

The Zionist Quest for Honor:
France and Jewish Zionist Ideology and Subjectivity

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Abstract

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This dissertation combines affect, race, history and colonial studies to examine the process of Christian othering of Jews in Europe since the Protestant Reformation, with a focus on the narrative of honor that was used to depict European Jews as *lacking* it. While the ways Jews were portrayed and constructed have changed as Europe redefined itself through the subsequent centuries, following the Protestant Reformation, this dissertation points out that the essence of Christian perception and depiction of Jews as *dishonorable* remained unchanged. This study traces how this depiction emerges in French Christian and anti-Semitic representations through a reading of French religious and non-religious texts that have come to gradually produce French Jews, first as a people and then as an ethnic collectivity that does not belong among other nations, all within a narrative of honor. The claim that Jews lack honor came to be internalized subsequently by Zionist Jewish writers and leaders and was spread in Zionist Jewish literature. In providing a history of the constructed social, political, religious and cultural phenomenon of the *dishonorable Jew*, this dissertation intervenes in the discussions surrounding subjectivity in Zionist thought and how it internalized and adopted the notion of the *dishonorable Jew* by safeguarding and appropriating Christian and secular Zionist and anti-Semitic sentiments of contempt, disdain, shame and superiority over Diaspora Jews.

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Dedication

To Souad and Mohamed, my grandparents,
who have been forcibly expelled from their home in Jaffa, Palestine.

Introduction

The object of this study is the examination of the process of Christian othering of Jews in France, with a focus on the narrative of honor that was used to depict European Jews as lacking it. This dissertation explores the complex and contested relationship that French Christians have had with Jews, even in their absence after their expulsion. Offering a literary, cultural and religious history of France that stretches from the Middle Ages to the early twentieth century, this study demonstrates how religion and later nationalism were utilized to render Jews in the Diaspora as “dishonorable”.

Religion as a field cannot conceptually be dissociated from the exercise of power; a system of beliefs mediated by symbols and intended to interact with other spheres that make up the social (economy, culture, law, science, etc.) and creates the *other*. Talal Asad has demonstrated that the concept of religion has a history and its birthplace is in the Christian West. In the first centuries of our era, one could not conceive - and even less practice - religion outside a dense network of power relations. Religion, Asad tells us, owes its specificity to the knowledge production and the power struggles that gave birth to modern Europe, which was continuously defining itself in contrast with an *other*: “The medieval Church did not attempt to establish absolute uniformity of practice, on the contrary, its authoritarian discourse was always concerned to specify differences, gradations, exceptions.”¹

This project looks at the place of the Jew in the historical, religious and cultural identity formation and political self-definition of what became the French nation. I argue that French Christian and later anti-Semitic representations have come to gradually produce French Jews, first as a people and then as an ethnic collectivity that does not belong among

¹ Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, c1993), 38.

other nations, all within a narrative of French Christian honor. This process evolved laboriously and underwent several transformations of form and connotations before its acceptance by the general public and its endorsement by a smaller group of European Jews.

Europe, Nationalism and the Jews

The quest for knowledge that has eventually animated Enlightenment France would gradually obscure the disciplinary, political and bodily dimension of religious practice by replacing them with modern axes of ethics. Interrogating the relationship between religion and nationalism is a predicament in the study of anti-Semitism and Zionism. As Hobsbawm suggests, there is an established and perhaps too obvious connection between religion and nationalism. In *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm describes that the creation of a secular religion was a major innovation which was essential to the establishment of the French Third Republic:

The first was the development of a secular equivalent of the church – primary education, imbued imbued with revolutionary and republican principles and content, and conducted by the secular equivalent of priesthood – or perhaps, given their poverty, the friars – the *instituteurs*. [...] The second was the invention of public ceremonies. [...] The third was the mass production of public monuments.²

Benedict Anderson also places nationalism on the same level as the “great religiously imagined Communities.”³ The quasi-religious discourse in Renan’s “What is nation?” shows how nationalist myths are closely related to and perhaps of the same nature as religious myths. In order to produce the myth of an *honorable* Christian Europe, a dishonorable element had to be found or even created. Since ancient times, European Jews had to adjust to this anomaly in practice, leading to a tangled relationship with Europe’s attempts to define its

² Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridgeshire; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 263-307, 271-272.

³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 12.

religion, culture and identity. By excluding Jews from the notions of Christian honor, France could define itself as honorable, even when its revolution pledged to leave behind all ancient forms of religious animosity. Religious honor was transmuted into its secular, modern variant, and Jews had to find ways to integrate.

I draw on Partha Chatterjee's work on nationalism and the distinction between nationalism as a political movement (the outer domain) and nationalism as a cultural construct (the inner domain). If nationalism is a construct which declares its sovereignty over language, religion, novels, art, education and popular culture, then it surely could have a sovereignty over shaping not only the political and the cultural, but also the emotional. I draw on Joseph Massad's demonstration that the "spiritual" or "inner domain" of anti-colonial nationalism is as constructed by European colonialism as its outer domain, despite anti-colonial nationalists' claim that the inner domain is "sovereign," which in the course of this dissertation I apply to Zionism's claim that its inner domain, namely its notions of Jewish "heritage," "race," history, and culture, are sovereign and independent, when Zionism had imported them wholesale from European Christians and anti-Semites.

Realist theorist Hans Morgenthau claims that individual anxieties are rooted in nationalism and that "personal fears are thus transformed into anxiety for the nation."⁴ The state channels these existential fears, experiences and memories of discrimination, humiliation, racism, oppression, and marginalization, and provides them with political significance, so as to stimulate them when and if necessary. The production and control of a discourse of emotions by the state fosters sentiment that produces compelling demands for political inclusion and justice as well as exclusion and injustice around the world.

⁴ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1978), 125. Morgenthau argues: "Qualitatively, the emotional intensity of the identification of the individual with his nation stands in inverse proportion to the stability of the particular society as reflected in the sense of security of its members. The greater the stability of society and the sense of security of its members, the smaller are the chances for collective emotions to seek an outlet in aggressive nationalism, and vice versa." Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 122-123

Emotions and Discipline

In my research, I have found honor to be an attribute generative of other sentiments and has consistently been expressed as an explicit motivation for political action in Europe and in Palestine. This project therefore explores the extent to which honor and the sentiments it generated were expressed and the contexts in which they were not, from the Protestant Reformation through the twentieth century by French politicians, religious figures and authors and later more generally by the Jewish Zionist movement. My research focuses on how honor has been forged, adapted, adopted, rejected, integrated, or ignored in creating the self and the other and how it has influenced political decision-making.

Here I rely on studies of Affect to analyze the different kinds of sentiment diffused and used by the French Christian discourse on honor and to understand the history of these emotions, what spurred them and what was their mode of expression. Michel Foucault stated that “We believe that feelings are immutable, but every sentiment, particularly the noblest and most disinterested, has a history,”⁵ though he did not write those histories himself. For Foucault, studying history meant critically engaging with the present, an approach set out in his conceptions of “genealogy” and “history of the present.” He argued that: “In trying to make a diagnosis of the present in which we live, we can isolate as already belonging to the past certain tendencies which are still considered to be contemporary.” In his paper *What is a ‘history of the present’?* On Foucault’s genealogies and their critical preconditions, David Garland argues that Foucault examines a contemporary phenomenon and tracks its genealogy through the unconventional analysis of discourse, power relations and power as productive of

⁵ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 153.

subjects and truth.⁶ Truth-making, Foucault explains, is produced “within discourses which are themselves neither true or false.”⁷

If every sentiment has a discourse and a history, then what seems as most intimate and personal becomes an expression associated with representations, behaviors and discourse. Such ambiguity on the positioning of sentiment and reason characterizes the lack of agreement on what sentiments are and how to categorize them, but most importantly how to rule them. Emotions and passions can hardly be dismissed from the social and from forming it. The modern state, with its centralized government and national territorial claims, remains one of the most powerful institutions for enacting and systematizing difference, while simultaneously showing a remarkable tenacity and adaptability to transformations. Foucault's analysis of the state deconstructed state power into a field of multiple forces and through his inquiries of governmentality and bio-power, a new field of studies approached the notion of the state not only as a contradictory ensemble of practices and processes but also as its materialization into a social subject in everyday life.

As Ann Stoler has pointed out in much of her work on the colonial politics of sentiment, sentiment should not be separated from its relationship to political discourse and the representation of human experience. In her article *Maddening States*, Begoña Aretxaga looked into the “performances and public representations of statehood; and about discourses, narratives, and fantasies generated around the idea of the state,” whereas she affirms that the state “cannot exist without this subjective component, which links its form to the dynamics of people and movements.”⁸ The state becomes a social subject that elicits powerful emotions: hope, fear, desire, hatred and pride.

⁶ David Garland, “What is a “history of the present”?: On Foucault’s genealogies and their critical preconditions,” *Punishment & Society*, Vol. 16(4) (2014): 365–384

⁷ Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power” in *Power/knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon, (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 118

⁸ Begoña Aretxaga, “Maddening States,” *Annual review of anthropology*, Volume 32, Issue 1 (2003): 395

The correlation between discourse and the formation of the social has been understood in part from literatures that have analyzed political powers and orders, which through governance structures, have managed to shape a homogenizing dominant discourse and administer populations in ways that fit the nation-building project. Following Stoler, I highlight that affect is not just epiphenomenal to the political, “a smokescreen of rule ... a ruse masking the dispassionate calculations that preoccupy states,”⁹ but that the affective is “the substance of politics.”

I track in the first part of this dissertation the ambiguous allegiances, affiliations and cultural expectations that a narrative of honor forged in French society. This allowed me to conceptualize honor theoretically and analytically as being an attribute generative of other sentiments. Even though honor is not an emotion, it consists of many intertwined affective elements that, when put together, function as a disciplining mechanism that ensures conformity with social expectations. Honor is a multi-level construct that includes the self and the other, both infused in gender roles and norms; but it is also an attribute consisting of a set of emotions and passions that regulate it.

The notion of honor as a trait that is possessed by some leads to sentiments of contempt and disdain toward those who are then deemed not in possession of it. The creation of masculine normativity and gender roles were also forged through a narrative of honor whereas male Christian honor came to represent potency, power and action, all based on toughness, strength, and courage to protect oneself, one’s property, and one’s family from defamation and threats. Honor, thus, provided a specific definition of class and hierarchical domination within the social structures of feudalism denoted by chivalry – the military system of feudalism- but also by a code of conduct embracing the refinement of society.

⁹ Ann L. Stoler, “Affective States,” in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, ed. David Nugent and Joan Vincent (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 6

Gradually, honor became a glorious guiding line for a specific social class, the aristocracy, which used it as a measurement of inclusion and exclusion. Honor set boundaries between those that embody the refined qualities of beauty, generosity, altruism, self-sacrifice and those who do not. The narrative of honor generated contempt for Jews that, at times, went beyond disdain to the point of hostility. For honor to remain specifically Christian and specifically French, aristocratic and masculine, Jews had to lack it.

Jews, Zionism and Honor

The second part of this project addresses how the claim that Jews lack Christian honor was interpreted and internalized by Zionist Jewish writers and leaders and spread in Zionist Jewish literature. Many studies have pointed out how Zionism had internalized many of the ideas contained in physical and metaphorical anti-Semitic representations of Jews; however, what the majority of this literature has not examined is which sentiments were put to use to generate anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic notions as a structure of knowledge.

I ask if Zionist consciousness or awareness as a people lacking honor evolved as a result of European influence or if it occurred independently from this influence, based on roots in Jewish tradition, religion and thought without an imposition from the European ideologies that oppress them? Was the Zionist nationalist formulation and reformulation of Jewish honor born out of the ordeal of gentile rejection and carried the stamp of this experience? My research looks into the wider discussion of how Zionist thought in its major characteristics internalized and adopted the notion of the dishonorable Jew by internalizing and appropriating Christian and secular Zionist and anti-Semitic sentiments of contempt, disdain, shame and superiority over Jews and shaped through them a Zionist ideology about Jews lacking honor.

European Jewry suffered from the culmination of centuries of *Judenhass* ("Jew Hate") in Europe throughout medieval Christianity, the Protestant Reformation, the nineteenth century of racial thinking and later on the anti-Semitic movement. Despite the emergence of Renaissance humanism and Jewish assimilation, European Jewry was not spared political and societal antagonism. As a consequence, European Jewish fears were expressed in a number of ways in the late nineteenth century with the rise of racial anti-Semitism in Western Europe and with the intensification of traditional religion-based Jew-hatred in Eastern Europe, materializing in the forms of restrictive laws, impoverishment, and pogroms. East European Jewish fears manifested in mass emigration mostly to the United States on the one hand, and in joining the existing revolutionary movements (socialism) on the other. In Western Europe, it manifested in increased assimilation (religious and social) in country-specific nationalisms (Germany, Austro-Hungary, and France). By the end of the century two Jewish political movements arose to address these increasing fears which adopted existing political ideologies: Jewish Zionism and Bundism.

This dissertation focuses on Jewish political Zionism in France and shows how it was preceded by: (1) three centuries of Protestant projects and claims that Jews did not belong in France and must be "restored" to Palestine, the home of the Hebrews; (2) a century of the rise of European nationalisms and nationalist thought; (3) more than a century of European colonization of Asia and then Africa; and (4) a century of Jewish assimilationism into European culture. The second part of this dissertation looks at how Jewish Zionism adopted all four elements in the formulation of its political project to address European Jewish fears and ambitions.

I will primarily focus on Jewish Zionism as a political project. I refer to Zionist ideology and its workings as a structure of values and beliefs that are informed by its leaders' tangible experiences. In the search for the ideological origins of Jewish Zionism, we notice a

social and political cohesion between Christian, secular and Jewish Zionists, prompted by propositions that were expressed in some form of organized and goal-oriented direction. The many social, economic, ideological and political developments that were occurring at the end of the nineteenth century in Europe had an impact on the position and identity of Jews in Europe. It was within the realities and contours of European identity vis-à-vis Jewishness that Zionism crystalized its national imagination and tailored its nationalism within the terms and logic of European norms and nationalist thought.¹⁰

Western honor values excluded “dishonorable” individuals and groups, as the dynamic of gaining or losing honor only pertains to those perceived as within the discourse. Honour is not an emotional capital that could be traded and exchanged regardless of space and social status. It was only valued by, and within, social groups that shared the same notions and practices. Therefore, Western honor conditioned honor of the Diaspora Jew to fulfilling divine prophecies by departing from Europe. I argue that this discourse on honor was meant to trouble, incite and reject the sustainability of a home in diaspora for Jews. Jewish Zionism endorsed this narrative which implied losing the essential character of Jewish heritage and culture, within the thematic of nationalism. In that sense, political Zionism reshaped the past and the future of Jews in Palestine along the lines of gentile honor.

Honor and Settler Violence

Zionist leaders have not refrained from formulating and using a language that grasps and incorporates honor into the Zionist lexicon, linking it to settler-colonialism and the possibility of a Jewish regeneration on colonized land. Nations and empire were always co-constituted, as recent studies of colonialism have argued.¹¹ In the case of the Zionist project, which was

¹⁰ Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: a colonial-settler state?* (New York: Monad Press; 1973).

¹¹ Frederick Cooper and Ann L. Stoler, “Tensions of Empire: Colonial Control and Visions of Rule,” *American Ethnologist*, 16 (1989): 609-621.

colonial but with no metropole and which has redefined "Jewish History" to forge a state and then create a nation—not simply in the metaphorical sense of fabrication, but also in the literal sense of actively transplanting populations from across Europe - honor, rooted in a racial nationalist project, was instrumental in defining both the new Jewish colonizer and the colonized Palestinian.

In Palestine, freed of the *Ostjuden*-curse and shame, the New Jew could, following two millennia of presumed homelessness and living on the peripheral of history, once again “enter history” as a subject. Through the layers and functions of honor, Zionist settlers were able to transmute themselves into a different race in a different geography. In the context of varying power relations (Jews as objects of anti-Semitism vs. Jews as colonial-settler subjects with racialized power), honor was mobilized and weaponized to produce a new Jewish race, that is no longer effeminate, but now colonial.

In the final part of my dissertation, I analyze how eagerly wanting to attain gentile honor has shaped the Jewish Zionist colonial endeavor. Here I am interested in understanding how wanting something that is not yours and attaining it by force - while surely being a colonial phenomenon and not exclusive to Zionism - shapes colonial societies. The Zionist project, which portrayed itself as a redemptive vehicle for the renewal of Jewish life on colonized land, envied gentiles for their honor and the native Palestinian population for their land. In order to function as ‘normal’ actors on the world stage and in the eyes of gentiles, Zionist settlers had to reconcile these two diverging lines. This meant that colonial violence was not solely necessary to conquer the land but also to elevate the Jewish settler into the realm of gentile honor.

Chapter 1: Christian Honor versus Jewish Dishonor

This chapter looks at the development of Christian othering of Jews in Europe, specifically following the Protestant Reformation. It provides the historical evolution of Non-Jewish Zionism in France, with a focus on the genealogy of honor that was used to depict European Jews as lacking it. While the ways in which Jews were portrayed and constructed changed as Europe redefined itself through the centuries following the Reformation, this chapter points out that the essence of Christian perceptions and depictions of Jews as *dishonorable* remained unchanged.

I aim to trace how this depiction emerged in French Christian and anti-Semitic representations through a reading of religious and non-religious texts that came to gradually produce French Jews, first as a people and then as an ethnic collectivity that did not belong among other nations, all within a narrative of honor. Aware that these texts are a product of their time and environment, it is therefore a peculiar task to differentiate religious from non-religious texts. There are specific challenges in periods where the dominant world views strike us today as religious; as such, to avoid pre-conceptions, I will locate the texts within their specific historical context in order to provide the necessary nuance in understanding the functions of honor. I explore how sentiments of contempt, disdain, and shame over Jews were generated through representation and narrative resolution and were continuously expressed in relation to honor. Some of these representations reproduced depictions and stereotypes of Jews that had formed in medieval times and remained unaltered.

The ebb and flow of periods of violence and its absence within Jewish-Christian relations through the centuries has been the subject of research and scholarship over the past

decades.¹² This chapter does not participate in that debate; however, it understands that the historicization of Jewish-Christian relations has been subjected to (and distorted by, at times) the legacies of the dominant Christian discourse and the agendas of the Protestant Reformation and Renaissance humanism. The Renaissance, while seeking a “rebirth” of a glorious past, misrepresented and depicted Jewish presence and existence in medieval times as backward and dangerous for ideological and political reasons.¹³ The creation of this narrative regarding Jews was made possible by political dominance and a racial power imbalance that also allowed those stereotypes to survive.

The Protestant Reformation—the sixteenth century’s major religious and political movement—was marked by new and different interpretations of the Bible and, in particular, the texts of the Old Testament, which brought about a rediscovery of the Jewish people and the divine role they could play in the lives of Protestant Christians. Protestantism used biblical prophecies as the base for its Christian Zionism, an ideology that urged the departure of Jews from Europe to the Holy Land to initiate their redemption. This ideology – which began to produce the Jews as a separate people and later a separate race - was endorsed and redefined by nineteenth century anti-Semitism through the mobilization of those same sentiments of contempt and shame and incorporated the figure of the dishonorable Jew in its secular non-Jewish Zionism.

¹² Regarding the many sides of the debates, Jonathan Elukin has argued for instance that Jewish-Christian relations in medieval times were overwhelmingly characterized by peaceful coexistence with the exception of a small number of violent “disconnected outbursts.” See Jonathan Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), xix–xx. Robert Chazan, on the other hand, portrayed a depiction of the Jewish experience in medieval Christian Europe between 1000–1500, emphasizing the dynamic and the destructive aspects of the Jewish-Christian encounter. See Robert Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish life in Medieval Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹³ This chapter’s review of French Christian depiction of Jews does not uphold the belief that Jewish life from medieval times to early modernity in Western Europe was characterized solely by the emergence of a “persecuting mentality,” in which Jews were subjected to an aggressive policy of religious, social, and political exclusion, as framed by Robert Moore, Robert Chazan and others. Historian Salo Baron called for an end to the “lachrymose” view of Jewish history that emphasized the persecutions, oppression, expulsion, and marginalization Jews had suffered in the pre-modern period. See Robert I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) and Salo Baron “Ghetto and Emancipation: Shall We Revise the Traditional View?” *The Menorah Journal* 14 (June, 1928): 515–26.

This chapter does not aim to register all manifestations of Christian Zionism, or non-Jewish Zionism, throughout its history in European novels and books. Its scope is limited to its manifestations in France, the country where the two principal Zionist leaders under review in this dissertation, Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau, immigrated in the last quarter of the nineteenth century—the time at which they called for the convening of a Zionist Congress. The chapter argues that the impact and influence of the history of Christian Zionism and anti-Semitism in France on the thought and political projects of Herzl and Nordau were considerable. Additionally, the links between Zionism and anti-Semitism on the one side, and English and German Protestantism, Enlightenment, and nationalism on the other have been overanalyzed,¹⁴ and so examining the more underrated French case will complement these studies and contribute to a better understanding of European Zionism. Tracing French Zionism to the inaugural moment when Napoleon Bonaparte made the first articulation of political Zionism at an important moment of the history of empire,¹⁵ helps us place events within their historical and political frame.

¹⁴ For a global survey of Jewish Zionism and its rootedness in Western Christian tradition, see Walter Laqueur, *A history of Zionism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976); Regina S. Sharif, *Jewish Zionism: Its Roots in Western History* (London: Zed Press, 1983); Shlomo Sand, *The invention of the Jewish people*, trans. Yael Lotan (London; New York: Verso, 2009); and Robert M. Healey, "The Jew in Seventeenth-Century Protestant Thought," *Church History* 46, no. 1 (1977): 63–79. On Protestantism and Christian Zionism, see Ursula Rudnick, "Lutheran Churches and Luther's Anti-Semitism," in *Jews and Protestants: From the Reformation to the Present*, ed. Irene Aue-Ben David, Aya Elyada, Moshe Sluhovsky, and Christian Wiese (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 229–240. On English Protestantism and Zionism, see Andrew Crome, *Christian Zionism and English National Identity, 1600–1850* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Laura Robson, "Church, State, and the Holy Land: British Protestant Approaches to Imperial Policy in Palestine, 1917–1948," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 39:3 (2011): 457–477; Donald M. Lewis, *The origins of Christian Zionism: Lord Shaftesbury and evangelical support for a Jewish homeland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Jonathan Freedman, *The Temple of Culture: Assimilation and Antisemitism in Literary Anglo-America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). On the influences of the Enlightenment on Jews, see Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). On the influence of German Bildung on the identity of acculturated German Jews, see George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) and David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). On the influences of anti-Semitism on Jewish Zionism, see Yakov M. Rabkin, *What is Modern Israel* (London: Pluto Press, 2016). On modern anti-Semitism in Germany, see Doris Bergen, "Catholics, Protestants, and Christian Antisemitism in Nazi Germany," *Central European History* 27, no.3 (1994): 329–348; Victoria Barnett, *For Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Donald J. Dietrich, *Catholic Citizens in the Third Reich: Psycho-social Principles and Moral Reasoning* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988). On the development in both the Catholic and Protestant churches in Germany in the early period, see Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich*, trans. John Bowden, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987–1988).

¹⁵ This moment attributed a new purpose to Jews as part of France's imperial ambitions to expand its territory and defeat England. Napoleon's 1799 Palestine Campaign marked the first time since the Crusades that a Western power ventured into the Arab region and came back, though defeated, with hopes for a future conquering of Palestine.

In sum, this chapter presents a chronological overview of and introduction to the French Christians' religious, political, and cultural imagining of the Jews of France from the Protestant Reformation up to the nineteenth century, and how the expression "diaspora Jew" came to be linked to notions of honor and dishonor. Through the reading of these texts, a historiography of the concept of honor is presented as part of Europe's Christian heritage of competing religious, social and political hierarchies in order to provide the historical coordinates of this claim. This section also studies the sentiments of contempt and shame, which are subordinate to the notion of honor, that were diffused through political and literary works with regards to French Jews and their projected departure out of France, examining how these sentiments were expressed, shaped, and framed in order to understand how the depiction of Jews by non-Jewish Zionists later manifested in the thought and ideology of Jewish Zionists.

The next chapter examines how the modern notion of honor was generative of sentiments like contempt, disdain, and shame. These Christian and secular Zionist and anti-Semitic sentiments of contempt and superiority over Jews informed depictions of Jews as lacking honor. These sentiments, this chapter shows, were used in a power dynamic to affect the internalization of these anti-Semitic notions—namely that Christians have honor and that Jews do not—by Jews themselves, and through this internalization, Christians could dictate and control the behavior of Jews.

The subsequent chapters address how the claim that Jews lack honor came to be internalized by Zionist Jewish writers in particular and became widespread in their literature. Many studies have pointed out how Zionism internalized many of the ideas contained in physical and metaphorical anti-Semitic representations of Jews; however, what the majority of this literature has not examined is which sentiments were used to generate anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic notions as a structure of knowledge.

1.1 France's Early Zionists: The Discovery of the Jewish People

The French Middle Ages and Jewish Sins

The forms of anti-Judaism seen in the gradually Christianizing European West and, more specifically, in France throughout the centuries can be divided into several categories.

