diese Duplizität, ja Multiplizität kommt er nie hinaus.“ Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, Wien, Leipzig (16) 1917, S. 442.