Ancient Judeophobia and the theologically based Jew-hatred of the Middle Ages targeted both the religion and its followers. In the thirteenth century, following the rise of sectarian movements such as the Cathars in Western Europe, the Catholic Church felt its authority was being challenged and threatened.¹⁶ Historian Louis Newman proposes that the flourishing of Catharism in southern France was accompanied by marked prosperity among southern French Jews, but he cannot confirm whether the correlation of the growth of Catharism, which was fundamentally opposed to the doctrines of Judaism, and the prosperity of Jews is an indicator of Judaic influence on Catharism.¹⁷

In 1199, Pope Innocent III (1161–1216), who called for a crusade against the Cathars, condemned all readings that doubted the word of God, as Christian believers should rely wholly on the clergy for the sole understanding and sole interpretation of the Bible. Wanting to isolate Jews from Christian society, the Catholic Church's attacks were also directed against the Hebrew books, which, according to the Pope, contained subversive elements as “Jews perform detestable and unheard-of things against the Catholic faith.”¹⁸ Innocent III

¹⁶ Catharism was a dualist medieval religious movement between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries that thrived in southern Europe. Its followers faced a prolonged period of persecution by the Catholic Church, which rejected their unorthodox Christianity and perceived them as a religious and political threat to the established order. Interestingly, some Protestant Churches claim a Cathar heritage as their early reformers were aware of the Cathar tradition.

¹⁷ Louis Israel Newman, *Jewish influence on Christian reform movements* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925).

¹⁸ Solomon Grayzel et al., “Letter Innocent III, January 17, 1208,” in *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century* (Philadelphia: Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, 1922), 115. See also Robert Chazan, “Pope Innocent III and the Jew” in *Pope Innocent III and his World*, ed. John C. Moore (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 187–204. On Jews in Medieval France, see Gilbert Dahan, *Les Juifs en France médiévale: dix études* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 2017); and William C. Jordan, *The French monarchy and the Jews: from Philip Augustus to the last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

insisted that the Jews were condemned to perpetual servitude for crucifying Christ,¹⁹ and as a consequence of this eternal sin, they have been turned into wanderers on earth.²⁰ One could speculate that the Cathar heresy led the church to oppress any forms of orthodoxy, a process that led to a heightened concern with Jewish teachings and practices.²¹

The influential French abbot Pierre le Vénérable (1092–1156)²² expressed particular sentiments of contempt and disdain toward Jews. In *Adversus Judaeos*, Pierre explains that for shedding the blood of Christ, Jews were doomed to remain enslaved, miserable, fearful, wailing, and exiled on earth until they convert to the Christian god. Jews, he writes, should not be murdered but rather “preserved” in their dishonor: “Dieu veut en effet vous conserver, non pas pour votre honneur, mais pour votre déshonneur, non pas pour vous être agréable, mais pour faire de vous un spectacle pour le monde, il veut vous garder comme il a gardé le fratricide Caïn.”²³ For the Christian Church, Jewish dishonor was a consequence of their sins, a badge of shame that Jews would carry and that would be met with contempt. The absence

¹⁹ Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth century* (Philadelphia, 1933), Document 5, Innocent III, 18: “Etsi Judeos, quos propria culpa submisit perpetue servituti, cum Dominum crucifixerint, quem sui prophete predixerant ad redemptionem Israel in carne venturum.”

²⁰ Innocent III, 24: “quare Judei, contra quos clamat vox sanguinis Jesu Christi, etsi occidi non debeant, ne divine legis obliviscatur populus Christianus, dispergi tamen debent super terram ut vagi, quatenus facies ipsorum ignominia repleatur, et querant nomen Domini Jesu Christi”.

²¹ Historian John O’Brien calls for a nuance in understanding the relationship of the Jews and the Cathari, as “The complex structure of Southern society had enabled elements of various minority groups to attain positions of importance and to prosper under orthodox princes. The decrees of the councils do not illustrate that the Jews enjoyed special influence under heretical princes, but rather that the prosperity of the Jews was one aspect of the tolerance of southern French society which was so distasteful to the Church.” See: John M. O’Brien, “Jews and Cathari in Medieval France,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Jan., 1968), 215-220

²² Pierre le Vénérable, or Peter the Venerable, was the abbot of the Benedictine abbey in Cluny, which was acknowledged as leading Western monasticism and as the origin of the Crusades, inciting lords and knights to partake in crusades in the Holy Land. Peter produced some of the most important documents of the twelfth century and published the first Latin translation of the Qu’ran, which became the standard Benedictine text used by the preachers of the Crusades. Known as the Toledan Collection, it was eventually printed in 1543 with an introduction by Martin Luther. Some historians have documented that monks of Cluny produced knowledge to justify the crusades, while their monasteries benefited from “Muslim gold.” For more on this, see Delaruelle Étienne, “L’idée de croisade dans la littérature clunisienne du XIe siècle et l’abbaye de Moissac,” in *Annales du Midi: revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale* 75, no. 64 (3–5 May 1963): 419–440; and Anouar Hatem, *Les poèmes épiques des croisades, genèse, historicité, localisation, Essai sur l’activité littéraire dans les colonies franques de Syrie au Moyen-âge*, (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1932), 43, 45, 52. Peter also attacked the Talmud as black magic. See the essay by Alain Boureau, “Un épisode central dans la construction de la magie noire du livre: de la rivalité des exégèses à la crémation du Talmud (1144–1242)” in *Das Buch als magisches und als Repräsentationsobjekt*, ed. Peter Ganz (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992).

²³ “God wants to keep you, not for your honor, but for your dishonor, not to be kind to you, but to make you a spectacle for the world, He wants to keep you as he kept the fratricide Cain.” (My translation) Cited in Jean-Pierre Torrell, “Les Juifs dans l’œuvre de Pierre le Vénérable,” *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 30, no. 120 (1987): 340.

of a call to physically harm Jews did not mean that they were not reprimanded: Jewish presence, it seems, was framed temporally and spatially as a lesson and punishment.

Pope Grégoire IX (1145–1241) summoned several European kings to burn “unholy” Jewish texts, but the only ally to be found was France's Louis IX (1214–1270), known also as Saint Louis, who needed the clergy's support for his political endeavors. He ordered an investigation into Jewish writings, which led to *Le Procès du Talmud* (The Trial of the Talmud) in 1240,²⁴ which saw the Jewish Halakhah (law or interpretation of the Torah) put on trial for two years. The Talmud was eventually proclaimed "*un livre infâme*" and was burned publicly.²⁵ In 1242, twenty-four cartloads of the Talmud were set on fire in the Place de Grève in Paris in the presence of the provost and the clergy; and by 1394, France had expelled its Jews indefinitely, with only some small communities remaining in parts of the country.²⁶

Although this was neither the first nor the last time that popes and kings called for the burning of the Talmud, the theological discussion between ecclesiastics and rabbis that occurred during the trial exposed the content of the old Hebrew books to a wider audience.²⁷ This period generated the accusations of corruption, lies, usury, and deicide that characterized medieval stereotypes of Jews. Additionally, these sinful activities that were linked to Jews forged the way of depriving them of any honor. While historically honor was linked to a man's material possessions, such as land and family, the implications of honor saw a change as lands and properties became more accessible to other segments of society, not just the

²⁴ For more on the Trial of the Talmud under Louis IX, see Paul Salmona and Juliette Sibon, eds., *Saint Louis et les Juifs: politique et idéologie sous le règne de Louis IX* (Paris: Éditions du patrimoine, Centre des monuments nationaux Musée d'art et d'histoire du judaïsme, 2015).

²⁵ The Talmud consists of the Mishnah and the Gemara. The Mishnah is the original written version of the oral law, and the Gemara is the record of the rabbinic discussions following this recording. The Talmud is the compilation of the historic rabbis "discussing" or "debating" the Torah's meanings.

²⁶ Maurice Samuels, *Inventing the Israelite: Jewish Fiction in Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 6.

²⁷ Part of this audience would consist of the forefathers of a group that later became known as the Huguenots, the Calvinist Protestants of France.

aristocracy. Honorability transmuted from a material good to a human quality by the late medieval period.

The endless and bloody wars, which were the regular feature of mediaeval Christendom, played an important part in the subsequent development of chivalry and its conceptions of honor. This development in Western European Christian civilization can be traced to the Crusades (tenth–thirteenth centuries), during which soldiers acted as God's vassals. These were points of intersection between religion and chivalry, which not only embodied the honor of bearing arms but also the honor of Christian redemption. The vices of the knights during the Crusades and their “extreme quarrelsomeness and pugnacity, merciless arrogance and greed, cruelty to the vanquished, lack of a sense of common humanity, faithlessness to those outside the circles of feudal obligation, and frequently impious disregard of religion”²⁸ in the conquest of Jerusalem could only be transmitted as acts of heroic chivalry on the European mainland, if contrasted to Jewish vices.

Catholic military campaigns sought redemption for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ by attempting to conquer Palestine several times. This pursuit of divine glory and Christian honor was the highest virtue in the scale of medieval values; volunteers would join the crusades based on strata of motivations, such as the prospect of mass ascension into Heaven and forgiveness of sins, as well as to satisfy feudal obligations and gain personal, economic and political advantages. There was something very glorifying in attaining the highest honorable Christian state of knighthood, the Grail King,²⁹ and being able to gloat about it. The general theme of Christianity and war excluded Jews by default from an integral part of

²⁸ Gerald Irving A. Dare, “The Interaction of Christianity and Chivalry in the historical development of the Law of War,” *The International Review of the Red Cross*, (Nov. 1963): 10

²⁹ The legend of the Holy Grail was said to be about the cup that Jesus Christ drank from at the Last Supper and which Joseph of Arimathea used to collect Jesus's blood at his crucifixion. The search for this grail became the principal quest of knights. In her book *Deadly Dishonor*, Brenda Schnitzler explains that the concept of the "honorable Christian" can also be found in the German tradition of honor and can be traced in early German literature, such as in Pfaffe Konrad's *Rolandslied* (1170) and Hartmann van Aue's *Parzival* (1210/1220), "which shows the process of learning and maturation to the highest honorable Christian state of knighthood, the Grail King."²⁹ Schnitzler then states that "this Christian concept of vassality eventually developed into the more secular concept of feudality and western chivalry." Keiser, Brenda, *Deadly dishonor: the duel and the honor code in the works of Arthur Schnitzler*, (New York: P. Lang, 1990), 4.

the Christian civilization of Western Europe. Although much has been written about chivalry both in the history of war and of literature, few attempts have been made to set out its basic principles in relation to forging Jews as the antithesis of Christian ideals and thus of chivalry and honor.

The Renaissance and Christian Zionism

Christians who conceived of Jewish existence as defined by the crucifixion of Jesus emphasized the religious categories of chosenness and repentance in their understanding of Judaism. As the spirit of the Renaissance spread across Europe, minds opened to new horizons and resources, while simultaneously reminiscing of an invented glorious past “by appropriating Greek civilization and incorporating it into the recently invented Europe. This process was parallel to Protestantism’s appropriation of the Hebrew Bible in ways that the Catholic Church had previously shunned.”³⁰

These intellectual developments in the sixteenth century underlined the major religious and political movement within Western Christianity that challenged the Catholic Church and papal authority in particular, demanding reforms. The Protestant Reformation was marked by new and different interpretations of the Bible, specifically the texts of the Old Testament, which led to a rediscovery of the Jewish people and the divine role they could play. Calvinism argued that Jews would remain rejected until they embraced Jesus. It was with this new reading of the Old and New Testaments that Protestantism’s attitude toward contemporary Jews came to be informed by the sins of the ancient Hebrews, drawing a linear representation through time. The Huguenots, the Calvinist Protestants of France, also found

³⁰ Joseph Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 167.

in the Old Testament, and Genesis in particular, the basis that allowed them to separate themselves from Catholics and conceive of themselves as active elements in a divine plan.

With the invention of the printing press, the Protestant Reformation gradually rewrote modern European history by breaking away from the Catholic Church's scholastic decadence and monopoly. From the sixteenth century onward, the Catholic clergy gradually lost its grip on cultural and literary life while the Protestant Reformation spread further. Among intellectuals of that era, there was a frenzy of returning to the source and discovering and understanding the Old Testament and Talmudic literature independently from clerical teachings.

To satisfy this desire, King François I^{er} opened the *Collège des Trois Langues: Latin, Hébreu et Grec* (Collegium Trium Linguarum) in Paris in 1530 to break the monopoly of Latin and teach Hebrew and Greek. This institution later became the Collège de France as we know it today.³¹ Researchers, both Catholic and Protestant, sought knowledge of Hebrew to attain direct access to biblical, Talmudic, and Midrashic texts. As the study of Hebrew texts intensified, the printing press allowed the translations from Hebrew by Jacques Lefèvre (1455–1536), Robert Olivetan (1506–1538), and Sébastien Chateillon (1515–1563) to spread and reach the general public.³²

This dissertation does not focus profoundly on the downfall of Rome and the possibilities of Jewish deliverance from papal suppression. It seems that in the struggle that

³¹ See "History and Archeology," website of the Collège de France, <https://www.college-de-france.fr/site/histoire-et-archeologie/index.htm>.

³² Lefèvre was a humanist and a precursor of the Protestant movement in France, who based his work on Hebrew and Greek texts. Olivetan, the cousin of Jean Calvin, was a humanist and the first to translate the Bible into French from Hebrew and Greek. Chateillon was a renowned Protestant preacher and theologian who was appointed by Jean Calvin as rector of the Collège de Genève. With Hebrew texts being translated, Hebrew studies were pursued more intently by both Catholic and Protestant intellectuals during the sixteenth century. Clément Marot, the poet of the court of King François I^{er}, composed fifty psalm adaptations, which were introduced into Christian liturgy. Renaissance humanist François Rabelais invested in Talmudic and cabalistic studies. Other eminent Hebraists such as Guillaume Postel, Gilbert Génbrard, Blaise de Vignère, and Guy Lefèvre de la Boderie wrote poems full of cabalistic allusions. Notable scholars among the Protestants were Salluste de Bartas and Agrippa d'Aubigné, whose collection *Les Tragiques* bitterly deplores the sufferings of the Protestants, persecuted by the Catholics, and draws direct comparisons with the children of Israel. The end of the century is marked by a heavy Jewish presence in dramatic works such as "Saul le furieux" by Jean de la Taille, "Les Juives" by Robert Garnier, "Abraham sacrificing" by Théodore de Bèze, "Jephté" by Florient Chrétien, and "Aman" by Antoine de Montchrestien.

erupted between the Catholic church and Protestantism, the Jews were trapped between ancient catholic anti-Judaism and Protestant anti-Catholicism that transformed Jews into divine actors. Protestantism used biblical prophecies as the base for what became Christian Zionism, a movement that urged Jews to depart to the Holy Land to bring about their redemption. The Protestant Reformation had, on the one hand, a religious current that preached tolerance toward Jews and, on the other, a messianic current that expected the Jews to realize all the religious and social aspirations of Protestant Christianity.³³ A politically and theologically motivated form of anti-Catholicism was central for Christian Zionism, as Protestants themselves faced persecution, violence, torture, and forms of expulsion.

Protestant preachers who sympathized with the Jewish ‘people’ admired their noble willingness to undergo the worst humiliations on account of their faith. France had its share of millenarian Christian Zionists, most notably among the Huguenots in the southern regions, who faced sectarian violence at the hands of the Catholics.³⁴ This persecution, however, did not stop Calvinist preachers such as Michel Le Francheur, Jean Dailé, and Jean Mestrezat from reproducing Middle Ages stereotypes and accusing Jews of superstition and of the falsification of sacred texts, emphasizing the anti-Jewish tendencies of premodern Christian exegesis.³⁵

Other writers, such as renowned soldier-poet Agrippa d'Aubigné, who wrote of the suffering of the Protestants at the Crown's hand, were affected by the rediscovery of the

³³ This chapter is not an analysis of Protestant religious works on Judaism but it looks at how, through a reevaluation of the Bible, Jews were given a divine role. Salo Baron notes that Calvin had an ambiguous attitude toward Jews. Though he held negative views of Jews and attacked Jewish exegesis, Baron discusses the ways that Calvin also advanced positive views of the law, Jewish interpretations of the Ten Commandments, and principles of the separation of church and state that Baron deems as working to the eventual benefit of the Jews. See Salo W. Baron, “John Calvin and the Jews,” in *Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict: From Late Antiquity to the Reformation*, ed. Jeremy Cohen (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 380–400.

³⁴ This sectarianism would come to be known as France's wars of religion, which lasted from 1562 until 1598 when the *Edit de Nantes* was signed.

³⁵ On Protestants and Jews in France, see Myriam Yardeni, *Huguenots et Juifs* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2008).

Jews. D'Aubigné wrote *Les Tragiques* (1616) in the midst of the wars of religion,³⁶ a plea sufficiently eloquent to delegitimize the last Valois princes. *Les Tragiques* is a vast production that illustrates vividly the Wars of Religion, and the state of culture, customs, political and social life at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The poem, in which d'Aubigné bitterly condemned the suffering of Protestants persecuted by Catholics, calls for revenge for the blood of his people, based on values of honor, fidelity, love, and salvation.

Informed by noble feelings, such as resilience and loyalty in a turbulent political and spiritual context, his zeal reads as uncompromising militancy put in the service of a greater cause: God or the just King. Most of d'Aubigné's poem refers to loyalty, honor, and the Protestant Alliance—for him, for the sake of eternal honor, blood could be shed in the name of justice and freedom. Here, he draws parallels with the Hebrew people who would gain freedom, justice, and honor once they committed to their divine purpose. D'Aubigné unites the past of the Jews with the present fate of the Protestants, in order to rewrite a universal history of one true faith, which is now bitterly persecuted.

The poet did not unify his struggle with that of the Jews completely, but rather sought to draw an indefinite linear line from their past to the future, portraying them as active elements in an ongoing divine plan set forth by Protestantism. The verses, full of pain and vehemence, seem like cries of truth. In this poem, which is essentially an allegory of Protestant prosecution, the Jews are transformed into the Protestants' chosen people, while d'Aubigné calls for their Exodus³⁷:

³⁶ *Les Tragiques* is a vast epic and satirical poem in seven songs or books ("Misères," "Princes," "Chambre dorée," "Feux," "Fers," "Vengeances," and "Jugement") by Agrippa d'Aubigné, published in 1616, in which he recounts the misfortunes of France during the wars of religion. The work of d'Aubigné is still relevant today, as it is taught at high schools in France and has often been included in the French "baccalauréat" (high school) exam.

³⁷ The citations are from the critical edition of Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, ed. A. Gamier and J. Plattard, 4 vols. (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1962–1967).

Qui voudra se sauver de l'Egypte infidelle,
Conquerir Canaan et habiter en elle,
O tribus d'Israel, il faut marcher de rang
Dedans le golfe rouge et dans la mer de sang³⁸

D'Aubigné depicts Protestantism's effort to mobilize all Jews as a religious community, albeit composed of several tribes (*O tribus d'Israël*). He then morphs them into an imagined and constructed oneness. D'Aubigné calls on them to come together and close their ranks (*marcher de rang*) as a homogenous people to conquer Canaan and make it their home. D'Aubigné describes the difficulties of merging a trajectory that is both political and spiritual, yet one has to question the kind of messianic feature he is gesturing toward if infidel Egypt represents the Catholic Church and the “sea of blood” symbolizes *le massacre de la Saint-Barthélemy*.³⁹ In this metaphor, into whose sea of blood does he want the Hebrews to march after crossing the red gulf that stood for the Red Sea? His emphasis is on the future and on the concrete promise of redemption formulated in the Old Testament. His aim, like that of the prophets, is to realize divine action, and thus set history in motion and reconnect the past with the future. Nonetheless, this divine action required a bloodbath: d'Aubigné fuses the miracle of marching through the Red Sea and the later massacres of the Canaanites into one bloody march. To reach fulfillment and salvation, Zion needs to be reconquered by the persecuted:

Voici marcher de rang par la porte dorée,
L'enseigne d'Israël dans le ciel arborée,
Les vainqueurs de Sion, qui au prix de leur sang
Portans l'escharpe blanche ont pris le caillou blanc:
Ouvre, Jerusalem, tes magnifiques portes;
Le lion de Juda suivi de ses cohortes
Veut regner, triompher et planter dedans toy
L'estendart glorieux, l'auriflam de la foy.⁴⁰

“Who would want to escape from infidel Egypt,
Conquer Canaan and live in it,
O tribes of Israel, close your ranks and march
Into the red gulf and into the sea of blood” (D'Aubigné, “Fers,” 521–28, my translation.)

³⁹ The Saint Bartholomew’s Massacre of 1572 was a wave of Catholic violence against Protestants (the Huguenots) that started in Paris and spread through France during the French Wars of Religion.

⁴⁰ D'Aubigné, “Les Feux,” 1–8.

We see that d'Aubigné presents a spiritual outlook on Protestantism's future, one in which Jews are chosen to accomplish a mission for all of humanity. Jews are therefore turned into and produced as a unified people with no self-will other than to fulfill a past prophecy, even if the price of victory was to be paid with their blood and the blood of others (*Les vainqueurs de Sion, qui au prix de leur sang*). D'Aubigné demands the same ferocity from the Lion of Judah (i.e., Christ) and his followers in marching through the Golden Gate to conquer and triumph in Jerusalem where he will plant the oriflamme of faith (i.e., the Protestant faith). Jerusalem, for Catholics and Protestants alike, has always been idealized and memorialized as the city that ascended to the Temple of Jesus—one of passion, crucifixion, and resurrection.

Ancient Israelites here ceased to be a metaphor and manifested as contemporary Jews, unified as a collectivity. Jews were instrumentalized to the extent that they served as a metaphor at one point and as a literal vehicle for deliverance at the another; it is as if Jews had no real existence prior to their imagining in the Protestant narrative. It is noteworthy how d'Aubigné's revisionist history of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt became an instigation for genocide—a powerful yet disturbing image, especially given his certainty of the prophecy's fulfilment.⁴¹

French Diplomatic Missionaries

Protestant millenarians from the sixteenth century onward relentlessly believed in the coming of the millennium and felt the imminent urge to “restore” Jews to Palestine and the need to convert them. This period witnessed a gradual incorporation of this eschatological history into the political and diplomatic sphere, merging national political endeavors to the future of

⁴¹ This period in the history of France comes to a close with the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), the spread of starvation and disease, the military defeat of Calvinism, and the peasant and urban revolts, all of which seemingly reinforced the Protestant hope for a return to primordial times, reflected by the reinterpretation of Jewish messianism into a Christian framework.

Jews.

Considered perhaps the greatest heretic of his time, millenarian and French Ambassador to Denmark Isaac La Peyrère (1594–1676) wrote *Le Rappel des Juifs* (Recall of the Jews), again showcasing the perceived purpose of Jewish existence: Jews were set apart from all other people by God and were given an elected land. Peyrère called for their "restoration" to the Holy Land to launch the beginning of the Messianic Age. Noteworthy was the geographical demarcation of Palestine that he introduced in his work *Prae-Adamitae* (Men before Adam), a promised land that ran from the Nile to the Euphrates and from the Mediterranean to the lower end of the Arabian Peninsula, stretching to today's Saudi Arabia and Yemen.⁴² Ironically, he dedicated this book to "All Synagogues of the Jews dispersed over the face of the Earth."

La Peyrère served as the Secretary of Louis I^{er} de Bourbon, prince de Condé, who was a prominent Huguenot and a general during France's War of Religion and the uncle of the future king of France, Henri IV. As his secretary, La Peyrère spread a new form of French nationalist messianism, reserving a special role for France in this process: God had chosen the French people and their king for an exceptional mission, and France would lead the return of the Jews to the Holy Land.⁴³ Here again, we see this affirmative and normative creation of Jews as a people, albeit as the chosen ones. He ties the present and the future of the Jews to the King of France and the return of the Messiah, as all three combined would renew mankind and nature once the prophecy was fulfilled.

⁴² Isaac de La Peyrère, *Prae-Adamitae* (Amsterdam, 1655).

⁴³ Isaac de La Peyrère, *Du Rappel des Juifs* (1643), 135: "C'est la raison et la conjecture mesme que nous avons que la France sera le lieu où les Juifs seront premièrement convez de venir pour se faire Chrestiens; et ou les Juifs se retireront contre la persecution des peuples qui les dominant." Available at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8608258x.r=le%20rappel%20des%20juifs?rk=42918;4>.

What is very particular about La Peyrère's analysis is his description of Palestine, imagined in terms of a “land of milk and honey” that had been fertile and beautiful when the Jews lived there. In *Le Rappel des Juifs*, La Peyrère similarly describes the unnatural physical beauty of the Jews.⁴⁴ This all ended when God cursed them and expelled them from the Holy Land. Once the Jews renounced their true God, they were cursed, they and their land were temporarily doomed spiritually and physically. Palestine—the promised, cherished and holy land, once so fertile and magnificent—was now doomed to drought, dragons, and evil spirits: “La Terre Sainte a été Maudite en leur Malediction. La Ville de Jérusalem est devenue le Repaires de Dragons et des Esprits démmodés.”⁴⁵ The women of Jerusalem, once renowned for their indescribable beauty and kindness, resembling pillars of white marble, were now described as having dark skin, marked by bodily diseases and spiritual agony. Here, we notice the beginning of the physiognomic depiction of diaspora Jews with dark skin, evil eyes, long nose, dark hair and so on, a portrayal that became generalized for centuries to come and that was integral to the racialization of the nineteenth century.

The long Christian tradition of depicting the Jewish body as diseased, the “Judenkratze,” was seen as originating from God's wrath and his punishment for their eternal sin. Dark skin, spiritual agony, and bodily diseases went hand in hand as markers of a falling from grace—syndromes of a spiritual, racial, and bodily degradation that came to be coded in the late nineteenth century as “degeneration” in a scientific sense, as we will see later.⁴⁶ Jews

⁴⁴ The original quote from *Le Rappel des Juifs*: “Leurs Enfants ont été comparés à des Plantes robustes qui croissent sur le Liban, dont la tete est haute et droite et la chevelure épandue. Leurs ont été comme de ces Pilliers ou de Marbre blanc, ou d'Albatre, que l'on void de tous ordres dans les Edifices des grands Roys. On, a admiré la vigueur et l'adresse des enfants d'Ephraim. Il n'a été parlé que de la beauté et de la gentillesse des Filles de Jerusalem. Dieu a sucité a ce peuple des Roys justes et Victorieux, qui les ont fait fleurir en temps de paix et thriompher en temps de guerre. Et pour ne pas parler seulement des Juifs en leur Personnes; At-il été Pays au monde si fertile et si beau qu'a été la Judée ou la Palestine; cette terre Promise, cette Terre Sainte et Cherie, de laquelle il est écrit que Dieu avait toujours les yeux pour elle? At-il été Ville au monde si magnifique et si pompeuse, qu'a été la Ville de Jérusalem, cette Ville Princesse des autres Villes?”

⁴⁵ La Peyrère, *Du Rappel des Juifs*, 71. (The Holy Land has been cursed by their damning. The city of Jerusalem has become a den of dragons and hexed spirits).

⁴⁶ Regeneration has different connotations in Christian theology; it is linked to a spiritual renewal of man or of “being born again” (John 3:3–8 and 1 Peter 1:3) from a previous state of separation from God and subjection to the decay of death (Ephesians 2:5). Thus, in Lutheran and Roman Catholic theology, it generally means that which takes place during baptism. Regeneration represents a wider theme of re-creation and spiritual rebirth. The verb “to degenerate” dates from the end of

were condemned to wander the earth, La Peyrère writes, having lost any claim to a legitimate place in society. They had no heart and no honor and were left to the mercy of others: “Nous les voyons sans Coeur et sans honneur exposer aux outrages de toutes les nations du Monde.”⁴⁷ Jews are rendered as victims yet at the same time tainted with their own suffering and dispossession. Deserted, literally and metaphorically, a return to Palestine of the converted diaspora Jews, led by the King of France, was the only possible redemption for Jews and the salvation of humanity.

This could be seen as a continuation of France's obsession with the Crusades and later its imperialist expansion. As American historian Richard H. Popkin puts it:

La Peyrère 's emphasis on France and the French King, however, is not just local pride, but is based on a long prior tradition that had developed in France during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance about France's connection with the biblical world, its special role in Christian history and its religious mission at the present juncture of Divine history.⁴⁸

Diaspora Jews could only regain their honor by returning to the Promised Land and repenting to God. It seems that for the early Protestant preachers, as long as the Jews did not fulfill this purpose, they would forever live dishonored. By this logic, a failure to depart from France and march toward Palestine was akin to being a dishonorable Jew, defying God's will. The relevance of La Peyrère's work lies in his introduction of a divine prophecy into the political realm of diplomacy, which cleared the way for a French based messianism, involving Jews and Palestine which were revived and used a century later to formulate political conceptions regarding French Jews.

the fifteenth century and meant "to lose or suffer impairment to the qualities proper to the race or kind," and in the figurative sense, "decay in quality, pass to an inferior state." Stemming from the Latin *degeneratus* it was used for physical as well as moral qualities. It is worth noting that forms of Jewish degeneration are described some two hundred years before Max Nordau's study on degeneration.

⁴⁷ La Peyrère, *Du Rappel des Juifs*, 72.

⁴⁸ Richard H. Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676): His Life, Work, and Influence* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1987), 61–62.

Popkin informs us that Abbé Grégoire, who called for granting Jews rights in order to “regenerate” them during the French Revolution, was influenced by the works of La Peyrère; Napoleon relied even more so on *Le Rappel des Juifs* when he convened the Grand Sanhedrin.⁴⁹

Two Paris newspapers, both controlled by the government, the *Gazette de France*, August 28, 1806, and the *Journal de Paris*, August 19, 1806, announced the discovery of “un livre aussi rare que singulier,” namely Isaac La Peyrere's *Du Rappel des Juifs*. The newspaper accounts said that everyone was talking about the meeting of the Jewish assembly. Then they gave a summary of La Peyrere's opus of 1643 that predicted that the Jews and the Christians would be reunited in France, forming the basis for the New Age which would be run politically by “un roi universel,” the King of France. The reader should realize that indeed it was all happening under the aegis of that universal monarch, the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. To commemorate this historic moment, Napoleon issued a handsome coin showing himself giving the Ten Commandments to a kneeling Moses.⁵⁰

The social, political, economic, and cultural knowledge produced by what came to be known as “men of expertise,” men identified as having specific knowledge of relevance to the government, has to be seen as the outcome of a historically contingent process in which specific actors (and groups of actors) used existing power relations including patronage ties to impose their particular interests in and visions of the state’s organization and tasks.⁵¹

This new set of knowledge was further developed to serve French political entities, whether cultural or political, in fulfilling the prophecies of Jewish history and preparing for the conditions necessary for Jewish return. French Protestant leader Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713) outlines in his work some of the Old Testament promises that had yet to be fulfilled. One of these prophecies was about the “the people of Israel” being the ruling, the chosen, and the Holy People. Like d'Aubigné, Jurieu, in *L'Accomplissement des Propheties* (1686),

⁴⁹ The gathering of the Grand Sanhedrin will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

⁵⁰ Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère*, 109; see also 94–114.

⁵¹ Lothar Schilling and Jakob Vogel, “State-Related Knowledge: Conceptual Reflections on the Rise of the Modern State” in *Transnational Cultures of Expertise: Circulating State-Related Knowledge in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019).

predicted the Messiah's return only if the reestablishment of a Jewish kingdom in Palestine was concretized, where all exiled Jews, reunited, would convert and embrace Jesus.

From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, we can trace a slow but steady rediscovery by French Protestants of the instrumental role the Jews could play in shaping Protestantism's future, a future seen as inseparable from Christendom's destiny. For that purpose, despite the diverse attitudes toward Jews, they remained grouped as a people, a collectivity, rather than being perceived as individuals of a different faith. The monarchy and the Roman Catholic Church oppressed Jews and Protestants alike; yet for most Protestants, the Jews of the world were morphed into one people, all of whom were considered descendants of the ancient Hebrews of Palestine, and who had a promised land to return to.

1.2 France's Enlightenment or the Invention of the Dishonored Israelites

The Enlightenment period (1685–1815), which sought to elevate human reason above traditionalist religion, brought forth a new form of rationalist secular Jew-hatred, commonly called anti-Judaism. This new approach was justified and explained through anti-religious arguments, which were now considered pillars of true knowledge and morality.⁵² It is worth mentioning that this evaluation of ideologies, the creation of new concepts, and the constellation of shared knowledge contributed to the development of modern political and social discourse.

The calls for reform and the debate that followed were a particularly important cultural, intellectual, and political tool to formulate and influence policies, as part of the

⁵² It was during the Enlightenment that the main themes of anti-religious Judeophobia were forged, often reinforced with scientism and subsequently claiming to be "progressive" or "revolutionary." See Nicholas Hudson, "From Nation to 'Race': The origin of racial classification in eighteenth-century thought," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 3 (September 1996): 247–264; Adam Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6–11; and Fadiev Lovsky, "L'antisémitisme rationaliste," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 30 (1950): 176–199.

evolution of concepts and fields that would frame the nation-state as we know it today. Concerning the position of Jews in France, Voltaire (1694–1778), Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), and the Baron d'Holbach (1723–1789),⁵³ among many others, launched a semi-secular debate on their presence in relation to notions of freedom and rationality, while relying on a dialectical understanding of history and its grounding in a schema of whiteness, as part of a structure of power that produces racial hierarchies.

During the Enlightenment, generalized descriptions of ‘racial’ appearances and characters came to dominate ethnographies and as such, gradually redefine the categories of ‘race’ and ‘nation’. The doctrine of race was contrived deliberately to justify slavery and imperialism.⁵⁴ Voltaire distinguished between “nature” and “moeurs”- between the essential nature of people and their traits of character in relation to their race and those gained through education and government. Though he claimed that his intention was not to antagonize Jews, Voltaire nonetheless merged individual Jews into “*le peuple Hébreu*,” contributing to their further stigmatization and stereotyping while, more importantly, adding a rational, modern language to medieval stereotypes.

For Voltaire, the Jews' lack of generosity, hospitality, loyalty, and leniency was entrenched in their hearts. They were, for him, the enemies of the human race; this atrocious nation (“*Cette nation atroce*”) had nothing substantial to offer. Cowardice was inherently Jewish as the biblical Hebrews were never ready to fight and always lamented their fate, and God had to step in repeatedly to save them, as they were physically and psychologically

⁵³ Paul-Henri Thiry d'Holbach, *L'Esprit du judaïsme: Ou Examen raisonné de la loi de Moïse et de son influence sur la religion chrétienne suivi de David ou L'histoire de l'homme selon le coeur de Dieu* (Londres: Éditions Coda, 2010).

⁵⁴ Oliver C. Cox, *Caste, Class and Race* (New York and London: Modern Reader, 1959), 322-45

incapable of defending themselves.⁵⁵ They would deceive their way out, which only contributed to their disgrace.⁵⁶ We notice here that Voltaire refers to Jews not only as a collectivity but more importantly as a “nation.” This projection reflected the increasing emphasis that the ideology-building processes placed on a national consciousness, a question with which the philosophers of the eighteenth century were dealing. The meaning of the word nation evolved with the French Revolution, a process that was set in motion in tandem with racial hierarchization, and would lead to the characterization of Jews as a separate nation aligned with Jewish self-representations.⁵⁷

The construction of identities and images of the *other* were revised and shifted in accordance with the values expressed by the enlightened philosophers, which were to form the core of French nationalism and impact the state-building processes and their legal and social contexts. This knowledge production proposed practical solutions to the integration of Jews into secular society, such as replacing the communal laws, processes, and relationships of smaller communities with laws and procedures grounded in abstract legal codes, as well as the secularization of education. Intended to influence policies, this novel stream of knowledge was thought not only to improve the welfare of the population but also to advance the power of the ruler and the state: “Thus, the establishment of institutions, in which

⁵⁵ Voltaire, *Tome 11* (1785), 208: "On ne voit au contraire, dans toutes les annales du peuple hébreu, aucune action généreuse. Ils ne connaissent ni l'hospitalité, ni la libéralité, ni la clémence. Leur souverain bonheur est d'exercer l'usure avec les étrangers; et cet esprit d'usure, principe de toute lâcheté, est tellement enracinée dans leurs coeurs, que c'est l'objet continuel des figures qu'ils emploient dans l'espèce d'éloquence qui leur est propre. Leur gloire est de mettre à feu et à sang les petits villages dont ils peuvent s'emparer. Ils égorgent les vieillards et les enfants; ils ne réservent que les filles nubiles; ils assassinent leurs maîtres quand ils sont esclaves; ils ne savent jamais pardonner quand ils sont vainqueurs: ils sont ennemis du genre humain. Nulle politesse, nulle science, nul art perfectionné dans aucun temps, chez cette nation atroce." (On the contrary, we see no generous action in the historiography of the Hebrew people. They know neither hospitality, liberality, nor leniency. Their sovereign/ultimate happiness is to exercise usury on strangers; and this spirit of usury, the core of all cowardice, is heavily ingrained in their hearts. It is the mean which they continuously use with an eloquence proper to them. Their glory is to set fire to the small villages they are able to take over. They slaughter older people and children; they only spare nubile girls; they murder their masters when they are slaves; they never know how to forgive when they are victorious: they are enemies of the human race. No politeness, no science, no art has been perfected by this atrocious nation in any period of time [My translation]).

⁵⁶ Voltaire, *Tome 5* (1768), 74–76: "[...] il est très vraisemblable que les Phéniciens, en découvrant l'Andalousie, et en y fondant des colonies, y avaient établi des Juifs qui servirent de courtiers, comme ils en ont servi partout; mais de tout temps les Juifs ont défiguré la vérité par des fables absurdes. Ils mirent en œuvre de fausses médailles, de fausses inscriptions; cette espèce de fourberie, jointe aux autres plus essentielles qu'on leur reprochait, ne contribua pas peu à leur disgrâce."

⁵⁷ The assumption that Jews have often referred to themselves as a people or a nation will be discussed in the next section.

knowledge was collected, systemized, authorized and disseminated was considered particularly important. With memoirs, project-papers, pamphlets, scientific and popular publications circulating in Europe and beyond, experts also contributed to a broader discourse in which the actual missions of the state and its concrete organization were discussed.”⁵⁸

Voltaire and some of his contemporaries set the tone for the later racial doctrines that othered the Jews while simultaneously demanding that this Jewish singularity cease to exist. Historian Ronald Schechter argues that the Jews offered eighteenth century reformers a test case for Enlightenment: if allowed to flourish naturally and provided with the necessary transformation, this “backward people” could be made into productive citizens.⁵⁹ Jean Jacques Rousseau, the author of *Du Contrat Social*, denounced the fate reserved for Jews in Europe. Despite his expression of sympathy, he did not use any positive attributes in describing Jews. Interestingly, Rousseau’s analysis of the Jews was a political one, as he was fascinated by - what he claimed to be - their ability to form of a nationhood:

Moïse, le premier qui forma et exécuta l'étonnante entreprise d'instituer en corps de nation un essaim de malheureux fugitifs, sans arts, sans armes, sans talents, sans vertus, sans courage [et qui] osa faire de cette troupe errante et servile un corps politique, un peuple libre, [...] il lui donnait cette institution durable, à l'épreuve des temps [...] que cinq mille ans n'ont pu détruire ni même altérer.⁶⁰

Rousseau seems charmed by how Moses created a political body out of fugitives lacking arts, weapons, talent, virtue and courage, and was able to even institutionalize them as a free people that withstood the test of time. For Rousseau, Moses was not just the creator of the Jewish nation but the first to mold a group of people into a nation.

⁵⁸ Lothar Schilling and Jakob Vogel, *Transnational Cultures of Expertise: Circulating State-Related Knowledge in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019).

⁵⁹ Ronald Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715–1815* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

⁶⁰ “Moses, the first who formed and carried out the astonishing enterprise of turning a swarm of unfortunate fugitives, without arts, without weapons, without talents, without virtues, without courage into a body of nation [and who] dared to make of this wandering and servile herd a political body, a free people, [...] he gave them lasting institution, which stood the test of time [...] that five thousand years could not destroy or even alter.” (My translation) in Jean Jacques Rousseau, “Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne” (London: 1770–71), 9. A copy of the text is available at Académie de Grenoble: http://www.ac-grenoble.fr/PhiloSophie/wp-content/uploads/ebooks/rousseau_pologne.pdf.

That Jews were a people seemed to be a given, but what captured Rousseau's attention was that they constituted a nation with institutions. In *Profession de foi du Vicaire Savoyard*, Rousseau takes a keen interest in the history of the Hebrews and pays homage to their laws, which imposed a political structure on the people. He questions the relationship between religion and state and the sorts of foundations of the institutions (*le fondement des institutions qu'un peuple se choisit*) that a people chooses for itself.⁶¹ In his book on education, *Emile ou l'Education*, Rousseau encourages the creation of a "free republic" for the Jews:

Lorsqu'ils auront à nouveau une libre République, avec des écoles et des universités à eux, où ils pourront s'exprimer en sécurité, nous pourrons apprendre enfin ce que le Peuple Juif a encore à nous dire.⁶²

It is ironic that, despite Rousseau's willingness to incorporate them in the human "fraternité," he nevertheless believed that once Jews regained their own entity, with schools and universities of their own, where they could express themselves in full liberty, would their true motives come to light. Although Voltaire and Rousseau never saw eye to eye,⁶³ it seems that their inclusion of Jews in their arguments against intolerance and persecution was to grant them rights in order to *transform* them. For them,⁶⁴ whether Christians or secularists, the fact that Jews continued to exist, in all their permutations, kept them as a recognizably different entity, for whom a solution needed to be found. This demonstrates that these overtly political writings created the basis for a more secular definition of Jewish nationhood.

⁶¹ This is surely the reason why Rousseau significantly influenced the current of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment. See Valéry Rasplus, "Les judaïsmes à l'épreuve des Lumières—Les stratégies critiques de la Haskalah," éditions Textuel, *Contretemps*, no. 17 (Septembre 2006): 58.

⁶² "When they will once again have a free Republic, with schools and universities of their own, where they can express themselves in safety, we will finally learn what the Jewish people have yet to tell us." (My translation) in Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile ou de l'Education* (O.C; IV, 1762) 620. Text available at: http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Rousseau_jj/emile/emile_de_education_4.pdf.

⁶³ In his letters, Voltaire calls Rousseau, his fellow *philosophe*, an animal, and a madman: "le plus méchant fou qui ait jamais existé, un singe qui mord ceux qui lui donnent à manger est plus raisonnable et plus humain que lui." Letter to Damilaville, November 3, 1766, in Voltaire, *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire: Correspondance générale*, Tome VI, (Paris: Lefevre, 1818), 124.

⁶⁴ I use the word 'Gentile' to define Western non-Jews, as its original Latin etymology prior to 1400 means "of or belonging to the same nation," hence, as a noun, gentiles (plural) might mean "men of family; persons belonging to the same family; fellow countrymen, kinsmen".

It is noteworthy that these obsessions with French Jews, whether during the Renaissance or *Les Lumières*, occurred when there were hardly any Jews in France, following their expulsion in 1394. As such, it was as if Jews did not exist but were imagined or conjured up in these theologians and philosophers' writings. Why, then, this fixation on a so-called problem, the subjects of which were largely absent? People, nation, and race: these three words were applied to Jews over time, each used to exclude them from the national and political body in different ways. Despite the divergent opinions regarding Jews in the eighteenth century, with Voltaire mocking their traditions and Rousseau calling for a rapprochement, a general consensus was reached by philosophers and jurists of the time that the existence of the Jews in Europe no longer posed a religious question but something that will evolve into a national question of belonging or not belonging. Though the idea of a common set of laws for all and the abandonment of old systems of privileges and penalties accompanied the Revolution, the ground for this idea was prepared by Rousseau.

Revolutionary Zeal and French Jews

As the French Revolution approached, French Calvinism remained divided between tolerance and mistrust toward Jews, whereas French rationalism and the state-building processes made assimilation the precondition for Jewish equality. Though the French Revolution of 1789 emancipated French Jews when the National Assembly decreed on December 24, 1789 “that non-Catholics are eligible for all civil and military positions, as other [Catholic] citizens,” a decree that recognized the Jews' right to otherness (i.e., to remain Jewish), this emancipation was not well received everywhere.⁶⁵ The French Revolution's

⁶⁵ The term “emancipation” in Jewish historiography does not indicate that Jews were previously enslaved and were now free but is used in parallel to the terminology about the legal enfranchisement of Catholics in England. On the process from a comparative point of view, see Rainer Liedtke and Stephan Wendehorst, eds, *The Emancipation of Catholics, Jews and Protestants: Minorities and the Nation-State in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 1999) and *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models*, ed. Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron, and Uri R. Kaufmann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

emancipation of the Jews came with a price tag: it transformed the Jews into *Israélites*, a designation supposedly secular and more acculturated, but which in fact was a racially loaded adjective that turned Jews into a separate nation and race. Additionally, the universalizing logic of the French Revolution's declaration of human rights demanded from Jews to surrender their identity as Jews in the name of their *citoyenneté*.

Due to the centrality of the French emancipation decrees in Western Jewish history, a considerable amount of scholarly research has focused on their ramifications. Part of the debate focuses on understanding the Jewish presence in France as a 'nation within a nation' in relation to the newly forged French identity, as part of a larger process of European modernization. Solomon Poesner's work on the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine shows that the consolidation and secularization of the modern state led inexorably to the inclusion of Jews in civil society.⁶⁶ The emancipation decrees therefore reinforced the claim that Jewishness in France has always been a test case for French identity throughout the centuries.

The decrees cannot as such be explained simply as a side effect of revolutionary zeal but as part of a long process of self-identification vis-à-vis the *other* that was necessary for French self-definition. The perception of French Jews as immoral was not altered by the French intellectuals of the revolutionary era who cast them as the epitome of the anti-citizen. The revolutionaries believed that Jews, who were in dire need of "regeneration," would "lose their particular characteristics" once admitted as citizens.⁶⁷ As such, Jewishness served the purpose of exemplifying the power of the republic to transform and uplift the so-called degenerate.⁶⁸ Turning Jews into citizens rested on the perception that they were not only subject to exclusions but also lacking the qualities of citizens.

⁶⁶ Solomon Poesner, "The Social Life of the Jewish Communities in France in the 18th Century," *Jewish Social Studies* 7, no. 3 (1945): 195–232.

⁶⁷ *Le Patriote français* (December 24, 1789): 2.

⁶⁸ Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews*, 5–17.

Gary Kates asserts that the emancipation decrees were the pinnacle of a trajectory of progress for the Jews, simply because “the Jewish question raised issues fundamental to their (Frenchmen) own identity: (...) The debates over Jewish emancipation reveal not a Jewish problem but a problem the French had defining nationality and representation.”⁶⁹ In his book *The Right to Difference: French Universalism and the Jews*, Maurice Samuels argues that French republicanism has been open to minority particularism since the Revolution, which sought to make the Jews citizens in order to demonstrate the inclusiveness—the universality—of their revolutionary principles. The revolutionaries’ goal was to show that one law applied equally to all people, even to outsiders as culturally and religiously different as the Jews. Assimilation was thus no main condition for emancipation.⁷⁰

This view is in contrast with that of Arthur Hertzberg, who read the emancipation decrees as liberal concepts inherent in the Enlightenment that were an incubator for a form of racial anti-Semitism. Behind Hertzberg’s logic was a Zionist solution to the problem of French Jewry.⁷¹ Though French Jews applauded their new status, Jewish communities in diverse French cities were still denied their civil rights and the National Guard demanded their abrogation, leading to the publication of a series of anti-Jewish books, petitions, and pamphlets.⁷²

In a strategic move to keep French Jews within his grasp should he need them for his future imperial plans,⁷³ Napoleon sought to regenerate them by conveying an assembly of

⁶⁹ Gary Kates, "Jews into French Men: Nationality and Representation in Revolutionary France" *Social Research* 56, no. 1 (1989): 232.

⁷⁰ Maurice Samuels, *The right to difference: French universalism and the Jews* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2016).

⁷¹ Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968).

⁷² For an interesting bibliography on what has been published in the French media concerning French Jews between 1789–1800, see Zosa Szajkowski, “The Emancipation of Jews During the French Revolution: A Bibliography of Books, Pamphlets and Printed Documents, 1789–1800,” *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 3, no. 3/4 (December, 1958): 87–114.

⁷³ The relation between the claim to rationalism in the European Enlightenment and the justification for imperialism is central to much work in colonial studies. See, among many other works, Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986) and Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

Jewish communities in France. Ironically, Napoleon called the new body established in February 1807 *Le Grand Sanhédrin*, which, like its ancient counterpart, had seventy-one elders. This naming of the gathering is a disturbing and even provocative association with Christianity, reflecting Napoleon's malicious intent: historically, the Sanhedrin was an ancient supreme council among Jews that came together for the last time during the Holy Temple period.

It was also the Sanhedrin, the Jewish tribunal, that paid Judas thirty pieces of silver to commit his crime, according to Christian biblical stories.⁷⁴ Napoleon gathered the seventy-one elders, in accordance with past practice, but unlike in the past, twenty-five of his group's members were not clerics. *Le Grand Sanhédrin* issued a document, written in French and translated into Hebrew, offering twelve answers to twelve questions posed by Napoleon. He requested that the committee to denounce Jewish tradition and rituals in favor of Jewish assimilation into French society.

The regeneration of the Jews could only occur once Jews give up their erroneous ways of usury and polygamy, but the sixth article was strikingly a questioning of their loyalty: "Les juifs nés en France et traités par la loi comme citoyens français regardent-ils la France comme leur patrie? Ont-ils l'obligation de la défendre? Sont-ils obligés d'obéir aux lois et de suivre toutes les dispositions du code civil?"⁷⁵ Would a French Jew always remain loyal to his French nation? The Sanhedrin members offered Napoléon answers that would please both sides, but they did specify that when loyalty to the state conflicted with loyalty to the Halakha, then loyalty to the state was to be prioritized.

⁷⁴ The Bargain of Judas is a biblical episode that relates how Judas Iscariot made a bargain with the Jewish chief priests to betray Jesus. Recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels, Matthew 26:14–16, Mark 14:10–11, and Luke 22:1–6. See Abbé Joseph Lémann, *La prépondérance juive: Napoléon I et les Israélites* (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1889-1894)

⁷⁵ "Do Jews born in France and treated by law as French citizens regard France as their homeland? Do they have an obligation to defend it? Are they obliged to obey the laws and follow all the provisions of the civil code" (My translation). Napoléon 1^{er}, Lettre du 22 juillet 1806, à Champagny, ministre de l'Intérieur : les 12 questions à faire à l'Assemblée des juifs

This approach did not lead to the demise of the diasporic Jewish ethno-religious collectivity, but rather to a transformation of sorts in the (Christian) nation-building process and perception of Jews. Post-emancipation Jews had now to redefine their identities and their religious and cultural heritage in relation to their new French nation and the dominant culture. There were undoubtedly intertwined interests that influenced Napoléon's policies, but he had unquestionably envisioned a purpose for French Jews in his imperial ambitions to expand French territory and defeat England. Napoléon's Palestine campaign of 1799, though unsuccessful, took place some 8 years before the gathering of the Sanhedrin, and gave rise to millenarian hopes in Europe: for the first time, their expectation of the return of the Jews to Palestine (and thus the return of the Church's power) was linked to concrete imperial projects.

French historians Jean-Christophe Attias and Esther Benbassa write about Napoléon's expedition to Palestine: "C'est la première fois depuis les Croisades qu'une armée occidentale s'aventure dans cette contrée. L'événement est de taille et bien de nature à échauffer les esprits."⁷⁶ This was the first time since the Crusades that a Western power ventured into the Arab region and came back, though defeated, with hopes for future ventures, turning myths of a far illusion into a tangible plan of conquest. Attias and Benbassa write further that these new documented discoveries would likely have affected Jewish readers: "Les courants romantiques en littérature et en art ainsi que la recherche historique et archéologique donnent à ces matériaux un charme tout exotique, et ce flot d'informations atteint aussi le lecteur juif."⁷⁷ What is noteworthy is that as time moved forward, post-Enlightenment Jews were now asked to join the nation and adopt its principles and self-image as their own, meaning that we move from an emphasis on how the French imagined the Jew to, as we shall see, how

⁷⁶ "This is the first time since the Crusades that a Western army has ventured into this region. The event is of significant size and nature to excite the minds." In Jean-Christophe Attias and Esther Benbassa, *Israël, la terre et le sacré*, (Paris: Flammarion, 2001), 187.

⁷⁷ "Romantic trends in literature and art as well as historical and archaeological research give these materials an entirely exotic charm, and this flood of information reaches the Jewish reader as well." (My translation) Attias and Benbassa, *Israël, la terre et le sacré*, 190. (Romantic trends in literature and art as well as historical and archaeological research give these materials an entirely exotic charm, and this flood of information cannot but reach the Jewish reader as well.)

French Jews came to imagine themselves.

1.3 France's Imperialism and the Universality of Jews

With the expansion of the capitalist economy and its colonial ambitions, France described its nineteenth-century imperialist ventures in crusading terms. Its colonization of Algeria in 1830 was compared to Saint Louis's descent on Tunis in 1270, so much so that French historian Jean-Joseph Poujoulat (1808–1880) stated that “the conquest of Algiers in 1830 and our recent expeditions in Africa are nothing other than crusades.”⁷⁸ Even in its colonies, imperial France exported its preconceived "Jewish problem" to nourish anti-Semitism on foreign grounds.

With the colonization of Algeria, Algerian Jews served an important political function in the creation of the French colonial order. French colonial officers, many of whom were recruited Jews, portrayed Algerian Jews as oppressed, ignorant, impoverished, and backward.⁷⁹ Luckily, just as the République could cure the ills of prerevolutionary French Jews, it could do the same to Algerian Jews.⁸⁰ Unsurprisingly, France exported to Algeria a policy of Jewish “regeneration,” a term then unanimously used and accepted by French Israelites, which had originally been conceived to uplift metropolitan France’s supposedly degenerate Jews. This official policy, inspired by the metropolitan regeneration discourse but was eventually understood as civilizing in the colonial context, began with the establishment

⁷⁸ Cited from Adam Knobler, "Saint Louis and French Political Culture," in *Medievalism in Europe II. Studies in Medievalism*, ed. Leslie J. Workman and Kathleen Verduin (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996), 159–61.

⁷⁹ This trope concerning North African Jews was mirroring the trope of French Jews in the metropole as “Orientals.” On the first encounters, see Richard Ayoun, *Les Efforts d'assimilation intellectuelle et l'émancipation législative des Juifs d'Algérie* (Paris: Syros, 1982) and Geneviève Dermenjian, “Les juifs d'Algérie dans le regard des militaires et des juifs de France à l'époque de la conquête (1830-1855),” *Revue historique*, I Issue 576, (10/1/1990): 333-339. On the efforts of the Alliance Israélite Universelle to educate Jews of the Mediterranean basin and a discussion of the discourse that justified the project, see Esther Benbassa, “L'éducation féminine en Orient: l'école de filles de l'Alliance Israélite universelle à Galata, Istanbul (1879-1912),” *Histoire, économie et société*, Vol. 10, Issue 4, (1991): 529-559; Michael M. Laskier, *The Alliance israélite universelle and the Jewish communities of Morocco, 1862-1962* (Albany : State University of New York Press, 1983); Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: the Alliance israélite universelle and the politics of Jewish schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 1–24.

⁸⁰ This would be part of a policy that marked the beginning of a universalist Jewish solidarity movement.

of Jewish consistories in Algeria in the late 1840s. Though the local Jewish communities resisted the creation of these consistories, French historian Valérie Assan explains that for the French authorities, these consistories had to fulfill a twofold objective: by accelerating the “regeneration” of Algerian Jews, France could control a population it was wary of and use it for its colonial ambitions.⁸¹ This approach set the gears in motion for Algerian Jews’ regeneration, assimilation, and naturalization as French citizens.

In its attempts to protect and unify the presumed Jewish body outside of France and in the new territories it was conquering in the Middle East, the French government called upon Jewish Minister of Justice Adolphe Crémieux to set up a specific *mission civilisatrice* to protect the rights of all Middle Eastern Jews after France's fiasco with the Damascus affair in 1840.⁸² The *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, created in 1860, sought, through French education and culture, to “regenerate”—vocationally, linguistically, morally, and spiritually—all Oriental Jews to attain the highest grounds of universalism.

This French Jewish mission was performing missionary work while creating a modern Jewish solidarity that transcended national borders. To further solidify its grip on the Jews of the Arab region, the French government passed the Crémieux Decree in Algeria in October 1870, granting French citizenship to Algerian Jews, referred to as *Israélites indigènes d'Algérie*, but not to Algerian Muslims, effectively dividing the indigenous population along

⁸¹ Valérie Assan, *Les consistoires israélites d'Algérie au XIXe siècle: l'alliance de la civilisation et de la religion* (Paris: Colin, c2012).

⁸² The Damascus affair originated in the power struggle between imperialist France and Britain over the future of the Ottoman Empire, exposing their embedded anti-Semitism. In 1840, Father Thomas, a *protégé français*, and his servant Ibrahim Amarah disappeared in Damascus. The French consul, Ulysse de Ratti-Menton, who, with the support of local Christians, immediately accused the city's Jews of having kidnapped father Thomas to perform a “ritual crime”—a common accusation in Christian Europe, yet unprecedented in Arab countries. Supported by the Council of State's president Adolphe Thiers in Paris, the consul ordered the arrest and torture of people within the Syrian Jewish community. The Damascus affair demoralized the Jewish community in Damascus and Jewish communities in Europe mobilized in favor of the Jewish communities in the Middle East. For more on the Damascus affair, see Georges Bensoussan, *Juifs en pays Arabes: le grand déracinement, 1850–1975* (Paris: Tallandier, c2012); and Rina Cohen, “L'affaire de Damas et les prémices de l'antisémitisme moderne,” *Archives Juives* 34, no. 1 (2001): 114–124.

religious and racial lines and instigating them against one another.⁸³ Charles Roussel, a colonial judge in Algeria at the time, wrote that: “In spite of the attempts to antagonize Ismael against Israel, the (Arab) tribes refused to follow this path.”⁸⁴ The Crémieux Decree excluded Algerian Jews specifically from their natural space in the hope of converting them into agents for French imperial ambitions. Hanna Arendt writes in her essay “Why the Crémieux Decree was Abrogated” that in times of military and political crisis in the colony, by naturalizing Algerian Jews, France summoned the loyalty of its new citizens just as Napoleon had stated in the sixth article of the Great Sanhedrin decree: “It was, therefore, of no small importance to the government to have about 38.000 loyal Frenchmen in the colony at a time when trouble obviously lay ahead.”⁸⁵

France extended the myth of its national crusading past to its imperialist present with Jews in its midst. When Napoleon III sent his troops to Lebanon in 1860 to instigate the Maronites against the rest of the population, he reminded soldiers leaving for the Levant of

⁸³ The concept of indigenous Jews cast Algeria’s Jewish inhabitants as social equivalents to the unemancipated and putatively isolated Jews of prerevolutionary France. On this colonial narrative and the policies it justified, see Joshua Schreier, *Arabs of the Jewish Faith: The Civilizing Mission in Colonial Algeria* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, c2010). The French applied the term *indigène* to most Algerian Jews and Muslims, until the 1870 Crémieux Decree naturalized most Jews in Algeria, making them a religious minority among French citizens. The term did *not* parallel the post-1390 (or 1492) Jewish historiographic distinction between *toshavim*, or natives, and *megorashim*, those who had been expelled from Spain or Portugal and their descendants. On colonial policies that created indigenous Jews out of some Algerians while making Frenchmen of others, see Stein, *Saharan Jews*. For French views on North African Jewries, see Pierre Birnbaum, *The Jews of the Republic: a political history of state Jews in France from Gambetta to Vichy*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); Lisa Moses Heff, “The Impact of the Napoleonic Sanhedrin on French Colonial Policy in Algeria” *CCAR Journal* (Winter 2007): 35–54; and Lisa Moses Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

⁸⁴ Cited in Zosa Szajkowski, “Socialists and Radicals in the Development of Antisemitism in Algeria (1884–1900),” *Jewish Social Studies* 10, no. 3 (1948): 257–280.

⁸⁵ Hannah Arendt, “Why the Cremieux Decree was Abrogated,” *Contemporary Jewish Record* vi (1943): 116–17. The Crémieux Decree was subject to challenges: the Vichy Regime abrogated it in 1940, only to abrogate it *again* in 1942 (Pétainist general Henri Giraud used pressure to eliminate racial laws after the Allied landing as an excuse to condemn the decree as “racial law” that distinguished between Jews and Muslims). The Crémieux Decree was reinstated in 1943. On efforts to attach Algeria’s Jews to France and the contested rhetoric that accompanied this campaign, see Ayoun, “Les efforts d’assimilation”; Richard Ayoun et Bernard Cohen, *Les juifs d’Algérie: 2000 ans d’histoire* (Paris: J.C. Lattès, 1982); Nathan Godley, “‘Almost Finished Frenchmen’: The Jews of Algeria and the Question of French National Identity, 1830–1902” (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 2006); Joshua Schreier, *Arabs of the Jewish Faith: The civilizing mission in Colonial Algeria* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 88–103; Simon Schwarzfuchs, “Colonialisme français et colonialisme juif en Algérie (1830–1845),” in *Judaïsme d’Afrique du Nord aux XIXe-XXe siècles*, ed. Michel Abitbol (Jérusalem: Institut Ben Zvi, 1980), 37–48; Shurkin, “French Liberal Governance”; Szajkowski, “Establishment of the Consistorial System”; and Szajkowski, “Struggle for Jewish Emancipation.” For work specifically on the Algerian *consistoires israélites*, see Assan, *Les consistoires israélites*. On Algerian Jews’ evolving memory of the conquest and colonization, see Ethan Katz “Between emancipation and persecution: Algerian Jewish memory in the longue durée (1930–1970),” *Journal of North African Studies* 17, no. 5 (2012): 793–820.

the legacy they ought to uphold: “You are leaving for Syria ... On that distant soil, rich in great memories ... you will show yourselves to be the worthy descendants of those heroes who carried the banner of Christ gloriously in that land.”⁸⁶

In that same year, Ernest Lahranne, Napoleon III’s private secretary, emphasized how the Jews would carry France's banner into the Holy Land. Laharanne published his appeal *La Nouvelle Question D'Orient: Reconstruction de la Nationalité Juive*, in which he laid out how France would benefit financially and militarily from Jews acquiring a homeland in the Holy Land: “Placés comme un vivant trait d'union entre trois mondes, vous devez amener la civilisation chez les peuples encore inexpérimentés, vous devez porter les lumières d'Europe que vous avez recueillies à flots ... Marchez, Juifs de tous les pays! L’Antique patrie vous appelle et nous serons fiers de venir rouvrir vos foyers !...”⁸⁷ Laharanne positioned French Jews as a bridge between three worlds: the degraded East, Enlightened Europe, and the Jews, who he saw as a separate world, disregarding and excluding them as citizens of France.

Laharanne's vision influenced one of the earliest Jewish proto-Zionists, Moses Hess, a French-Jewish philosopher who rejected assimilation. Hess wrote *Rome and Jerusalem: The Last National Question*, a manifesto in which he called for Jewish national revival.⁸⁸ Hess is generally recognized as the first person to have formulated the modern Jewish Zionist concept. I see him rather as the heir to four hundred years of non-Jewish Christian Zionism, which he re-framed as a Jewish tradition. In his treatise, as in the works of the Christian tradition that he adopts, Jews are not individuals but rather a separate people and race who require a separate nationality and a nation-state of their own. Ironically, it is Europe's Judeophobia and anti-Semitism that created the Jewish Question, while modern imperialism

⁸⁶ Knobler, "Saint Louis and French Political Culture," 163–64.

⁸⁷ Ernest Lahranne, *La Nouvelle Question D'Orient: Reconstruction de la Nationalité Juive* (Paris : E. Dentu, 1860), 40-41

⁸⁸ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem: a study in Jewish nationalism* trans. Meyer Waxman (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1918).

invented the Eastern Question during the same period in the eighteenth century with regards to the Muslim Ottoman Empire. Laharrane recast the Jewish Question as the New Oriental Question, with Jewish Zionists such as Hess providing Zionism as the solution to both questions.

The Oriental Question became the locus of European powers' religious and political policies when dealing with the conquest of the Ottoman Empire, of which Palestine formed a part. Hess understood very well the role that European imperialism played in forging the Last Question, as he asked those unconvinced by France's commitment to the Jewish and the Oriental questions: "Do you still doubt that France will help the Jews to found colonies which may extend from Suez to Jerusalem and from the banks of the Jordan to the coast of the Mediterranean?"⁸⁹ Hess was convinced that the French nation's spirit urged Jews, not on religious grounds but based on "purely political and humanitarian motives, to restore their ancient State."⁹⁰

Modernity and the Zionist Reformulation of Palestine

With the rise of post-Enlightenment science, more geographic and archeological research more was published and romanticized about Palestine. The notion of conquering Arab lands, Palestine in particular, had been planted and took root in French and British soil. Subsequently, the European Jew was no longer able to remain untouched by centuries of Europeans dealing with his physical and metaphorical presence. There was a Christian attitude toward Jews in Europe that had traveled across the centuries; prophecies and stereotypes were passed on from one generation to the next, one century after another, shaping the perception of French Jews as a collectivity with a purpose and a home elsewhere,

⁸⁹ Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 149.

⁹⁰ Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 150.

as a citizen of a foreign state that had no loyalty to their host country.

French Christian philosophers and politicians debated over the same aspects of Jewry, ascribing to them the same labels, even when speaking in their defense. This variance was not in the content but only in the framing. The new generation of writers was not immune to this tradition of trivializing and demonizing everything Jewish; many integrated it in their argumentation as facts. It should not be surprising therefore, that something akin to reciprocal disdain came to the fore, filtering through the hard layers protecting the emotions of some European Jews, pushing them to forge a particular identity. The Jewish reader must have absorbed at least part of what had been written, researched, and propagated around their existence in Europe.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, marked ideologically, politically, and socially by the processes of industrialization and capitalism, the emerging of a socialist movement and the expansion of European colonial empires brought about major transformations in the position of French Jews. Internally, France was haunted by a fear of the *ancien régime*'s return and its aristocratic grip and was therefore engaged in defining its post-Revolutionary national identity through discourses emphasizing a bourgeois moral and nationalist project. Culturally, this was also the century of romanticism, the rediscovery of Palestine through travel, and a new fascination with race theory, leading to the emergence of the Semitic Jew. Authors filled pages with idealizations of the biblical land in their romantic imaginations as a place that now felt only a few miles away, while Orientalists turned Palestine into a deserted land, filthy and hungry for the return of Western Civilization. As Edward Said explains: “with a degraded and unworthy East and noble, enlightened West; the bridge between those warring representatives of East and West will be Zionism.”⁹¹

⁹¹ Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 64.

Noteworthy is how Arab Jews were contrasted with non-Jewish Arabs and other populations in the writings of French travelers. If the local populations were orientalized, either for their decadent and lavish lifestyles or for their poor and backward manners, the Arab Jews were described as equally bad, if not worse. Charles-Nicolas-Sigisbert Sonnini de Manoncourt, a French naturalist who traveled to the East on behalf of the government, described in *Voyage dans la Haute et Basse Egypte* (1799) the Jews he met in Egypt as a nation that has been able to conserve its character and practices whilst living among others—a vice not a virtue. Sonnini de Manoncourt condemned Jews to have the same indelible vices wherever in the world they were:

On les [les Juifs] retrouve en Egypte, ou ils vivent tells que nous les connoissons, avares, adroits, insinuants et bas trompeurs. Leurs pillages ne sont pas comme ceux des Bédouins et des autres voleurs de l'Egypte, ni éclatants, ni exécutés à force ouverte: ce sont, ainsi que chez nous, des filouteries adroites, des lardins officieux qui remplissent leur bourse, et vident sans bruit celle d'autrui. C'est ainsi que j'ai vu les Juifs, partout ou j'en ai rencontrés, on reconnoit en tous lieux leurs vices indélébiles, tant qu'ils s'obstineront à ne pas franchir la ligne qu'ils ont tracé entre eux et les autres peuples; on les voit aussi en tout lieux déployer les meme moyens, les memes astuces, les memes friponneries, vrais fléaux dans l'ordre social, enfin cette meme insensibilité, cette meme ingratitude, dont ils ont payé, dans ces derniers temps, la generosité et les procedés magnanimes de la France.⁹²

Sonnini was repelled by the Jews he met in Egypt because of what he conceived as “their deceitful tricks” and for being, in his view, as dishonest as all Jews he ever came across. Most remarkable in his analysis is not only his generalization of all Jews, whether in France, Greece, Turkey, or Egypt, turning them into one and the same people despite their diverse ethnic backgrounds, religious traditions, histories, and roots, but also the connectivity he drew between their local political realities and what was happening in France.

⁹² “We find them [the Jews] in Egypt, where they live, as we know them, stingy, clever, cunning and deceptive. Their plundering is not like those of the Bedouins and the other thieves of Egypt; it is neither brilliant, nor carried out with open force: they use, just as they do back home, clever trickeries, illegitimate ruses to fill their purses, and empty them without making any noise. This is how I saw the Jews, wherever I have met them, we recognize in all places their indelible vices, as long as they persist in not crossing the line they have drawn between them and other peoples; we also see them everywhere deploying the same means, the same tricks, the same schemes, real plagues in the social order. In sum, this same insensitivity, this same ingratitude, with which they have paid, in recent times, the generosity and the magnanimous procedures of France.” (My translation) Charles-Nicolas-Sigisbert Sonnini de Manoncourt, *Voyage dans la Haute et Basse Egypte, fait par ordre de l'ancien gouvernement* (Paris: Chez F. Buisson, 1799), 116.

To him, Egypt's Jews were plagues in the social order and expressed the same insensitivity and ingratitude that French Jews showed for France's generosity and magnanimity. Sonnini is referring here to the French Revolution that had, ten years earlier, granted French Jews civil and political rights. He is reinforcing the notion that all Jews across the globe were considered to be one and the same group, and that this universal diasporic Jew should be grateful for anything granted to them.

Although the nineteenth century was one of political turmoil for France, which witnessed the fall of several forms of governments—from the Restoration Monarchy (1815–1830) and the July Monarchy (1830–1848) to the Second Republic (1848–1852) and the Second Empire (1852–1870)—the rapid urbanization and integration of Jews into the middle classes in France brought about the movement of Jews en masse from rural towns and from Eastern Europe to Paris, which became the new center of Jewish life in the country. It was also the century that saw the first generation of Jews to be born as French citizens, many of whom regarded their Judaism as an expression of their French patriotism and their liberal political identities. Unfortunately, this did not safeguard them from the religious, secular, racial, political, and social antagonism that Jews encountered in France during that century.

Over four hundred years, the discovery, during the Reformation, of Jews as a people with a vocation, laid the foundation for their later instrumentalization in settler-colonial projects. The anti-Catholic thrust of the Protestant evangelical Zionist vision grouped them as a people to fulfill a religious purpose. As ideologies evolved regarding language, nations, and states, *le peuple Hébreu* was turned into a nation that did not belong among nations. Simultaneously, their homeland was produced, framed, and created accordingly; slowly but steadily. Palestine was turned into Israel, and Jews were turned into *le peuple Israélite*. Now that there was a people and a land and, at a time when the forging of nationalism as a

geographical concept and identity was on the rise, what was needed was to give Jews a new identity, a new nationality. The *nationalité Israélite* needed to be constructed, in a final attempt to rid Christian and secular Europe of its Jews.

For Abram-François Pétavel (1791–1870), a biblical scholar, cofounder of the Protestant missionary *Société des Missions*, and a key figure in the Evangelical Alliance, the demise of Rome meant the imminent reestablishment of a Jewish nation in the ancient homeland of the Hebrews. His work emphasized the transition from *le peuple Israélite* to *le peuple d'Israël*, which ought to return to its homeland. He published several books appealing to Jews in favor of their “restoration” to Palestine from a theological point of view and addressed letters to the Jews in *Lettres aux Synagogues de France*, in which he expressed his concerns about their unawareness of the importance of their departure to Jerusalem.

Noteworthy among his works is *La fille de Sion ou le rétablissement d'Israël*,⁹³ which he dedicates to “*Aux Israélites et aux hommes d'honneur de Tous Pays.*” In this lengthy plea, Pétavel equates Israelites who embrace their divine calling with honorable men and explains that all honorable men were summoned and had a duty to allow the return of the Jews to their nationality. He explains that the Jewish nationality already existed through “their sacred language, the dogma of the unity of God, of which they are the born defenders; and their circumcision, the seal of the divine alliance. For that the Jewish homeland is a must for their national independence, and as such all Israelites ought to be reunited in Jerusalem.”⁹⁴

A truly honorable Israélite was one that did not deviate from his duty and virtue: “le véritable honneur est celui que ni les attraites les plus séduisants de la volupté, ni la

⁹³ Abram-François Pétavel, *La fille de Sion ou le rétablissement d'Israël: Poème en sept chants avec annotations et études bibliques* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1868). Available at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101073311514&view=1up&seq=16>.

⁹⁴ “De la nationalité juive: la langue sacrée, le dogme de l'unité de Dieu, dont ils sont les défenseurs-nés; la circoncision, sceau de l'alliance divine. Patrie juive nécessaire à l'indépendance nationale. — Commandement positif, qui ne permet pas aux Israélites de s'acquitter ailleurs qu'à Jérusalem.” Pétavel, *La fille de Sion*, 123.

perspective des souffrances les plus cruelles, ne sauraient faire dévier de l'étroit sentier du devoir et de la vertu.”⁹⁵ Jewish honor is linked here once again to ‘returning’ to Israel.

Pétavel was convinced that God could intervene in human history by miraculously resurrecting the Kingdom of Israel.

The real prophecy foretold that all the Jews from around the world would be brought to Israel and convert to Christianity in Jerusalem. As such, for Pétavel, the French-Prussian war of 1870 was destructive as it forced French Jews and German Jews to kill one another, while they had been summoned for a greater mission on this earth. On July 21, 1870, he wrote a letter to Napoleon III and the King of Prussia demanding they join forces and march toward Jerusalem “pour ramener Israel de tous les lieux de sa dispersion dans le pays donné à ses pères.”⁹⁶ Pétavel's work is just one example of the hundreds of pamphlets, correspondences, and writings of individual non-Jewish and Jewish writers who adopted this project as their own from the mid-nineteenth century onward.

There is a differentiation to be made between claims that Jews lacked honor and claims that honor required them to leave for Palestine. These ideas no doubt overlapped but they are distinct. Ultrationalists whose writings were later used by German Nazis, such as the French writer and journalist Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux, also spoke of a lack of honor in Jews. Gougenot des Mousseaux wrote an anti-Semitic apocalyptic pamphlet titled *Le Juif, le judaïsme et la judaïsation des peuples chrétiens* in 1869, wherein he deplored how Catholic France had been destroyed by Jews who manipulated the ideals of the Enlightenment. Gougenot des Mousseaux insinuates that the Israelites' degeneration shows a visible weakening of their sense of honor and their decadence.⁹⁷ He explains that Jewish

⁹⁵ Pétavel, *La fille de Sion*, 2.

⁹⁶ Abram-François Pétavel, *Notice sur Abram-François Pétavel: dernières paroles et derniers cantiques* (Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Librairie de Samuel Delachaux, 1840), 12.

⁹⁷ Again, this is interesting because this is some twenty years before Max Nordau devised the theory of degeneration based on the Jewish condition.

morality allowed them to lie and deceive Christians, and so taking the word of a Jew on his honor would be falling into the trap of the hunter:

S'il est de la morale judaïque que mentir au chrétien, que le tromper, que lui nuire dans sa personne et dans ses biens ce soit un acte méritoire, vraiment à quoi bon ce perfide et burlesque cérémonial du serment More Judaïco? [...] Se fier à l'honneur de tel ou tel Israélite; [...] mais se fier à des paroles que la foi d'un peuple déclare sans valeur à l'égard de chrétiens, quelle naïveté de confiance et quel besoin de se prendre aux filets du chasseur!⁹⁸

The alterations we can see over time in the portrayal of the dishonorable Jew are worth noting. It was not necessarily that a Jew lacked honor per se, more that their honor was deferred or suspended, which does not apply, in fact, to the Jew but specifically to the Diaspora Jew. The depiction of Jews evolved from positing them as instruments of Christian redemption to a more violent depiction of Jews as agents of destruction, which still portrayed their presence as revolving around the concept of honor.

The Dishonorable Diaspora Jew

For d'Aubigné, to have honor is to be loyal to God and fulfill his prophecy, and so Jews needed to conquer Canaan for the sake of honor and their conversion to Christianity. The humanists believed that Jews could be imbued with some grace if they repudiated their vices and transformed themselves into worthy citizens. For Voltaire, usury was one of the worst vices of the Jews, though he admitted that Jewish communities could never integrate into mainstream society as long as Christians confined them to the despised category of usurers. Jews were trapped in a vicious circle, according to Voltaire, as financial gain would ultimately stand in the way of their true sense of honor, or so it seemed to him. In the writings of Pétavel, honor is linked to virtue and duty and an honorable man has to fulfill his share of the divine duty. For the nationalists and the imperialists, such as Napoleon III, honor was

⁹⁸ Roger Gougenot Des Mousseaux, *Le Juif, le judaïsme et la judaïsation des peuples chrétiens* (Paris: Plon, 1869), 253. Available at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Philosophie, histoire, sciences de l'homme, A-14096, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k114558t/f6.item.r=honneur.texteImage>

linked to the expansion of the empire; the role of any honorable Jew was that of a foreign agent, placed at the intersection of two continents to the benefit of imperial powers.⁹⁹

This chronological narrative of honor was not just crucial in producing French Jews as part of a collectivity that did not belong among other nations, but it played an important role in forging and disseminating sentiments of contempt and disdain for Jews. This is in line with Paul Ricoeur's understanding that the formulation of a historical narrative directed by progressively developing time is necessary as the "temporal character of human experience" is at stake in a narrative and the truth claims it makes.¹⁰⁰ The narrative of honor, this study shows, contributed to the characterization of Jewish identities as exclusive by pinning down their otherness, all the more to evoke emotions that defined Christian social relations with Jews over several centuries. This narrative, which contained many contradictions, regarded the Jew as simultaneously damned and sacred: damned by the sin of rejecting Christ and sacred because of the redemption they could attain by accepting him. Both sentiments, however, reflected contempt.

French historian Jules Isaac explains in his book *L'enseignement du mépris* (The Teaching of Contempt) that the roots of modern Nazi anti-Semitism can be traced back to Christian contempt for Jews with its basis in the narrative that the Jewish people are solely responsible for the crucifixion of Christ, which is still part and parcel of many Christian doctrines.¹⁰¹ Gareth Jones, however, takes up the notion of "teaching contempt" and refutes the legacy of Christian anti-Judaism by concentrating on the work of theologians, artists, and

⁹⁹ Michael Denning argues in his study *Cover Stories*, while researching the literature of contractual murders in which, at the turn of the twentieth century, a period of intense imperial rivalry and global expansion of capital, the spy functioned as a magical figure who cleverly crossed national boundaries and rendered an increasingly complex and foreign world knowable, advancing capitalist and national expansion. See Michael Denning, *Cover Stories: Narrative and Ideology in the British Spy Thriller* (London; New York: Routledge & K. Paul, 1987).

¹⁰⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984–1988), 3.

¹⁰¹ Jules Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).

sculptors, all of whom played a role in propagating the negative stereotype of the Jew, contributing to attitudes of contempt.¹⁰² Both historians traced a genealogy of thought within Christianity that paved the way for and contributed to contempt for Jews and ensured its continuation. Neither of them, however, elaborates on what the necessity or purpose of this contempt was.

In the next chapter, I shall show how these teachings of contempt and the circulation of these emotions connected both to the overarching narrative of honor. Embracing a Jewish departure from Europe to colonize Palestine came to be seen as the “teaching of esteem.” Donald M. Lewis writes that when British evangelicals became fascinated with Jews and started to militate for the restoration of Jews to Palestine by lobbying the British cabinet on foreign policy decisions, they promoted a “teaching of esteem” that countered the “teaching of contempt.”¹⁰³ Evangelicals worked on this narrative by professing their love for those Jews who were willing to accomplish God’s mission by “returning” to Jerusalem and converting. By doing so, they effectively reshaped the Jew’s image in conversionist literature and impacted Jewish identity, which led to a transformation in Jewish-Christian understandings on what the role of Jews ought to be.

Throughout nineteenth century Europe, the rise of nationalism likened nationalist hopes to a kind of messianism regarding the depiction of Jews. We can trace a sharp rise in the presence of the Jewish ‘element’ or ‘figure’, depicted in diverse ways in writings, paintings, novels, and political projects by leftists and conservatives alike, poets, politicians, painters, artists, geographers, and historians. This stretched from Gustave Tridon's *Du*

¹⁰² Gareth Lloyd Jones, “Teaching Contempt: The Jew through Christian Eyes,” *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 20, no. 1 (1999): 5–20.

¹⁰³ Donald M. Lewis, *The Origins of Christian Zionism: Lord Shaftesbury and Evangelical Support for a Jewish Homeland* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

molochisme juif to Ernest Renan's *Histoire du Peuple Juif*, from Balzac, Racine, Proust, Graetz, Lazare, Salvador, Disraeli, and Horare Vernet to Paul Leroy Beaulieu.

One should underline here the important role that literature plays not only in reflecting a society's progress and its anxieties and preoccupations but also its active role in shaping, producing, and circulating certain feelings and stereotypes. In his analysis of the colonial stereotype, Homi Bhabha contends that the stereotype is "a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place,' already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated."¹⁰⁴ Moreover, narrative, created through repetition, whether literary or political, communicates to cognitive frames the force of feeling that stirs up specific attitudes and actions.

The nineteenth century witnessed different kinds of Judeophobia conditioned by the turmoil of anti-capitalist, revolutionary, and socialist movements (expressed by the likes of Fourier, Toussenel, Proudhon, etc.) and racial and nationalist Judeophobia, which came to be called anti-Semitism.¹⁰⁵ This modern form of Jew-hatred, the most recent iteration, underlined the same narrative of the dishonorable Jew, which evoked certain concerns about the instability of collective identity and the disintegration of the social and moral order, stemming from a fear of a Jewish disturbance of the Christian order.

¹⁰⁴ Homi Babha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 66.

¹⁰⁵ Zionist history usually positions these developments as departing from new political languages; however, as the above review has shown, they should be articulated not only in the context of the intolerance of Catholicism and the ambitions of Protestantism, but also from the historical need of emergent Europe to redefine its vision of a New Jerusalem.

Chapter 2: The Modern Construct of Honor

This chapter examines which sentiments were expressed and utilized by modern European Christian and secular Zionist anti-Semites at the end of the nineteenth century to inform their ideology about Jews lacking honor, by analyzing how the shape of this narrative transformed its religious components into more secular and scientific ones, while retaining the same undertones. Additionally, I investigate how these affective modes were produced to constantly challenge and discipline the Jewish minority politically, culturally, and politically through the many layers of honor. Finally, this chapter looks in more details at how a discourse of honor came to be shaped in France and what it is made of and how it functions, in order to demonstrate that in spite of the gradual transformation in the conception of honor and its attributes over time in Europe, the representation and depiction of the dishonorable Jew remained unaltered.¹⁰⁶

2.1 The Mutation of Honor through the Centuries in Western Europe

The dominant social system in medieval Europe, feudalism, provided exclusively landownership (fief) to the aristocracy, which in return, extended military service and protection to the Crown. The vassals were granted possession of land by the lord, while peasants (serfs) were allowed to remain on the land in exchange of homage, labour, and a share of the produce. As an effect and consequence of the social structures of feudalism, honor in Western societies, has been linked to a man's material possessions, such as land and family, and it was therefore reserved for aristocratic and monarchical elites.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ As established by historians and anthropologists, honor cultures differ greatly in many of their specifics and linguistic terms, leading to diverse cultures of honor.

¹⁰⁷ Peter L. Berger, Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner, *The Homeless Mind; Modernization and Consciousness* (New York: Random House, 1974), 84.

What unified this feudal pyramid at the ideological level were the personal bounds and the mutual obligations between the monarch and his vassals, leading to a relationship centered around loyalty and kinship. As the struggle for political dominance and landownership relied greatly on unstable alliances between diverse vassals, honor emerged as a cohesive element within an otherwise volatile aristocratic ruling class.¹⁰⁸ Honor, thus, provided a specific definition of class and hierarchical domination which came to be expressed in a pact of homage and the performance of military duty:

At the same time, this synallagmatic pact was also the hierarchical domination of a superior over his inferior: the vassal was the liegeman of his lord, and owed him personal, bodily fealty. The composite ethos of the feudal nobility thus held "honor" and "loyalty" together in a dynamic tension ... (in) an aristocratic definition which made compatible pride of rank and humility of homage, legal fixity of obligations and personal fidelity of allegiance.¹⁰⁹

Loyalty entailed devotion, integrity and pride, which all triggered a strong feeling of self-consciousness. The formal system of aristocratic honor was defined and protected by a social measurement of individual worth whilst being a group-oriented value, from which one can derive self-satisfaction and pleasure. It was not easy to identify the standards of honor, being a fluid and intangible quality, but when the implications of honor changed, as land and property became more accessible to segments of society beyond just the aristocracy, honorability transmuted from a material good to a human quality by the late medieval period. Honor was thus initially forged as an exclusive characteristic of the nobility for it implied considerable political and economic (landholding) power. In addition, honor took on a crucial role in the ideological sphere, in order to maintain hegemony, serving both to define the parameters of the ruling class and to enhance its cohesion by defining distinctive qualities and life-patterns.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 446.

¹⁰⁹ Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: New Left Books, 1974), 409-410.

¹¹⁰ Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 299. It is from this context that aristocratic honor is to be understood as 'a direct expression of status, a source of solidarity among social equals and a demarcation line against social inferiors'. See: Peter L. Berger, Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner, *The homeless mind; modernization and consciousness* (New York: Random House, 1974), 80.

The social structures of feudalism denoted by chivalry – the military system of feudalism which embodied a code of conduct comprising the refinement of society – have strongly influenced the medieval notion of honor, though it remained an aristocratic concept rather than a subjective or social attribute of all individuals in feudal societies.¹¹¹ In his *View of the state of Europe during the middle ages*, Henry Hallam provides an overview of the institution of chivalry and its properties, which obeys a system of duty and service to a lord and of courteous knightly behavior. As part of the feudal structure of Western Christendom, the roots of the ideas of chivalry, he tells us, are:

Three powerful spirits, which from time to time have moved over the face of the waters, and given a predominant impulse to the moral sentiments and energies of mankind. These are the spirits of liberty, of religion and of honour . . . It was the principal business of chivalry to animate and cherish the last of these three.¹¹²

Chivalry had an undeniable impact on the practical nature of honor; it dictated not only the factor of service and the bearing of arms, but also relationships of loyalty and obedience between lords and knights. Love and family affairs were also guided by feelings of pride and courtesy.¹¹³ The worship of Virgin Mary as part of the service rendered by the knight stipulated that a woman's honor fell under her male guardian's honor as she had none of her own, establishing the dominance of a patriarchal hierarchy. Women came to represent purity, virginity and chastity, and by forfeiting them, women could cause shame and dishonor to their kinship. Honor mandated on women a set of behaviors, a template for living and an ideal of domesticity. Scholars have largely consigned the attainment of honor for women to the realm of sexual chastity.¹¹⁴ Honor was by default a masculine enterprise which gradually

¹¹¹ Berger et al. *The Homeless Mind*, 80

¹¹² Henry Hallam, *View of the state of Europe during the middle age* (London: A. Murray & Son, 1869)

¹¹³ See also: Edgar Prestage, *Chivalry: a series of studies to illustrate its historical significance and civilizing influence*, (Oxfordshire, England ; New York : Routledge, 2009).

¹¹⁴ Laura Gowing, "Women, Status and the Popular Culture of Dishonour," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 6 (1996): 225–34 and Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London ; New York : Routledge, 1994), 65.

became associated with a form of military duty and warfare, confining women to the shadows of the structure of honor.

Masculinity being a broad subject, this study will only approach it from the angle of male cultures of honor—a form of gendered honor—shaped by social and cultural interactions, and not as a result of biology. In the introduction of *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor and Rituals in Modern Europe*, Pieter Spierenburg states that conceptions of honor are characteristically gendered, with male honor predominantly being linked to notions of physical bravery, military virtues of loyalty, and forceful response to insults in Western societies, unlike other cultures that tend not to resort to aggression when feeling shamed.¹¹⁵ According to Spierenburg, resorting to violence has been the way that men in the West specifically have chosen to define themselves for centuries.

Although chivalry developed within the feudal system, its continuous quest for glory made it a structure or a mesh full of passions, hard to be tamed. Honor was the guide for human action; men strove to perform with greatest valor on the battlefields and were glorified for their actions. The quest for honor was a restless, violent and emotional structure that left clear traces in the later practices of social behaviour and in the conduct of warfare. The medieval Church understood the power of the ideas, ideals and practices of chivalry upon love and war and its position as an active force within feudal society.

In a move to influence and control the actual conduct of warfare and to disrupt the structure of the feudal system, the medieval Church coopted chivalric honor and fused it with religion in its call for the Crusades.¹¹⁶ The crucial intersection between chivalry and religion were the Crusades, during which soldiers acted as God's vassals. The Roman Church bonded

¹¹⁵ Pieter Spierenburg, ed., *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor, and Rituals in Modern Europe and America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998).

¹¹⁶ In today's terminology, one could call the Crusades colonial conquests. This interplay of honor and religion is of importance for this dissertation, as binding these two elements together results in warfare, or in today's terminology, in settler-colonialism. This point will be discussed in Chapter 6.

and fused, in the name of honor, the responsibilities of honorable Christians with their responsibilities as Roman soldiers. Catholic military campaigns sought redemption for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ by attempting to conquer Palestine several times.

This pursuit of divine glory and Christian honor was considered the highest virtue on the scale of medieval values; volunteers joined the crusades based on strata of motivations, among them the prospect of mass ascension into Heaven and the forgiveness of sins, as well as to satisfy feudal obligations and gain personal, economic, and political advantages. There was glory to be found in attaining the highest honorable Christian state of knighthood—becoming the Grail King¹¹⁷—and being able to boast about it. However, with the weakening of the Roman Catholic Church, the nobility appropriated the role of the "knight" by introducing it into the king's court, thereby increasing the social status of knighthood by emphasizing qualities of bravery, nobility, courtesy, and generosity.

Honor and Dishonor as societal attributes in French Society

In her study of honor in sixteenth-century France, Ariette Jouanna explains that French society was structured by the notion of honor, which dictated certain roles and socially approved behaviors that were imposed on the knights and clergy, so that they could remain honorable in the eyes of God and the king.¹¹⁸ Honor in this sense was quintessentially a social achievement that allowed room for moral ambiguity. This, according to Jouanna,

¹¹⁷ The legend of the Holy Grail was said to be about relate to the cup that Jesus Christ drank from at the Last Supper and which Joseph of Arimathea used to collect Jesus's blood at his crucifixion. The search for this grail became the principal quest of knights. In her book *Deadly Dishonor*, Brenda Keiser explains that the concept of the "honorable Christian" can also be found in the German tradition of honor and can be traced in early German literature, such as in Pfaffe Konrad's *Rolandslied* (1170) and Hartmann van Aue's *Parzival* (1210/1220), "which shows the process of learning and maturation to the highest honorable Christian state of knighthood, the Grail King." Keiser then states that "this Christian concept of vassality eventually developed into the more secular concept of feudality and western chivalry." Brenda Keiser, *Deadly Dishonor: The Duel And The Honor Code In The Works of Arthur Schnitzler* (New York: P. Lang, 1990) 4.

¹¹⁸ Ariette Jouanna, "Recherches sur la notion d'honneur au XVIème siècle," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 15, no. 4 (October–December 1968): 597–623.

placed a value on conformism, creating a defined and codified social order. Any deviant behavior called into question the image that society has of itself.

Compliance with an ideal performance was particularly demanded of nobles, whose qualities served as a criterion for the hierarchy of noble orders; honor was therefore often seen as a social order, containing collective norms and attributes that could provide stability to the social hierarchy. For Jouanna, honor concretely embodied people's symbolic behavior, both through signifiers and through the hierarchy of social rank and dignity. It was simultaneously an intellectual principle and a social reality: to be honorable brought prestige that was translated into degrees of "l'honneur-vertu" and "l'honneur-estime" (i.e., reputation or fame, that is to say, the effect produced in the consciousness of others by the spectacle of a quality or deed conforming to a socially approved model).¹¹⁹ Honor is thus a system for judging relative merit as:

Honor was more than just a set of rules for governing behavior. Honor permeated every aspect of consciousness: how you thought about yourself and others, how you held your body, the expectations you could reasonably have and the demands you could make on others; it determined the quality of your marriage and the marriage partners of your children. It was your very being.¹²⁰

Of note for this study is Jouanna's assertion that interference from foreign elements could prevent honor from fulfilling its role.¹²¹ As such, when wealth substituted for 'virtue'—that is to say, when it was acquired too quickly or by socially disapproved means (such as usury)—these actions channeled social esteem and prestige for individuals' own profit, thus distorting the true sense of honor.¹²² The stereotype of the Jewish usurer emerged in the mid-twelfth century in medieval France. Traditionally, the Catholic Church forbade Christians to lend money to other Christians with interest; one solution was to allow non-Catholics to practice

¹¹⁹ Jouanna, "Recherches sur la notion d'honneur au XVIème siècle," 623.

¹²⁰ William Ian Miller, *Humiliation And Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 67

¹²¹ Jouanna, "Recherches sur la notion d'honneur au XVIème siècle," 622.

¹²² Jouanna, "Recherches sur la notion d'honneur au XVIème siècle," 622.

moneylending.

Along these lines, many princes and nobles across Europe recruited Jews who could practice moneylending to the benefit of local trade, industry, and war-making without the threat of papal disapproval hanging over the Christian who made use of them. The fact that Jews were severely restricted from entering most trades in most cities helped establish usury as a "Jewish practice."¹²³ As a consequence, usury evoked sentiments of disdain and contempt of Jews, and depicting usury as a foreign element implied that both Jews and moneylending were foreign to Christianity. This narrative produced the image of the Jew who "grows fat and wallows in luxuries" while "the Christian is hung from the noose,"¹²⁴ as proclaimed by Peter the Venerable, who condemned all Jewish economic activity.

By 1290, King Edward I of England had justified the expulsion of Jews by claiming that:

the Jews did . . . wickedly conspire and contrive a new species of usury more pernicious than the old . . . to the abasement of our . . . people . . . for which cause We, in requital of their crimes and for the honour of the Crucified, have banished them from our realm as traitors.¹²⁵

There is more here than just Edward I's declaration of the expulsion of the Jews. The words "wicked," "conspiracy," and "pernicious" in relation to the "abasement" of Christians were used to produce and portray disorderly entities. The Jewish element, the despicable and the uncategorizable—what Julia Kristeva calls "abject"—is in this description self-abasing, dangerous, and poses a threat to law and order, and to religious, socioeconomic, political, and libidinal orders.¹²⁶ In this sense, Jewish usury destabilized not only the king's hegemony but also the honor of Christ, and for that reason, Jews were outed as dishonorable traitors. This

¹²³ For more on Jews and usury in Medieval France, see Julie L. Mell, *The Myth of the Medieval Jewish Moneylender* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

¹²⁴ "Pinguiscit inde et deliciis affluit Iudaeus, unde laqueo suspenditur Christianus" (Peter the Venerable, *Letters*, 1:330).

¹²⁵ M. Rigg, ed., *Select pleas, starrs, and other records from the rolls of the Exchequer of the Jews, A.D. 1220–1284* (London: B. Quaritch, 1902), xli.

¹²⁶ Julia Kristeva, *Powers Of Horror: An Essay On Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

narrative of honor produced and was underlined by the sentiments of ‘contempt’ and ‘disdain’ through polarized imagery that encodes features of Jewishness.¹²⁷

With the Enlightenment came a decline in the centrality of honor to modern political thought: both John Locke and Rousseau rejected the aristocratic notions of honor while attempting to develop a new type of honor for individuals committed to equality. Locke followed Thomas Hobbes in rejecting honor by questioning the naturalness of social position, weakening religious conviction, and replacing duty with privatized self-interest. Rousseau, in turn, joined Locke in challenging the "pride and destructive vanity" of aristocratic honor, though he sought to recover the heroic sense of self-sacrifice that relied on medieval notions of chivalry at odds with modern commitments to gender equality, showcasing why the modern notion of honor in the French context did not succeed in removing the element of violence from the prevalent concept of honor.

What this debate was able to achieve was the domestication of honor through economic stability. In his book *The Passions and the Interests*, historian Albert Hirschman analyzes how the drive and force that came out of the pursuit of honor were harnessed to turn them into virtues. The heroic ideal of honor was gradually recast in terms of "interest," pushing society to pursue its own best interests rather than symbolic glory, in part through the notion that interest was not concerned just with economics but a range of spheres—"interest of conscience, interest of honor, interest of health, interest of wealth."¹²⁸

In her reading of this work, Ann Stoler writes that Hirschman's compelling history of the passions sets out a genealogy that registers “the incessant flux in political theory in the

¹²⁷ The terms are used with quotations marks as these feelings are culturally organized understandings, as knowledge about feelings is undoubtedly mediated by cultural, historical, and linguistic frameworks.

¹²⁸ Albert Hirschman et al., *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*, rev. ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 38.

seventeenth and eighteenth century over what morality was.”¹²⁹ In other words, what Hirschman suggests is that rather than assuming the supremacy of reason over emotion, by the nineteenth century, there was an oscillation between reason and sentiment, with each keeping the other in check. In sum, a closer look at the traditional European Christian and later secular notion of honor shows us that aristocratic honor never truly disappeared; rather, it evolved to fit a democratic mold.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the notion of honor took the form of individual morality, honesty, and authenticity, all of which still had a Christian heritage. Through examining the history of the development of ideas of honor in Western philosophy, Peter Olsthoorn argues in his book *Honor in Political and Moral Philosophy* that honor—or rather, a concern for honor—is valuable both heuristically and motivationally for those it ought to discipline. Olsthoorn distinguishes between the classical, aristocratic notion of honor—which amounted to public recognition of the social elite by peers, often for acts of military valor—and democratic honor, which came to be understood as the more egalitarian notion of dignity and could be won by most people, regardless of social class, through acts that were more socially ‘productive’ than the ‘destructive’ acts of war.

While this was an attempt to rationalize power, at the end of the nineteenth century, power relations were exercised differently on those excluded from the dominant culture. The democratization of the aristocratic notion of honor after the French Revolution allowed every brave male citizen, irrespective of birth or rank, to distinguish himself in the defense of the motherland or by serving the state. The French *Grande Armée*, which included millions of French men from all societal strata, solidified the hegemony of this democratized code.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Ann Stoler, “Affective States” in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, ed. David Nugent and Joan Vincent (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007), 10.

¹³⁰ William M. Reddy, *The Invisible Code: Honor and Sentiment in Postrevolutionary France, 1814–1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 10.

Yet, despite endeavors to harness it, honor remained illustrated by the omnipresence of expressions and behaviors containing the word itself in daily political, moral, and civic language. Robert Nye writes that although the French Revolution domesticated excessive violence, the imperial officer corps under Napoleon was particularly influential in bringing back the duel—a ritual of honor formerly limited to aristocrats and a few wealthy individuals.¹³¹ Statecraft attempted to harness these passions, yet the state itself represented passions with a lust for power and need for glory. Honor was effectively reflected in the motto of the French army “Honneur et Patrie,” which embodied the identity, virtues, and heroic acts of the regiments.¹³²

Throughout the nineteenth century, European Christian Society remained driven by a social and emotional investment in the notion of honor, an investment that was also identitarian. It was through the deployment of honor as an exclusive French Christian attribute which Jews lacked that the latter were subordinated and held in contempt and disdain. Considered the great age of dueling,¹³³ the nineteenth century was also known as *point d'honneur*—a time during which the French words *honneur* (honor), *honorer* (to honor), and *honorable* (honorable) were widely used—and dueling became a constitutive part of depicting Jews as dishonorable in the emergent racialized discourse of anti-Semitism. The next chapter will look more profoundly into the history of dueling in France, its relationship with anti-Semitism, and the role of duels in Zionist ideology.

¹³¹ Robert A. Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*, new ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

¹³² President of the Republic Jules Grévy handed over the flag with its emblem to the military on July 14, 1880, at Longchamp, during a military ceremony that unified the army with the republic and the nation.

¹³³ Stuart Carroll, *Cultures of Violence: Interpersonal Violence in Historical Perspective*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 31

The Particules of Honor

The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* defines the term *honneur* within the French context as emerging in the tenth century from the Latin *honor*, honor to the Old French *onor*, as “dignity, distinction, position, victory, triumph.” Honor was linked to “honneur rendu aux dieux, décerné à quelqu'un; charge honorifique, magistrature.”¹³⁴ Honor thus entailed full social recognition of a virtuous attitude.

Though honor is not considered to be an emotion, it is constituted of different layers of emotions, such as guilt, shame, envy, and anger, all intertwined; honor starts with the measurement of someone’s self-worth, which is determined by the worth and esteem they have in the eyes of others. To use William Ian Miller’s words:

[h]onor is above all the keen sensitivity to the experience of humiliation and shame, a sensitivity manifested by the desire to be envied by others and the propensity to envy the successes of others. To simplify greatly, honor is that disposition which makes one act to shame others who have shamed oneself, to humiliate others who have humiliated oneself. The honorable person is one whose self-esteem and social standing is intimately dependent on the esteem or the envy he or she actually elicits in others. . . . In the culture of honor, the prospect of violence inhered in virtually every social interaction between free men . . . For shame and envy are quickly reprocessed as anger, and anger often is a prelude to aggression.¹³⁵

For Miller, honor and envy function as part of a continuum. One’s depiction as honorable should elucidate envy in others. In *Landscape for a Good Woman*, Carolyn Steedman ties *envy* in 1950s Britain to exclusion and dislocation as part of class and gender analysis. She reconstitutes envy as part of a world of strategic maneuvering for power and social

¹³⁴“Honor presented to the gods, awarded to someone; an honorary position, a magistracy” (my translation). In addition, in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, honor is defined as, “action, démonstration extérieure par laquelle on fait connoître la vénération, le respect, l'estime qu'on a pour la dignité, ou pour le mérite de quelqu'un”; honneur “signifie encore, Vertu, probité”; “se prend aussi pour la gloire qui suit la vertu, pour l'estime du monde, & pour la réputation”; “se prend aussi pour Dignité, Charge ; mais en ce sens il n'a d'usage qu'au pluriel.” *Le dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (Paris, 1694), article *Honneur*. Available online at <https://academie.atilf.fr/9/consulter/HONNEUR?options=motExact>

¹³⁵ William Ian Miller, *Humiliation And Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 84.

development.¹³⁶ In this sense, envy creates social tensions but also feeds honor's restless nature.

However, envy has also a psychoanalytic component. Melanie Klein defines envy as “the angry feeling that another person possesses and enjoys something desirable – the envious impulse being to take it away or to spoil it.” But envy is also destructive as it is “an oral-sadistic and anal-sadistic expression of destructive impulses.”¹³⁷ The relevancy of Klein's work to my own research relates to her incorporation of the Freudian dual drives in psychic dynamics and economy. Here, the relationship of the subject to its object always originates from the gap between them: the power that moves the subject towards the object, issues from this gap. The object of desire is not yet fully within the reach or possession of the subject, which triggers desire, passion, or what Freud termed “attraction”. Once the object is attained, the desire can be consummated and subsides.

The implication, which is a fundamental characteristic if not a precondition for Klein's thinking, is the inherent separateness or the gap between the subject and object. Klein describes this gap as the desire to possess the object and especially its goodness and supplies.¹³⁸ Everything here pivots around the separation, the need of what's not in one's property, the gap, or the absence of the object of desire. As such, Klein further defines envy as an inborn “expression of destructive impulses with a constitutional basis,” meaning that it is present from birth, and is resistant to change. The psychoanalytic dimension of the politics of envy, although embedded in ephemeral and deeply internal emotions, in relation to honor, are crucial in understanding how this gap between what we want and do not possess is instrumentalized in the intersections of power formation and affective politics.

¹³⁶ Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987).

¹³⁷ Melanie Klein, *Envy and Gratitude: A Study of Unconscious Sources* (London: Routledge, 2001), 176.

¹³⁸ Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 183.

Envy, and all its particles, would function as a motivator to close the gap between the honorable and the dishonorable. To attain and remain in proper social standing and to enter the realm of honor, those emotions and qualities were instrumentalized to shape and define an entire social order and mode of conduct, known as the *pursuit of honor*. Honor was therefore perceived as a dignified distinction that was conferred on individuals for actions that brought renown or that bound groups together through pride in collective achievements.¹³⁹ This entailed an overwhelming, and at times invisible, preoccupation with honor in various social domains.

There was, however, something very particular about the pursuit of honor in European societies post-Enlightenment: it entailed deriving a sense of worthiness from well-established social norms of honorable behavior, and thus abiding to preconceived attitudes and classical hierarchical systems of honor. Hence, within this emotional economy, honorable men internalized a strong sense of preconceived moral obligation and pride, but also of sin and guilt that were a means to regulate behaviors—when social standing is sanctified by the perception of others, honor becomes a disciplining tool that dictates behavior and demands obedience.

The social logic of honor entails layers of moral worth. The meaning of honor evolved in terms of to whom it was due and what gave one a sense of honor, but it always remained essentially a Christian masculine phenomenon.¹⁴⁰ The quest for honor underwent many transformations as class struggles attempted to categorize and control virtues and passions in order to affect their contribution to society—honor has a great capacity to motivate people to act in the pursuit of self-fulfillment and ambition.

¹³⁹ William M. Reddy, *The Invisible Code: Honor and Sentiment in Postrevolutionary France, 1814–1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press) 1997.

¹⁴⁰ The Jewish man was seen as hyper-sexual and as a danger to the masculine status of non-Jewish men. See: David Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); and Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). The narrative of the “feminine insane Jewish body,” meanwhile, was instrumental in the discourse pathologizing Jewish dishonor, and also pathologizing the Jewish race more broadly.

Honor and its component part, obedience, are often, if not always, put on an equal footing with virtue, perhaps with an exaggerated sense of dignity; however, as Alasdair MacIntyre writes, “Virtues are dispositions not only to act in particular ways, but also to *feel* in particular ways. To act virtuously is not to act against inclination; it is to act from inclination formed by the cultivation of the virtues. Moral education is an *éducation sentimentale*.”¹⁴¹ These highly personal, intimate dispositions categorize and impose a singular meaning of the *Other*. Insofar as all emotional states involve a mix of intimate and physical experience and a conscious grasp of self-and-situation, Robert Solomon argues that emotions are thus, by definition, not passive “states” but moral “acts” as we create them to give order, substance, depth, and involvement to our lives.¹⁴²

Centuries of European Christian stereotyping of Jews produced contempt and disdain of the latter in the narrative of honor. Following Solomon, emotionally driven social control implies that European Christian impulses are ultimately reflected in their acts. The shaping of appropriate and reasoned affects through the concept of honor comes about through the utilization of those motivators, functioning as a disciplining tool to regulate behaviors that keeps in check any deviancy or excess, while also serving to exclude those who do not possess noble qualities and morality. The concept that honor entails obedience is relevant to my analysis, as positioning honor only within the social realm is not sufficient to grasp its full workings as its emotional scope is too complex to map out.¹⁴³

Honor shuttles back and forth between the interior space and the social construct of conduct. The former is an ambiguous space wherein honor would contain the irrational and

¹⁴¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 149.

¹⁴² Robert Solomon, *The Passions: The Myth and Nature of Human Emotions* (New York: Anchor Press, 1976).

¹⁴³ Some landmark studies on honor include Julian Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate of Shechem or the Politics of Sex: Essays in the Anthropology of the Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); David D. Gilmore, ed., *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (Washington, D.C.: The American Anthropological Association, 1987); J. G. Peristiany and Julian Pitt-Rivers, eds., *Honor and Grace in Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Michelle Z. Rosaldo, "The Shame of Headhunters and the Autonomy of Self," *Ethos* [11, no. 3 \(Autumn, 1983\)](#): 135–151.

designate what is rational and reasonable, despite being full of contradictions. It is there that these contradictions often unfold in the hypothetical and the imaginative, where one speculates what could or could not happen. It is also where imagined consequences are formed, typically by the shame, lying, contempt, disdain, and deception that space ought to veil.¹⁴⁴

2.2 Honor's Internal Other: Shame

Even though honor is not an emotion, it consists of many intertwined affective elements that, when put together, function as a disciplining mechanism that ensures conformity with social expectations. The notion of honor as a trait that is possessed by some leads to sentiments of contempt and disdain toward those who are then deemed not in possession of it. The narrative of honor generated contempt for Jews that, at times, went beyond disdain to the point of hostility. However, there are other emotions that are generated and that assist the discourse of honor as a disciplining element. One such generated emotion is shame, honor's direct and immediate antonym. The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* in its 1694 first edition equated the antonym of honor, *dishonor*, to 'shame'; as such, lacking honor meant feeling shame. In the same dictionary, shame is defined as: "Confusion, trouble excité dans l'âme par l'image de quelque deshonneur qui nous est arrivé, ou qui nous peut arriver."¹⁴⁵

This *confusion of the soul* merits attention, given that there is much to be said about the human soul in philosophy and psychology. In order for humans to understand who and what they are, they ought to account for their soul, which touches the most intimate spaces of their being, such as emotions, senses, eternal truths, memory, and reason. There is much left

¹⁴⁴ Examples are of men discovering their wives' adultery or a noble being called a "bastard" in the presence of the king, and so on.

¹⁴⁵ "Confusion of the soul caused by dishonor" (my translation). *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (Paris, 1694), 569–570. Available online at: <https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr/article/A1H0128>

to the ‘unknowability’ and the imaginary in Plato’s sensible world, where the soul has its own life, a life independent of the body. It is that world of confusion that honor taps into—shame is more than an emotional reaction to being held in contempt and disdain, while honor is similarly a critical and complex constellation where identity, historicity, power, guilt, and sexuality end up, are revisited, and are reproduced.¹⁴⁶

Moreover, honor's relationship to shame shows that it is more than just its inverse; as both are part of a self-conscious experience. In modern usage, shame is “the affect of indignity, of defeat, transgression, and alienation. It is felt as an inner torment, a sickness of the soul.”¹⁴⁷ It is thus an emotion that requires a concept and perception of the self as an object of evaluation. Therefore, shame is a relationship of value, of someone who has suffered dishonor by failing to adequately protect one’s honor. Regardless of whether spectators are present or whether they are imagined, the dishonored man perceives himself as being judged negatively by an audience guided by a value system to which he no longer belongs. By being shamed, groups whose identity has been defined and exposed by it (in this case, degenerate Jews) become consolidated—as part of an ethnicity, for instance—through identifiers, and are compelled to wear their shame as a mask or a burden.

Through the narrative of honor, as we will see in the next chapters, Jews were made to *feel* shame; one way this was done by designating them as Hebrews, rendering them pre-modern and foreign simultaneously. The process of shaming also tended to include accusations. Jews were put on public display to magnify feelings of shame and, once that had been accomplished, Christian Europeans could more easily accuse Jews of vice and other stereotypes that prevailed and point out their difference.¹⁴⁸ Napoleon had offered them

¹⁴⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1991).

¹⁴⁷ Silvan S. Tomkins, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Adam Frank, eds., *Shame and its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 133.

¹⁴⁸ Nietzsche pointed out that Christianity as well as the democratic polity practice a systematic exclusion of difference by perceiving being different as immoral.

equality and autonomy and allowed them to form a Sanhedrin, the first gathering of their elders since ancient times, and yet despite this, Christians and secularists insisted that Jews could not let go of their old vices.

Shaming practices, such as accusation, exposure, inducing vulnerability, and wounding, are tools that render the invisible—one's personal belief system or faith for instance—visible.¹⁴⁹ This process excludes those who are perceived as different by considering them to be dishonorable. In order to incentivize the obedience of Jews in Europe, the discourse of honor imposed a certain normativity, and used shame to regulate the behaviors of those deviating. This vicious cycle of shaming (through accusation) unfolded in an endless spiral, with the feelings of shame spilling over into the wider community.

The discourse of honor generated an entire enterprise of shame management, which served to anchor instantaneous and deep-seated moral perceptions of the Jews. The particularity of the locus of shame is often the result of the deployment of the discourse of honor, part of this operation is the very physicality of shame—how it works on and through the body. Shame involves the de-forming and reforming of bodily and social spaces, as bodies “turn away” from others who inflict and witness shaming¹⁵⁰; thus, subjective experiences of shame relate to their social context.

Shame, therefore, triggers an impulse to escape, hide, cover oneself, and, ideally, disappear. This the kind of shame that condemns one to silence.¹⁵¹ Shame, however, has another face that is nourished by a political imagination. Karl Marx informs us about this

¹⁴⁹ Leon Wurmser, *The Mask of Shame* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

¹⁵⁰ C. D. Schneider, "A Mature Sense of Shame" in *The Many Faces of Shame*, ed. D. L. Nathanson (New York: Guilford Press, 1987) 194–213. See also: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick & Adam Frank, "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins," *Critical Inquiry* 21, no.2 (1995): 496–522.

¹⁵¹ Think, for instance, about victims of sexual violence.

when he explains that “shame is a revolutionary sentiment,” and it is, according to him, another name for *introverted anger*.¹⁵² This is the kind of shame that pushes one not to delve into self-lamentation, but on the contrary, to react and act. As such, shame can be conceptualized as a political emotion: one only feels ashamed before the community one desires to belong to, and that feeling threatens different domains.¹⁵³

Shame, defined as dishonor, might seem to be the antonym of honor; however, the old French etymology reveals that honor (*honneur*) and shame (*honte*) come from the same root. Thus, the French dyad *honneur/honte* further adds to the ambiguity of the idea of honor. This ambiguity is displayed in its ability to, at times, act almost as a synonym for virtue and at other times as virtue's opposite. It is important to bear in mind the original and historic connections of honor and shame and their deployment in modern social practice and usage in nineteenth-century Western societies. In these societies, honor and shame were essentially different sentiments and social assessments made about action (or inaction): one needed to be lacking in one to have the other. It would seem, then, that both sentiments fell on the same continuum and that shame could more accurately be seen as the absence of honor, rather than its opposite.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² In 1843, Karl Marx wrote a letter to Arnold Ruge regarding the French revolution. Marx says that despotic German patriotism caused Germany's defeat and they ought to feel ashamed. He contends that revolutions are not "made by shame," but that "shame is a revolution in itself" as a "kind of anger turned in on itself." For Marx, shame is a social emotion: the reddened cheeks, caused by shame, have perhaps intentionally, the same shade as the Communists' flag.

¹⁵³ Elspeth Probyn writes that shame is an ambiguous state that is either moving forward into the pursuit of more interest (and possible adaptation) or falling back into humiliation (moving further inward). The feeling of shame itself is the moment of interruption—the break in connection—but also signals a return of interest and connection. As Probyn writes, "the shame of the cultural outsider is fed by a deep desire to fit in and an abiding interest in being able to do so [...]. The more interested you are in fitting in, the more you are likely to feel ashamed when that interest is not enough to allow you to move smoothly in an-other culture and space." Elspeth Probyn, *Blush: Faces of Shame* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), ix–xviii, 8, 14, 28, 39.

Shaming Jews: Carriers of an Irreversible Illness

As I have pointed out throughout this chapter, not only was anti-Semitism informed and even partly generated by the discourse on honor that preceded it, but it is also a system of knowledge with a rich lexicon that in turn generates shame, disdain, and contempt as elements of the anti-Semitic claim that Christian Gentiles have honor, whereas diaspora Jews do not—the dishonored diasporic Jew was contrasted with the honorable European Christian. The discourse on honor, which was constitutive of the new anti-Semitism, combined the religious, the racial, the political, and the sexual to produce a new secular notion, not only of European Christian honor, but also and importantly of diasporic Jewish dishonor.

Through the workings of shame, i.e. the absence of honor, anti-Semitism was to find a productive modern venue for a discourse on honor. The narrative of the dishonored Jew soon overflowed into that of the new *fin-de-siècle* category of the “degenerate” Jew, excluding violently certain bodies and social classes.¹⁵⁵ The ideal of civility and citizenship conceals a great deal of violence. To condition Jewish behaviors in line with the pursuit of European Christian honor, a process of reducing Jewishness to obedience was set in motion. The following dichotomy became imperative: the essence of an ideal French Christian image was usually contrasted with the perception and construction of a degenerated and degenerating Jewish identity.

Jews were belittled and made to realize their disgrace: they brought shame and were unfit and insane, and as long as they remained in the diaspora, their anxiety would increase as they carried the original sin of their people. These symptoms were intended to make them envious of what all others had, whether this was a home, a future, or a position in society,

¹⁵⁵ Think of commoners versus those of noble status and unwanted minorities. Additionally, the “turning away” that is a particular consequence of shame is essential to this study, given that by shaming citizens we force them to metaphorically “cover themselves.”

leading to their further degeneration. With the advancement of medical science and race studies at the end of the eighteenth century, physiologists, psychiatrists, racial theorists and others used, secularized, and normalized the discourse of honor as something that emerged from nature, with specific workings in inferior races. Jews were considered a people without honor based on pathological findings, and their dishonor was seen as a symptom or an indication of a disease or disorder that they suffered from in the diaspora. Thus, by the nineteenth century, this concept received not only a racial-theoretical framing, but also a medical one.

Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893)¹⁵⁶ was one of the most prominent European neurologists who developed the idea of inherited Jewish insanity triggered by life in the diaspora. He drew on the American doctor George Miller Beard's (1839–1883) work on neurasthenia, which connected the modern body's organic mental and physical illness to the *fin-de-siècle* anxieties of modern civilization. Charcot worked on identifying the core group of clinical symptoms that together indicated the presence of neurasthenia, caused by the competitiveness and intensity of civilized life that altogether exhausted the nervous system. He studied his patients in acclaimed public clinical sessions at the prestigious Salpêtrière hospital in Paris, a warehouse for patients who suffered from nervous and neurological disorders.¹⁵⁷

Charcot concluded that a patient suffered from hysteria if other post-traumatic symptomatology manifested in addition to neurasthenia, a condition that he called *hystéro-neurasthénie traumatique*.¹⁵⁸ Finally, according to the cases he studied every Tuesday

¹⁵⁶ Both Max Nordau, the cofounder of the Zionist movement, and Sigmund Freud were trained by Charcot at the Salpêtrière hospital, where Charcot frequently showcased hysterics and emphasized their Jewishness. Sigmund Freud's early works, such as *Studies in Hysteria*, analyzed hysteria by drawing on an almost exclusively Jewish clientele; it is based on the work of Charcot that Freud further developed his theory of hysteria. In his diaries, Freud mentioned that he met Nordau once, but he was not impressed by him at all (Freud's diaries, Vol. I, p.201).

¹⁵⁷ Mark S. Micale, "The Salpêtrière in the Age of Charcot: An Institutional Perspective on Medical History in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Contemporary History* 20 (October 1985): 703–731.

¹⁵⁸ In the case of one railway worker he was studying, the patient showed the signs of Beard's disease, but the sensory-motor attacks indicated the onset of hysteria. The accident occurred the night of September 4–5, 1888, and Charcot visited the patient July 3, 1889. Charcot eventually concluded that many patients like this were suffering not from the physical injuries

evening from 1878 to 1893, most neurasthenics were adult male patients. One particular group seemed to stand out to Charcot and his colleagues, however, for its destined susceptibility to hysteria: Jews.¹⁵⁹

Although Charcot was studying cases, cataloging symptoms, naming diseases, identifying causes, and experimenting with therapies such as hypnosis to help his incoming patients, he already seemed to have a diagnosis at hand for his Jewish patients. In February 1889, Charcot diagnosed Klein, a twenty-three-year-old Hungarian Jewish patient (*Israélite Hongrois*), who fell asleep in a heavy rainstorm on his way from Brussels to Paris and woke up with a twisted arm and a cramped hand locked at an angle, a posture associated with hysteria. He had lost his sense of taste on the right side of his tongue, a symptom fairly common in male hysterics. Charcot diagnosed hysteric-traumatic paralysis provoked by sleeping on the wet ground.¹⁶⁰ He hypothesized that the trauma caused a psychological reaction, which triggered the contraction of limbs on the right side. Nonetheless, Charcot, the nineteenth century's foremost scholar of hysteria, concluded that Jews were predisposed to mental disorders due to their symbolic lineage of rootlessness, deceit, egoism, and amorality, having suffered from the ultimate trauma of negating Christian salvation. Because Klein was Jewish, he was predisposed to hysterical neurosis.¹⁶¹ Charcot noted that the persecutions that Jews had endured over the centuries might have predisposed them to nervous diseases,¹⁶²

and effects of accidents, but from the idea they had formed of and around it. Dutil, *Hystérie et neurasthénie associées*, 10–14.

¹⁵⁹ Paul Blocq, *La neurasthénie et les neurasthéniques* (Paris: Imprimerie F. Levé, 1891), 8. See also Emile Laurent, *La neurasthénie et son traitement*, (Paris: A. Maloine, 1897), 7.

¹⁶⁰ Klein was a case of traumatic hysteria in a predisposed subject (Leçons du Mardi, vol. 2, 347–53).

¹⁶¹ "Charcot had invoked this notion of inherited trauma in a Tuesday lesson when he presented a patient whom he called a 'wandering Jew.' Racial inheritance, an aspect of the widely held Lamarckian theory of heredity, along with consanguineous marriage, formed the slender theoretical framework with which Charcot and others sought to explain Jewish pathology." Quoted from J. M. Charcot and T. Gelfand, *Charcot in Morocco* (University of Ottawa Press, 2012).

¹⁶² According to an eyewitness account of Jane B. Henderson, "Personal reminiscences of M. Charcot," *Glasgow Medical Journal* 40 (1893): 293–98.

concluding that Klein was clearly a veritable descendent of Ahasvérus or Cartaphilus, the two so-called Wandering Jews in Christian mythology.¹⁶³

The Wandering Jew, a mythical character who originated in medieval Europe, cursed Jesus on the way to Calvary and was condemned consequently to drift on earth until his redemption, which, ironically, would never be granted. This Wandering Jew is encountered in many European writings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but these are reproductions of statements made as early as the thirteenth century. As noted earlier in Chapter 1, Pope Innocent III, who called for the crusade against the Cathars and ordered the burning of the Talmud, believed that Jews were cursed to wander the earth: “Thus the Jews, against whom the blood of Christ calls out, although they ought not to be killed . . . yet as wanderers ought they to remain upon the earth, until their countenance be filled with shame.”¹⁶⁴

Shame here is the burden and the identifier of the Wandering Jew. Abbot Peter the Venerable similarly expressed strong sentiments of contempt and disdain, likewise believing that “the damned and damnable” Jews ought to suffer and wander: “Since they spilled the blood of Christ—their brother in the flesh—they are enslaved, afflicted, anxious, suffering and wanderers on the earth, until . . . the miserable remnants of his people . . . will be converted to God.”¹⁶⁵ Charcot scientifically revived these images of the anxious, lost, trembling, wandering foreign Jew who traveled through time and space in European Christian societies as the Wandering Jew of the legend, who suffered from the same ailments as the Jew of the Salpêtrière—both the same traveling neuropaths¹⁶⁶ with a combination of racial

¹⁶³ Klein entered the clinic on December 12, 1888, and Charcot presented the lesson on February 19, 1889. J. M. Charcot, *Leçons sur les maladies du système nerveux*, vol. 1, 410.

¹⁶⁴ Grayzel et al., “Letter Innocent III, January 17, 1208,” 127.

¹⁶⁵ Cited in Robert Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 49.

¹⁶⁶ “Nous espérons faire reconnaître alors que le Juif-Errant de la Légende, et le Juif-Errant des cliniques ne sont qu’un seul et même type: un névropathe voyageur, pèlerinant sans cesse, apparaissant aujourd’hui, disparaissant demain, suivi bientôt

traits that converged on individuals such as Klein. Thus, when a “tattered, dirty, pale, thin, falling from fatigue, and confused” Klein arrived at the doorstep of the Salpêtrière hospital seeking help, it was now the turn of medicine and science to give a progressive meaning to these characteristics.

For Charcot, the shaking Jew of old times had always been the (new) hysterical Jew, marking a continuity through time and space. Medical psychiatry at this point cemented the narrative of the insanity and degeneration of the Jewish body. Klein was, according to Charcot, compelled by the irresistible need to move: even when he found work, Klein, it seems, was “constantly driven by an irresistible need to move on . . . without being able to settle down anywhere.”¹⁶⁷ He belonged to the category of neurotic travelers,¹⁶⁸ those whose disease was hereditary and included hysterics and neurasthenics. Charcot noted that Klein had received support from “ses coréligionnaires” as well as the “Association Israélite” in Metz during three years of wandering across Germany, England, Belgium, and France. He added that Klein's impulsive wandering and his plans to set off to Brazil after his release confirmed his neurosis.¹⁶⁹ Charcot stated, “You know, of course, that Jewish families furnish us with the finest subjects for the study of hereditary disease . . . how in the [Jewish] race, nervous symptoms of all sorts . . . are incomparably more frequent than elsewhere.”¹⁷⁰

This hereditary trait supposedly made Jews susceptible to this specific ailment,¹⁷¹ since “it is a characteristic of their race to move with extreme ease. At home nowhere, and at

d'un autre qui lui ressemble en tous points : 'Juif qui est errant, Parmi le monde, pleurant et soupirant'" Cited in Henry Meige, "Le Juif-errant a la Salpêtrière: Etude sur certains nevropathes voyageurs," *Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière*, 6 (1893), 20.

¹⁶⁷ Charcot, *Leçons*, 348; cf. Meige, "Le Juif-errant," 191.

¹⁶⁸ Charcot diagnosed another Jewish man who came to him for help: "Il est Israélite, et il est vagabond. Son extérieur et son histoire évoquent en nous l'image bien connue *du Juif-Errant*. Ce n'est pas le premier dans l'espèce qui ait attiré mon attention. Il serait intéressant de recueillir les exemples de ce genre et de les comparer entre eux" (Meige, 3).

¹⁶⁹ Charcot, *Leçons*, 413–15.

¹⁷⁰ Charcot, *Leçons*, 1:10; cited by Jan Goldstein, "The Wandering Jew and the Problem of Psychiatric Anti-Semitism in Fin-de-Siècle France" *Journal of Contemporary History* 20, no.4 (October 1985): 536.

¹⁷¹ *Charcot in Morocco* is the first-ever publication of Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot's travel diary of his 1887 trip to Morocco. Considered the father of neuropathology, Charcot is a seminal character in the history of neurology and psychology. His Moroccan travel diary includes his "objective" observations of the local Jewish community, which only fortified his

home everywhere.”¹⁷² The rootlessness entrenched in their two-thousand-year diaspora was at the origin of their hereditary trauma.¹⁷³ Jewish insanity, it seems, traveled the same course in medicalized psychiatry, forging a new path through which science could be used to shame and isolate Jews. Jan Goldstein has traced the evolution of “Jewish insanity” within the French scientific discussion and traced the emergence of a discourse on Jewish predisposition to mental illness in France from the disciplines of medical statistics, anthropology and demography in the 1860s to the “Jewish nervousness” treated by Charcot at the turn of the century.¹⁷⁴

When Jews were promised secular redemption through the political emancipation granted to them first by Napoleon and later by the 1871 German unification, their sanity was continuously questioned. While the cultural, political, and psychiatric debate understood degeneration only as a disease of modern civilization, the anti-Semites regarded it through the frame of race theory, in which Jews living in European societies were a corrupting factor.¹⁷⁵ There was a rhetoric of degeneration in the anti-Semitic discourse of the last decades of the nineteenth century. As Sander Gilman concludes in his study *Difference and Pathology*, psychiatrists in the last decades of the nineteenth century agreed on the strikingly frequent occurrence of nervous and mental illnesses among Jews.¹⁷⁶

The growing emphasis placed by psychiatrists and racial theorists on the pathologies of the “Jewish race” as a sign of the pathological turned the Jew into a mental patient—the

assumptions about the relationship between race and neuropathology. In 1891–92, two of Charcot's assistants published an article in his *Archives de Neurologie* that included thirty-eight family trees of diabetics. Nearly one-third bore the label “*famille israélite*.” Georges Guinon and A. Souques, “Association du tabès avec le diabète sucré,” *Archives de neurologie* (1891 & 1892); reprinted in Charcot, *Clinique des maladies du système nerveux*, ed. G. Guinon, vol. 2 (Paris: Progrès Médical, 1893), 289–348. Guinon and Souques remarked that Charcot conducted systematic genealogical research “on nearly all of the patients” who came to the outpatient clinic (*ibid.*, 345).

¹⁷² Meige, *Étude sur certains Névropathes Voyageurs. Le Juif errant à la Salpêtrière* (Paris, 1893) 192–193.

¹⁷³ Martin Engländer, *Die auffallend häufigen Krankheitserscheinungen der jüdischen Rasse* (Vienna: J.L. Pollak. 1902), 12.

¹⁷⁴ Goldstein, “The Wandering Jew”: 521–552.

¹⁷⁵ The accusation of their mental illness would develop into the metaphor of a parasite to denounce dishonored Jews as hostile to society.

¹⁷⁶ Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

prime neurotic.¹⁷⁷ It is no surprise that in the long continuous tradition of defamation, the darkening of the Jewish skin, for instance, once explained as a result of a divine dissatisfaction, was now reported at the *fin de siècle* as a sign of hysteria.¹⁷⁸ Hysteria and neuroses served to mark Jews with a predestined fate that was incurable by modern medicine. This anti-Semitic medical shaming discourse was employed to classify, categorize, and control Jews even further.

It is clear that the anti-Semites needed a victim—that is, the Jew—to create a truth, and through this elaboration of shame, control populations on both ends of the divide. To follow Foucault in “seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which are in themselves neither true or false,”¹⁷⁹ it was the very body and mind of the Jew that were continuously called into question, framed in the long chain of religious-cultural-medical associations.

2.3 Honor and Race

As we saw above, the priest, the politician, and imperialist joined forces to realize the project of transferring European Jews to Palestine over the span of four hundred years. They positioned Jewish (dis)honor, through this narrative, within a racialized space. Some Protestants believed that Christ’s second coming would only take place once the Jews were established in Palestine and had converted to Christianity. Anti-Semites saw in this approach a perfect means by which to rid Europe of its Jews at a time when the rise of new social classes benefiting from financial imperialism went hand in hand with the decline of a

¹⁷⁷ See the discussion in Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 483–85.

¹⁷⁸ S. Wier Mitchell, "Peculiar Form of Rupial Skin Disease in an Hysterical Woman," *The American Journal of the Medical Sciences* 105 (1893): 244–46.

¹⁷⁹ Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 118.

traditional aristocracy. Imperialists, meanwhile, saw a Jewish Palestine forged by them as a stronghold to dominate that region and maintain financial, military, and diplomatic control.¹⁸⁰

This push to endow Jews with honor in Palestine had become a common cause for a heterogeneous group of gentile fellow travelers, and was propagated initially through various channels that were scarcely, if ever, Jewish. I noted previously that this approach to honor was positioned within the diffusion of particular sentiments coupled with power relations, especially that of obedience. The Jew is summoned to obey that which is imposed upon or requested of them. For a Jew to become honorable, obeying gentiles is necessary. The honorable Jew is one who fits in the plan of the strong, powerful European Gentile, whether Catholic, Protestant, or nationalist and secular. What is remarkable and ironic about this gentile use of honor is that though normally one needs to face his adversaries to regain one's honor when shamed or dishonored (i.e., through the duel), the gentile deployment of the workings of honor when it came to Jews was to demand obedience rather than defiance as a means to restore their honor.

What is of particular importance for this study is how the racialization of honor was intrinsically related to the racialization of the Jew. We see here that honor was part of a constellation of sentiments, navigating between private feelings and public dispositions, as the delimiting of Jewish bodies and subjects through the workings of honor was directly linked to European hegemony. When European Christians perceived themselves as followers of a religion, they perceived Jews through the religious lens. Once the shift to a secular and nationalist framework occurred, they became French, British, German, etc., and so Jews were transformed into a separate nation and race— Semites.

¹⁸⁰ It was Napoleon Bonaparte who first thought of this idea, demonstrating how political Zionism was born of imperialist realpolitik as much as it was born of protestant polemics.

Indeed, the transmutation of traditional Christian Jew-hatred into a secularized and racialized polarization, generated first by the European Enlightenment and thereafter by European anti-Semitism, very much informed this European Christian and secular narrative of honor. Indeed, this transformation coded the Jewish presence in Europe as an “ethnie,” to use Anthony D. Smith's concept,¹⁸¹ and attributed to diaspora Jews an ethnic-conditioned sense of self-worth. As such, the story of honor is a story of race as much as it is a story of class.

Race overdetermined the representation of the dishonored diaspora Jew since the onset of race science, as Jews were being constructed as unique genetically and racially by the end of the nineteenth century. The history of Jewish dishonor produced by the nineteenth century carved out a “degenerate space” for the racial Other (the Jew) and sustained a racialized social order. This degenerate space where the dishonored diasporic Jew found him/herself is a racialized space where Christian violence can be inflicted on Jews with impunity. Michel Foucault's thought has been important in helping us to think about subjects and spaces. In his work, the body marked as insane has an opposite, the bourgeois body, which is marked as respectable. Foucault states that space is fundamental in any exercise of power.¹⁸² It is through policies of removing the degenerate bodies from spaces of respectability that Foucault begins his analysis with the establishment in the seventeenth century of “enormous houses of confinement” for containing the poor and the unemployed, asylums for the insane, and he extends this to prisons and schools, leading to the physical segregation of marginal populations.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Smith acknowledges the role of modernization in sparking nationalist movements but stresses the importance of preexisting “ethnie” as the basic material out of which nations are formed. See Anthony A. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Holmes and Meier, 1983), 192–210.

¹⁸² Michel Foucault, “Space, Power, Knowledge,” trans. Christian Hubert, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 252.

¹⁸³ Michel Foucault, “Madness and Civilization,” trans. Richard Howard, in *The Foucault Reader*, 124.

Through this multi-faceted framework, the bourgeoisie came to define itself by using “historical discourse as a strategic weapon of power,”¹⁸⁴ and perceived itself as a respectable and civilized group, largely through a spatial separation from those deemed to be dishonorable and lacking in respect. There is a disciplinary element in the affective economy of honor, pointing to the ways that disdain and contempt operate within it and register the Jew as part of a different race and an ambiguous identity that is inscrutable to Western rationality. As the power that produces docile subjects became relatively invisible in Western industrialized societies, the narrative of honor regarding European Christians and Jews circulated through those same mechanisms but became more vocal in its propagation of the sentiments of contempt and shame.

On the Question of a Jewish Collective Identity

The question that now has to be posed is how did Jews view and sense themselves, and was their identity and self-perception individually and as a group unconsciously, to use Freud’s psychoanalytical term, influenced by anti-Semitism? There is an ongoing academic debate within Jewish and Zionist studies regarding this question and the relationship between history and memory, the role and importance of collective memory, myth and commemoration and the ways the past shapes present Jewish identity formation.

The question whether Jews, regardless of how Gentiles have depicted them across the centuries, have perceived themselves as a group or as part of a collective and the understanding of exile and home is larger than the scope of this dissertation, especially as the interest in memory was awakened by a number of distinguished works that linked representation of the past with the emergence of nationalism and the invention of new

¹⁸⁴ Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995) 53.

traditions.¹⁸⁵ However, given the centrality of the Zionist narrative in this dissertation, I will look at how a Jewish collectiveness has been formulated within the Zionist discourse.

In his influential *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi analyzed the transition in Jewish conceptions of Jewish history from pre-modern to modern times. The readings by a modern historian of biblical and postbiblical texts served to define medieval and early modern Jewish culture in order to reclaim pride of culture after two thousand years of exclusion. Yerushalmi argued the importance of the traditional conception of Jewish history, which he labeled “Jewish memory” for Jewish survival and its role in preserving Jewish identity. However, for Yerushalmi, Jewish collective memory is creatively selective: “Certain memories live on; the rest are winnowed out, repressed, or simply discarded by a process of natural selection which the historian, uninvited, disturbs and reverses.”¹⁸⁶ Yerushalmi’s *Zakhor* valorized premodern Jewish memory and its constructive role in Jewish life and Jewish survival and questioned modern Jewish historical writing and analysis.¹⁸⁷

New Jewish historians dominated the first wave of nineteenth-century Jewish historiography, but the Maskilim, the Haskalah scholars, struggled to define their presence in a space that confined them to physical and metaphorical degeneration, concluding that the “Diaspora condition necessarily made Jewish life a dog's life that evokes disgust,” such that “correcting the despicable condition of Jewish life as portrayed by the Maskilim became the

¹⁸⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London, 1992), Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1993); Homi Bhabha, (ed.) *Nation and Narration* (London, 1990).

¹⁸⁶ Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 95

¹⁸⁷ Amos Funkenstein, “Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness,” *History and Memory*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring - Summer, 1989): 5-26 ; Michael Feige, “Rethinking Israeli Memory and Identity,” *Israel Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, (2002): v-xiv, David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York, 1995), Myers, *Resisting History: Historicism and Its Discontents in German-Jewish Thought* (Princeton, NJ, 2003). Robert Chazan places premodern Jewish life and thinking within a relatively autonomous Jewish community, in which the communal leadership exercised enormous power over its constituency. Much of the unanimity that characterized Jewish life in general and divinely mandated “Jewish memory” in particular can be readily traced to the conformity enforced by the empowered leadership of the premodern Jewish community. Premodern Jews had little choice in accepting the story of the Jewish past that was decreed for them in the biblical record and enforced by their well-established and powerful leaders. See Robert Chazan, “From “Jewish Memory” to Jewish History: *Two Perspectives*,” *Journal of Jewish Thought & Philosophy* 25 (2017): 279–304

raison d'être of the Zionist movement.”¹⁸⁸ Even though the Maskilim attempted to recreate “the Jew in the eyes of its oppressor” by advocating for Jewish cultural reform,¹⁸⁹ the rise of anti-Semitism and its subsequent racialization of the Jew in the nineteenth century projected a pre-defined ontology onto Jews which they could not escape.

Historians such as Heinrich Graetz, who was rigorously trained in the new techniques of historical research and was equipped with new data on the Jewish past, could not escape the socio-political reality of his time. His magnum opus *History of the Jews* fashioned a compelling portrait of Jewish history and identity, dominated by the medieval and early modern Roman Catholic Church, intended to be read and absorbed by Jews and non-Jews alike, to arouse sympathy for the historic plight of the Jews. Graetz insisted in his historiography on the remarkable capacity of Jews to rise above their induced suffering through a commitment to the life of the mind.

Critiquing Yerushalmi and by extension Graetz, historian Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin argues that

Modern Jewish historiography - and much of modern Jewish culture - did not merely adopt new historicist sensibilities in the nineteenth century. More sweepingly, they internalized an early modern Protestant scheme of history that equated a vibrant historical existence and progress with the path to Grace. By accepting this essentially Christian perspective, modern Jews were afforded the prospect of a return to history and a concomitant escape from exile. But in the process, they surrendered a distinctly Jewish and exilic notion of history that animated their collective life prior to the modern age.¹⁹⁰

What Jewish historians choose to include, emphasize, omit, and invent in their representation of the past is a variable, but the narrative that has enjoyed over a long period of time an uncontested dominance is the Zionist narrative. Israeli historian Shlomo Sand argues that Zionism has succeeded in “inventing” a people through its thorough construction of the

¹⁸⁸ Michael Seltzer, *The Aryanization of the Jewish State* (New York: Black Star Pub. Co., 1967), 25, 36.

¹⁸⁹ Seltzer, *The Aryanization of the Jewish State*, 37.

¹⁹⁰ Cited in David N. Myers, “Recalling Zakhor: A Quarter-Century's Perspective,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 97, Issue 4, (Fall 2007): 489-490.

Israelite nation in ancient times; the two thousand years of exile during which the people suffered and forfeited its national greatness until the glorious return to the ancient land; in sum, it is a process characterized by sacrifice and heroism.

Sand moves to an extended discussion of Zionism's relationship to the nationalisms that arose in nineteenth century Europe as one response to modernity. As he puts it: "For the Jewish nationalists, Judaism ceased to be a rich and varied religious culture and turned into something hermetic, like the German *Volk* or the Polish and Russian *Narod*, though with the unique characteristic that it comprised an alien, wandering people, unrelated to the territories it inhabited."¹⁹¹ Sand argues that history and biology were enlisted "to bind together the frangible secular Jewish identity." Together, these engendered an "ethnonationalist historiography" which was typified by the mid-nineteenth century German Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz and his friend Moses Hess, who "needed a good deal of racial theory to dream up the Jewish people."¹⁹² This was partly a response to the assimilationism throughout Western Europe where many Jews were rapidly becoming secularized and identified themselves as citizens of Germany or France.

Assimilating was one common way of dealing with anti-Semitism, with Jews changing their names, modulating their tones, marrying non-Jews, speaking eloquently to downplay the communication styles which were perceived to be too loud or too expressive, and at times incorporating Christian traditions into religious services to downplay Judaism. Any oppressed group bears the markings of their oppression. Of course, internalized anti-Semitism manifests along a continuum, with some aspects hidden to the eye, others visible if being looked for, and still other aspects were displayed in rather egregious fashion. What is of importance for this dissertation, is how the rising Jewish Zionist movements in Western Europe dealt with all these challenges and incorporated them in their quest for honor.

¹⁹¹ Shlomo Sand; *The Invention of the Jewish People* (London; New York: Verso, 2010), 255.

¹⁹² Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, 256.

Jewish Zionism and its Lack of Honor

The history of Europe between 1400 and 1900 is largely a history of the decline of old feudal hierarchies, the rise of new commercial and legal elites, and the expansion of empires through colonialism and, with these, the development of new ideologies. But it is also a history of the multifarious, deeply ambivalent, and ever-contested views of Jews and other minority peoples in Europe. The role that Jews played in these debates as well as in the concrete political, social, and economic transformations that accompanied them shed important light not only on the internal transformation of Jewish societies but also on which stereotypes Jewish intellectuals and leaders internalized.

As an idea, Zionism began as a European (Christian and later post-Enlightenment secular) project that instrumentalized the Jews for the fantasies and policies first of Protestant messianic endeavors, and then later of European empires. It invented a people, turned it into a unified body and called upon it to fulfill a historical task at any cost. When the first wave of Jewish nationalists and proto-Zionists emerged in around the 1840s, they had internalized the models that their Protestant predecessors had developed and added a Jewish nationalistic component to them. The frame of reference of that divide has historically been rooted in and dependent on the European public sphere's zeitgeist. Consequently, the composition of the categories of Self and Other shifted throughout time as Jewish Zionist policy evolved to base its arguments for legitimacy on the values and ideals set forth by European hegemony.

This instrumentalization sought to erase the agency of Jews, sometimes to the effect of making unfathomable their prior existence to the European Gentile imagination that conjured a particular image of and instrumentalized them.¹⁹³ Most importantly, these ideas were deployed in discourse to produce the diasporic Jew as lacking in honor through the

¹⁹³ The Arabs are also instrumentalized, though they are unnamed, in references to the seas of blood into which the Jews must march in the writings of D'Aubigné.

Christian sentiments of contempt and disdain and the Jewish sentiment of shame that they created. The diaspora Jew as lacking honor was a modern cultural construction that fit eighteenth- and nineteenth-century normative models of bourgeois respectability.¹⁹⁴

We can see the same narrative of the Jewish race's degeneration pathologized and conceptualized in modern civilization, adding to the same ancient negative connotations ascribed to the Jewish body, mind, and identity.¹⁹⁵ Jews, considered inherently less evolved, had degenerated as a result of living in gentile communities and of being oppressed for so long, and the degeneration of Jews was seen as unfortunately irreversible.¹⁹⁶ The development of the notion of Jewish alterity was not a new process but the strategy of pushing the diasporic Jew toward the pursuit of honor had to evolve with modernity. This led a good part of the Jewish intelligentsia to adopt, even internalize, the Christian concepts of honor and their attendant ramifications.

Anti-Semites located their contempt and disdain of Jews in the latter's unnatural sojourn into Gentile society. In the influential pamphlet *Die Judenfrage als Racen-, Sitten- und Culturfrage: Mit einer weltgeschichtlichen Antwort* (The Jewish Question as a Question of Race, Customs and Culture: With an Answer Relating to World History), German philosopher Eugen Dühring (1833–1921) reinstates this racial-biological approach: the Semite is a biological foreign body that has been inherently degenerate since *he departed* from Palestine.¹⁹⁷ The degeneration of the Jewish people is described here as a long process

¹⁹⁴ In his work on normative and aesthetic models of the body in nineteenth-century Europe, George Mosse argues that normative models of respectability such as sexual restraint and wide physical differences between males and females contrasted to other races created the homosexual and the Jew as the other.

¹⁹⁵ Most *fin-de-siècle* research and work on the male Jewish body within anti-Semitic and Zionist literature focuses on Zionist rejection of the feminized hysteric Jewish body by referring repeatedly to the creation of this new masculine Hebrew body. It was Sander Gilman's *The Jew's Body* that contemplated the perception of difference between the Western Christian homogenized white male body and the diseased and feminine Jewish male body, representing the decadent Jewish body. See Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body*. (New York: Routledge, 1992).

¹⁹⁶ In order to protect themselves from this narrative, Western European Jews projected this accusation of degeneration onto the majority of poor Eastern European Jews, who threatened the assimilation of Western Jews.

¹⁹⁷ In his diaries, Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, writes that Dühring's work influenced him so deeply that the experience remained with him for the rest of his life. Herzl writes "The first chapters of the book are in spite of their exaggerations and their spirit of hatefulness, so informative that every Jew ought to read them. The peculiar twist in the Jewish morality, and the lack of of moral seriousness in many (Dühring says in all) spheres of action, are mercilessly exposed and characterized. Cited from Alex Bein, *Theodore Herzl: A Biography* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 37–39.

of physical and mental corruption that stemmed from a generalized condition of homelessness that linked them to the ancient Hebrews of Palestine, the same conclusion that Charcot reached on the so-called incurable Jewish insanity.

For Zionists, Jewish inherent insanity was a symptom of the larger disorder; the lack of honor. Though the idea of honor had evolved by the mid-nineteenth century into a more democratic and individualistic attribute, one linked to personal dignity, French Jews still needed to navigate many obstacles before being granted the privilege of acquiring personal honor. It was only a matter of time before Jewish Zionism, as we will see, internalized these Gentile notions of Jewish dishonor. In fact, not only would Jewish Zionism insist on the shame that the Jews should feel for lacking honor in the diaspora, but, as will be demonstrated, that Jews should feel the gentile anti-Semitic sentiments of contempt and disdain for the diaspora Jew.

From here, we move from looking at how the French gentiles imagined the Jew to how French Jews came to imagine themselves. The shifting balance between traditional values concerning social order and the growing need of Jewish Zionists to save themselves from the increasing social violence to which they were subjugated eventually pushed them to internalize certain stereotyped attributes and think on the question of how a European Jew could regain their honor. French Jewish identity was forged through sentiments such as contempt, disdain, and shame, given how the dominant class used them to discipline French Jews into behaving according to its expectations. French Jews seemed to be caught in an affective economy that Protestant Christians had first established on the basis of a promise and a prophecy articulated in a divine book. That French Protestant and Catholic secular anti-Semites inherited this legacy in the nineteenth century was remarkable in itself, but that Jewish Maskilim and Zionists did so is ironic.

CHAPTER 3:

Armand Mayer or The Definition of French Jewish Honor

Fin-de-siècle France was a theater of sensationalized divergent currents seeking to define the origin, development, and ideological markers of French nationalism, which were affected by various social practices and ideological shifts, marked by the defeat and loss of Alsace and Lorraine, social upheavals and an intellectual and moral crisis. In attempting to understand the role that honor and shame played in the social history of French Jewry, we must consider the kind of nationalisms that were being forged locally in that period of time.

While the French state developed a republican secular nationalism, heir to the values of 1789, in order to attain a proper cohesion of a national community based on kinship, geography, language and economic interest as a method of government, a call for a different nationalism appeared and put the nation as a priority value. This nationalism, conservative militant and activist, identified with the Army and the Church, considering them as the guardians of great traditional values.¹⁹⁸ Both nationalisms influenced the way French citizens identified themselves and others; but it also expected from French Jewry to position itself within the French nationalist discourse.

This chapter looks at how dueling, honor, race, nationalism and masculinity affected and defined fin-de-siècle French society and how these forces crystallized in the figure of Armand Mayer, a French Jewish army officer who died fighting a duel with the anti-Semitic marquis de Morès. The death of Mayer was a public theater of French Jewish patriotic honor,

¹⁹⁸ Jean-Claude Caron and Michel Vernus, "Chapitre 10 - Le temps des nationalismes. La France de 1871 à 1914," *L'Europe au 19^e siècle. Des nations aux nationalismes (1815-1914)*, eds. Jean-Claude Caron, Michel Vernus Michel (Paris: Armand Colin, 2015), 315-346.

but it was also the podium where Zionists such as Max Nordau were defining their nationalism by fighting French Jewish assimilationism and calling it a dishonorable endeavor.

The French Nation in Historical Perspective

The national history of modern states has been shaped the moment historians were tasked with the creation of the nation as they have played a central role in establishing the parameters of a nation's history. French historiography relates the formation of what would become 'France' to the ascension of King Clovis (466-511). Settling in Lutèce, Clovis wanted to be the king of a unified country. Historian Collette Beaune elaborates on how at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Italian historian Paul Emile wrote his humanist *Historia Francorum*, a national history of France, requested by king François I, and saw in the conversion of the Franks, emblemized by the baptism of Clovis, a crucial moment in the national development of France as it unified the *Francs* and the *Gaulois*.

By getting baptized in 496, Clovis not only became the ally and protector of the Church but also grouped the diverse populations within his territory around the symbol of the Cross. Beaune explains that the narrative of an inaugural fusion of Franks and Gaulois allowed French people of all regions to locate common ancestors and placed the origins of the French nation within the organic unity of a pure race. Historians of the kingdom were then tasked to invent links between Bretons, Angles, Saxons and Normans, by finding them common ancestors. From this would flow the material birth of the nation according to Beaune, while the spiritual birth would be centered on the hierarchical conception of conversion, the baptism of King Clovis marking the final entry of France into God's plan.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Collette Beaune, "La notion de nation en France au Moyen Age," *Communications*, 45, (1987) :101-116.

This established Christianity as the official religion and ideology of the kingdom, casting the Jews, those obstinate people who refuse to recognize Christ, in a new light. The dignitaries of the Church endeavored to exclude from Christian worship all that recalls its Judaic origins, in order to distinguish themselves. From medieval times onward, the history of the Jewish minority ran parallel to that of the wider population of France. They too were victims of epidemics, endemic wars and poverty, though their marginal position as a minority made their situation even more precarious. But over such a long period of time and in such a vast country, the hostility towards Jews and their oppression were neither permanent nor general; generations of Jews lived in relative calm.

Over the course of centuries, as discussed in the first chapter, French Protestant anti-Judaism would not be sufficient to feed hostilities against Jews as religion were being redefined through secular notions. By excluding Jews from many professional spaces and pushing them towards usury, Jews became odious in the popular conscience in different ways. Anti-Judaism, originally religious, was nourished over the centuries with accusations of financial dishonesty. Not only were the Jews enemies of the faith, they were also dangerous competitors to the burgeoning commercial bourgeoisie. This is partly the image of Jews and Judaism that reached the chambers of deputies tasked with forging the new French body politic after the French Revolution.

3.1 Traditional French Jewish honor

Shortly before the French Revolution, in 1785, the *Société Royale des Sciences et des Arts* (Royal Society of Sciences and Arts of Metz) sponsored an essay contest on the question, “Est-il des moyens de rendre les Juifs plus heureux et plus utiles en France?” (Are there means of making the Jews more useful and happier in France?), at a time when politicians, lawyers, and philosophers were preoccupied with the larger question regarding

the presence of Jews in France and how to properly regenerate and transform them morally, spiritually, legally, and physically in order to integrate them in French society. This contest would become an illustration of the ‘enlightened’ paternalism to which French Jews would be subjected in the decades that followed.

Participants in the contest were asked to propose Jewish reform by tackling the following questions:

Si les changements qu'ils proposent peuvent s'accorder avec les lois religieuses et politiques des juifs, et avec leurs préjugés ; si une révolution dans leur constitution politique n'altérerait ce qu'il peut y avoir de louable dans leur constitution morale; si leur constitution physique ne s'opposerait point aux changements qu'on se proposerait de leur faire éprouver; si les lois religieuses, politiques et fiscales, ainsi que les préjugés populaires peuvent admettre les modifications dont on croirait la constitution des juifs susceptible.²⁰⁰

The three winning essays denounced the isolation and oppression of Jews in France and pleaded in diverse ways for their assimilation. The essay of Abbé Henri Grégoire (1750-1831), titled *The Physical, Moral and Political Regeneration of the Jews*, in which he professed that Jews could literally be made anew, became a reference for studies on Jewish regeneration, but behind the progressive message lay a violent attack on Jews.

Believing that Christians could regenerate Jews morally, their assimilation was necessary according to Grégoire in order to elevate those “parasites,” “vipers” and “vulture[s],” described as “cruel,” “pitiless,” and “fraudulent,” into French citizens.²⁰¹ Additionally, Grégoire faulted Judaism itself, which he saw as steeped in degenerative immorality. Yet Jews were a fertile testing ground: If reforming them could be accomplished, then humanity would have a manual for universalist possibilities. Grégoire was honored in

²⁰⁰ Quoted in Malino Frances, “Zalkind Hourwitz, Juif polonaise,” *Dix-huitième Siècle*, No.13, (1981): 82

²⁰¹ Abbé Henri Grégoire, *Essai sur la régénération physique, morale et politique des Juifs* (Paris, 1789; reprint, Paris: Flammarion, 1988), 52, 84, 96, 97, 147

the Pantheon by the French government as a model of ideals of universalism and human rights.

However, Grégoire's premise of Jewish degeneracy was endorsed by the founder of political Zionism, Theodor Herzl, who acknowledged that indeed "we were pushed into all the inferior occupations, we were locked up in ghettos where we caused one another's degeneration. And when they let us out, they suddenly expected us to have all the attributes of people used to freedom."²⁰² As we will see in the next chapters, Theodor Herzl's and Max Nordau's political Zionism was founded on the internalized anti-Semitic premise that Jewish bodies and minds had declined, decayed, and degenerated over the centuries as a result of persecution and life in the ghetto and had to be regenerated physically and morally. David Biale's book *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* tackles the Zionist myth of Jewish powerlessness and demonstrates that Jews throughout history were actively involved in political, social and military life. In his study of medieval Jewish societies, Biale notes a respect for military competence and the many situations in which access to weapons reflected the Jews' integration into the feudal social order.²⁰³

One of the three winning entries was written by Zalkind Hourwitz (1738-1812), a Jew from Poland. His *Apologie des Juifs* surprisingly received no similar acclaim, despite being a plea that defended the integrity of Judaism and Jews while calling for reforms that would transform Judaism and improve Jewish daily life.²⁰⁴ Though Hourwitz seeks an improvement of Judaism for the sake of Jews by calling for restrictions on rabbinical powers, he nonetheless provides a bitter critique of gentile society and rejects its tone of enlightened moral superiority over Jews:

²⁰² Rapahel Patai, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, (The Theodor Herzl Foundation, Inc, 1960), Vol. 1, 19

²⁰³ David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Publishing. Co, 1986)

²⁰⁴ M. Zalkind Hourwitz, *Apologie des Juifs: en réponse à la question: Est-il des moyens de rendre les Juifs plus heureux et plus utiles en France?* (Paris: Éditions d'histoire sociale, 1968)

Voilà cependant l'histoire de tout un peuple dans ce pays-ci; après l'avoir opprimé pendant plusieurs siècles, sans savoir pourquoi, on s'avise enfin de discuter sérieusement non s'il faut l'absoudre honorablement, et lui payer des dommages et intérêts pour sa longue oppression, mais s'il faut continuer à l'opprimer, ou s'il faut le mettre hors de cour et de procès!²⁰⁵

Hourwitz studied the six points raised by the contest, as if anticipating the twelve questions that would be posed by Napoléon two decades later. He explains the nature of Jewish life in gentile societies: a life that has been regulated outside political laws and enclosed in a network of loyalties founded on religious faith.

Hourwitz sees possibilities if Jews were allowed into the realm of citizenship, because political laws would be compatible with Mosaic and Talmudic Judaism. In what could be read as an ironic tone, Hourwitz states that it is Christians who hold stubborn prejudices over Jews only because they hold tightly to their religion: "... A l'égard des Chrétiens, qui, quoique plus éclairés que les Mahométans, sont cependant plus intolérants qu'eux envers les Juifs; en effet que doivent-ils penser des gens qui les oppriment, les détestent et les méprisent, uniquement à cause de leur religion (dont les principes est un pur théisme)."²⁰⁶

That which Christians wanted to alter or even vanquish for centuries, the Talmud, is in fact the source of the qualities that are recognizable in the Jews; thus, he continues, an amelioration of the Jewish political "condition" would not alter the core of their moral constitution.

Though Hourwitz enumerates Jewish vices, he refuses the narrative of Jewish degeneration and rejects the possibility of physical differences between Jews and non-Jews. Interestingly, he elaborates on the notion of Jewish honor, a quality Christians found lacking:

²⁰⁵ "Yet this is the story of a whole people in this country; after having oppressed them for several centuries, without knowing why, we finally decided to discuss seriously not whether to absolve them honorably, and to pay them reparations for their long oppression, but whether to continue their oppression, or perhaps dismiss their trial" (my translation).

²⁰⁶ "... With regard to the Christians, who, although more enlightened than the Mohammedans, are nevertheless more intolerant of the Jews than Mohammedans are; indeed what should they (Jews) think of people who oppress, hate and despise them, solely because of their religion (whose principles are pure theism)." (My translation) Zalkind Hourwitz, *Apologie des Juifs*, 29.

Il me reste à répondre à un troisième reproche qu'on fait Aux Juifs, c'est d'être sans ambition, et absolument insensibles à l'honneur et au mépris. Ce reproche est tout-à-fait gratuit; les gens de mérite sont estimés, les malhonnêtes et les ignorants sont méprisés parmi les Juifs, comme parmi les autres nations; ils ont aussi leurs disputes sur le pas dans la Synagogue; leurs docteurs, sans porter des bonnets carrés, n'en sont pas moins vains; il y en a qui supportent avec impatience de se voir le second dans leur communauté, comme César d'être celui de Rome. Si cette ambition ne les mène point à la véritable gloire, c'est que l'oppression leur en ferme le chemin.²⁰⁷

Hourwitz insists that Jews are as ambitious and vain as any other people, and that they too are sensitive to honor. He notes however that it is their understanding of honor that differs. He illustrates this point by referring to duels, known as *le point d'honneur*, which is a French Christian and (later secular European) practice:

Il est vrai qu'ils sont absolument insensibles à ce qu'on appelle proprement, *le point d'honneur*; mais c'est parce qu'ils croient bonnement avec Socrate qu'un honnête homme ne peut pas être déshonoré pour avoir été insulté par un brutal; que c'est le Gentilhomme qui paie ses dettes à coups de bâton qui est infâme, et non pas le Juif qui les reçoit; ils croient enfin que l'adresse d'escrimer n'est point une preuve de bravoure, ni la bravoure celle de l'honnêteté. Il faut avouer que ces préjugés des Juifs sont bien pardonnable, si l'on considère que les pirates barbaresques sont très-mauvais escrimeurs, très braves et très-malhonnêtes.²⁰⁸

Hourwitz positions Jewish rejection of duels to the acknowledgment that a brute cannot dishonor an honorable man. In a subtle way, Hourwitz employs a condescending tone to tell French Christians that Jews do not recognize bravery or honesty in the use of barbaric violence as a sign of honor. This is a practice that only French Christians regard as a gauge of honor.

²⁰⁷ M. Zalkind Hourwitz, *Apologie des Juifs*, 32. "I need to respond to a third reproach made against the Jews, which is to be without ambition, and absolutely insensitive to honor and contempt. This reproach is absolutely gratuitous; people of merit are esteemed, dishonest and ignorant ones are despised among Jews as among other nations; they also have their disputes on the steps of the Synagogue; their doctors, without wearing square caps, are as vain; there are those who do not bear to be second in their community, like Caesar to be that of Rome. If this ambition does not lead them to true glory, it is because oppression closes the way for them." (My translation)

²⁰⁸ M. Zalkind-Hourwitz, *Apologie des Juifs*, 33. "It is true that they are absolutely insensitive to what is called the *point d'honneur*; but it is because they honestly believe, like Socrates, that an honest man cannot be dishonored for having been insulted by a brute; that it is the Gentleman who pays his debts with punches who is infamous, and not the Jew who receives them; finally, they believe that the skill of fencing is not a proof of bravery, nor bravery a sign of honesty. We must admit that these prejudices of the Jews are very forgivable, if we consider that the barbaric pirates are very bad fencers, very brave yet very dishonest." (My translation)

In ancient Hebrew, the word *kavod* (honor) was linked to glory, particularly God's glory, 'Kavod Ha-Shem', and came to describe a feeling of holiness in defining the divine image of God in Judaic learning.²⁰⁹ Within the religious context, 'glory' defined man as a representation of God's divine image, a mirroring of inner holiness. In that sense, *kavod* had historically a religious and spiritual connotation that demanded humility from pious Jews in accepting all the hardships imposed upon them by God. Endurance of hardship was thus an act of honor. That act of honor was related to being morally upright, honest, and virtuous in one's relationship with God to avoid elevating one's own character and self-esteem and exhibiting an unreasonable conceit of superiority and pride.

A pious Jew should therefore shun the vices of honor, which include an element of pride, and strive for humility instead, which brings one closer to God. The normative Judaic ethos elevates 'humility' rather than pride as a fundamental characteristic of the human relationship to God, the spiritual connection between man and his Creator. This was set as a condition for moral behavior to honor God in the Jewish faith.²¹⁰ This view postulates that hardships in life ought to be met with humility, not pride and defiance, which were both corrupting human traits.²¹¹ The book of Micah includes humility among the three fundamental principles of Judaism: "He has told you, O man, what is good, And what the

²⁰⁹ For example, when Moshe asked God "Har'eni nah es kevodecha", translated as "Please show me Your Glory" (Sh'mot / Exodus 33:18), *kavod* was used here to define God's presence, infinity and glory.

²¹⁰ Ehud Luz, *Wrestling with an Angel: Power, Morality, and Jewish Identity* (Yale University Press, 2003), 32

²¹¹ In discussing pride and humility within Judaism, Daniel M. Nelson quotes the scholar and "father of the virtues" of piety and humility, Rabbi Yonah Gerondi (1200-1263), who particularly emphasized in his twelfth-century treatise *The Gates of Repentance* (Shaarei Teshuvah) the association of pride with wrongdoing: "pride results in many transgressions and brings one's evil inclination to bear more strongly upon him," and that "pride is the 'tillage of the wicked' [Prov. 21:4] in that sins sprout from it." Because of pride, "the poor is hotly pursued" (Psalms 10: 2), the righteous are slandered (Psalms 31: 19), and there is 'terror in the land of the living' (Ezekiel 32:26).²¹¹ Among the diverse understandings of humility in rabbinic Judaism, there seems to be a general agreement about the centrality of humility as a core principle of the Jewish faith.²¹¹ While pride is fueled with rebellion against God, humility is a crowning virtue.²¹¹ It is from this perspective that, although traditional rabbinical Judaism faced oppression in Europe, it was accepted as a manifestation of divine testing. As Hermann Cohen put it: "Suffering willingly endured proclaims the historical honor of the sufferer,"²¹¹ thus, by accepting earthly challenges, the pious Jew glorified God's presence and name and in so doing acquired honor. See Daniel M. Nelson, "Humility: The Virtue of Humility in Judaism: A Critique of Rationalist Hermeneutics," *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 13, No. 2, (Fall 1985): 298- 311. For more on the role of humility in Judaism, see: Ronald Green, "Jewish Ethics and the Virtue of Humility," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 1 (1973): 53-63 ; Herman Cohen, *Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism*, Trans. Simon Kaplan, (New York: Frederick Unger, 1972) and Mordecai Kaplan, "A Philosophy of Jewish Ethics," in *The Jews*, ed. Louis Finkelstein (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 32-64

Lord requires of you: Only to do justice And to love goodness, And to walk modestly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

Stanislas Clermont-Tonnerre (1757-1792), the revolutionary and protagonist of the struggle for Jewish emancipation, summarized the winning essays of the Metz competition as follows: "Grégoire had spoken as an ecclesiastical; (...) the Polish Jew alone had spoken like a philosopher." Perhaps more than his non-Jewish contemporaries, the 'Polish Jew' sought to safeguard some part of Jewish tradition before French universalism would set out to transform Jewishness into Frenchness.

On the eve of the French Revolution, there were approximately 40,000 Jews in France, who despite their relatively small number, were central to the debate of the regeneration of the French nation. The national idea born of the Revolution was itself new and exclusive, postulating the indivisibility of the French people and the country. The aspiration to change the very character of human beings, as Mona Ozouf has shown in *L'homme régénéré*, figured in the Revolution, such that the imposed centralism of the Revolution rejected any particularism, and in particular, the radical specificity of the Jews.²¹²

One source of modern French anti-Semitism and the rise of hatred against Jews at the beginning of the nineteenth century was the hostility of prominent figures to the revolutionary spirit and a yearning to return to Catholicism and to the privileges the monarchy granted them. This was true of the ultraroyalist Count Louis de Bonald (1754-1840), a staunch enemy of the revolutionaries and by default an opponent of the inclusion of Jews within the French nation. Bonald was a theorist of the counter-Revolution, who as a "deputé" during the Restoration sought to overturn the principles resulting from 1789. He longed to re-establish the monarchy and with it the church and nobility, so that France could

²¹² Mona Ozouf, *L'homme régénéré: essais sur la Revolution française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), 116-157

only be Catholic, noble, and purely French.²¹³ In 1806, the year Napoleon called the Assembly of Jewish Notables, Bonald wrote *Sur les Juifs*, wherein he stated that “Jews can never be, and *whatever one does, will never be* citizens under Christianity, without becoming Christian.”²¹⁴

Jewish Assimilation and Integration through Military Service

As faith was relegated to a private matter, the dethroning of the Catholic Church and the French Revolution created a possibility for Jews to conceive themselves fully as French citizens. Governed by exceptional laws that cemented their community solidarity, Jews would gradually leave their traditional communities and integrate into French society during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This process initiated a new mode of identification for Jews. They were forced to prove, to their compatriots and first of all to themselves, that one could be a good Frenchman without ceasing to be a Jew.

The now integrated Jews of France self-identified with the French nation, setting out a process of reconciliation between the two poles in which they found themselves: their belonging to the French nation, to which they proudly proclaimed their loyalty, and their affiliation to a community of faith and culture that defined their Jewishness. Such an effort opened the way to a particular mode of identification that tied the national to the confessional: Franco-Judaism or "israélitisme." The designation of "Israélite," considered a more noble designation, supplanted that of "Jew" with its presumed pejorative intonations.²¹⁵ Embracing the values of the republican regime, heir to 1789, the story of French Jewish

²¹³ David Klinck, *The French Counterrevolutionary Theorist, Louis de Bonald, 1754–1840* (New York, 1996). On Bonald and the Jews, see Arnold Ages, “Bonald and the Jews,” *Revue de l’Université d’Ottawa*, 44, no. 1 (1974): 32–43; and J. Hours, “Un précurseur oublié de l’antisémitisme français, le Vicomte de Bonald,” *Cahiers sioniens*, 4 (1950): 165–70.

²¹⁴ Louis de Bonald, “Sur les Juifs,” reproduced in *Mélanges littéraires, politiques et philosophiques*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1852), 369; original emphasis.

²¹⁵ Much used since the nineteenth century, the term "Israélite" fell into disuse after 1945 when the contours of Jewish identity were redefined. See: Georges Wormser, *Français israélites. Une doctrine, une tradition, une époque* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1963) and Dominique Schnapper, *Juifs et Israélites* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980)

scription takes place at the overlay of religious and historical templates that came together and rubbed up against each other in the nineteenth century.

The French Revolution opened the doors of citizenship to French Jews, paving the way for Jewish entrance into the military. Numerous studies have depicted the many debates that took place pre- and post-Revolution about the regeneration of French Jews by incorporating them into the social and legal body, which eventually led to granting them active citizenship.²¹⁶ This chapter builds on these studies to address the matter of the admittance of Jews to the military and the role this played in shaping their sentiment of belonging to the French nation and how notions of military honor came to shape Jewish Frenchness, leading to a strong sense of patriotism becoming part of Jewish identity.

The *Déclaration des droits de l'homme* of August 4, 1789 stirred immense hopes among the Jewish communities in France, as it did among other classes and populations of the nation. On December 23, 1789, Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794), one of the most prominent figures of the French Revolution, demanded at the National Assembly, in the presence of Abbé Grégoire, Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre, Antoine Barnave and Adrien Duport, that Jews be granted the right to vote: “Rendons-les au bonheur, à la patrie, à la vertu, en leur rendant la dignité d’hommes et de citoyens.”²¹⁷

Jews sent their delegates to the National Assembly with a series of addresses and requests. The French Jewish communities, the Sephardim of Bordeaux and Bayonne and the Ashkenazim of the northeastern provinces, were not unified and advanced different demands, according to their differing socio-political and economic realities.²¹⁸ Their active involvement in the process, despite their marginalization during the debates on their political fate, supports

²¹⁶ Ronald Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715–1815* (Berkeley, 2003); Maurice Samuels, *The right to difference: French universalism and the Jews* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016).

²¹⁷ Maximilien Robespierre, “Sur le droit de vote des Protestants, des comédiens et des Juifs,” Discours du 23 décembre 1789 à l’Assemblée constituante, Paris.

²¹⁸ For a detailed overview of the debates and request of the different Jewish communities in France at the time of the Revolution, see: Philippe Sagnac, “Les Juifs et la Révolution française (1789-1791),” *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine*, tome 1, No.3, (1899): 209-234

the argument that they actively sought to be part of the nascent national project early in the Revolution. Moreover, the assembly of the Commune of Paris acknowledged in 1790 that Jews were worthy of active citizenship, for among others, they joined the ranks of the Revolutionary National Guard with patriotic zeal: “Ils en sont digne par le zèle patriotique qui, dès le moment de la révolution, a transformé leur ame, les a couverts de l’armure civique, et en a fait de braves et infatigables soldates, entierement dévoués au salut et à la prospérité de la nation.”²¹⁹

Frances Milano provides evidence of the acculturation and integration of Jewish communities decades prior to the conferral of civic equality. The challenges posed by emancipation and its widely applied judicial procedures imposed on minority populations like the Jews a complex involvement and attachment to state and society. Despite the scattering of Jewish communities across France, Jews underwent the same process of internalizing the norms of legal culture as these related to commerce, torts, family, and inheritance. For Milano, Jewish emancipation was the culmination of pre-revolutionary development rather than simply a revolutionary logic. Jews advocated for and participated in their absorption in the state. The introduction of military service, which unified French social classes, was a crucial step toward the evolution of a more cohesive French Jewry.²²⁰

Though French Jewry did not possess a unified identity or belong to a single collectivity, according to sociologist Pierre Birnbaum, the Napoleonic reforms of the nineteenth century and service in the army offered Jews a trajectory to social integration: “In France, access to the state for Jews passed by way of the army first.”²²¹ Joseph Massad has

²¹⁹ M. Godard, “Discours prononcé le 28 Janvier 1790 par M. Godard, avocat au parlement, l’un des représentant de la commune,” in *Encyclopédie méthodique. Jurisprudence*, ed. Jacques Peuchet, Tome II, (Paris: Panckouck), 364 (Their patriotic zeal has, since the advent of the Revolution, transformed their souls and covered them in patriotic fervor, making out of them brave and tireless soldiers entirely devoted to the well-being and prosperity of the nation).

²²⁰ Frances Malino, *The Sephardic Jews of Bordeaux: assimilation and emancipation in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France* (University of Alabama Press, 1978). See also: Jay R. Berkovitz, “The Jews of France (1650–1815),” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe (Cambridge University Press, 2017), Chapter 34.

²²¹ Pierre Birnbaum, “Between Social and Political Assimilation: Remarks on the History of Jews in France,” in *Paths of Emancipation*, ed. Birnbaum and Katznelson (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 124

emphasised the crucial role of the military, with both its judicial and disciplinary functions, as a key institution of nationalism and the making of national identity and culture. The military, he tells us, is the most important homosocial nationalist institution within the confines of the nation-state, as “its role was to integrate a varied citizenry within the framework of national defense, the supreme duty of a nationalist.”²²²

Patriotism, in its most overt form, military service, offered a new mode of identification. When the law that turned Jews into French citizens was ratified, the Jews of France became French Jews. The Revolution made Jews “active citizens”; France was the first European country to emancipate them, a development admired by even the most fervent Zionists.²²³ Anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism were not eradicated the moment Jewish emancipation was declared. Jewish communities were wary of cheering too soon; yet their communities strove, with ardent patriotism and gratitude, to become French citizens and embrace France. In the words of the representative of the Saint-Roch community in 1791, after the vote in favor of Jewish emancipation: “Voilà votre patrie, votre Jérusalem, voilà la terre que Dieu a promise à nos ancêtres (...) et que juifs et Français ne soient plus qu’un seul et même peuple de frères.”²²⁴ The representative of Saint-Roch thus suggested that by fusing Jews to France, the Revolution had brought the metaphor of Jewish exile to an end.

The Jews as active citizens were among the most valiant defenders of their homeland. They enlisted in the revolutionary army and then became soldiers of the Emperor. By recognizing their equal rights, France granted them access to education as well as administrative and political jobs. Those who had left the Alsatian, Lorraine, and Comtadin

²²² Joseph Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 163

²²³ Chapters 4 and 5 elaborate on how Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau were fervent admirers of the French Revolution.

²²⁴ Quoted in Béatrice Philippe, *Etre juif dans la société française du Moyen-Age à nos jours*, (Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1997), 151. “This is your homeland, your Jerusalem, this is the land that God promised to our ancestors (...) May the Jews and the French be one and the same brotherly people” (My translation)

ghettos were now granted a military career, which led to their social advancement and an acceleration of their assimilation and secularization. Over the course of the Third Republic (1870-1940), thousands of Jews served in the French state as lawyers, judges, ministers, parliamentarians, and military officers, becoming what Birnbaum calls *juifs d'état*. The term evoked not only the social assimilation of French Jews but also the positions of prestige and authority they attained and their commitment and loyalty to the nation and its institutions.²²⁵

The integration of Jews into the French officer corps was a multilayered process that depended on the prestige of the military in France in the beginning of the eighteenth century, the establishment of meritocracy as a concept of revolutionary equality, and the intrinsic relationship between nationalism and militarism. Historian Derek J. Penslar writes that in a society that increasingly valued bourgeois social distinction and wealth, Jews pursued a military career with marked tenacity. Not only did a military uniform admit Jews from humble backgrounds into higher social classes, but it also became a path through which Jews could reconstruct their lives and that of their communities as French citizens and full members of the Republic. “A captain’s epaulets” Penslar comments, “were a source of considerable social capital.”²²⁶ This conception of integration and the fusion of Jewishness, understood in terms of cultural Judaism and Frenchness defined as the secular values of French civilization, ultimately led to a *judaïsme français*: “Infused with the French national spirit, Judaism was viewed as a vehicle for the expression of patriotic devotion.”²²⁷

²²⁵ Pierre Birnbaum, *Les fous de la République: Histoire politique des juifs d'État, de Gambetta à Vichy* (Paris: Fayard, 1992)

²²⁶ Derek J. Penslar, *Jews and the Military: a History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 104

²²⁷ Jay R. Berkovitz, *The Shaping of Jewish Identity in Nineteenth-Century France* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989)

3.2 French Jews in the Army:

Zionist physicality versus French Jewish Soldiers

Anti-Semitic representations of the Jewish body, as discussed earlier, depicted this body as degenerated, effeminate and weak. During the revolutionary debate on the emancipation of French Jews, questions were raised on whether the Jewish body could ever mesh with the French army, reinforcing the critiques of Jewish manhood. Napoleon's decrees of 1808, one of which prohibited Jewish men to pay for a replacement to perform their military duty, was meant to regenerate manliness in Jewish males and transformed them into virile, strong French soldiers.²²⁸ The question was not just about installing vigor in Jewish men but also whether they would be dedicated to serve the nation on a regular basis. The bishop of Nancy, Henri de la Fare, argued that the religious tenets of Judaism rendered its followers unfit to bear arms: "En ferez-vous des soldats? Leur religion leur défend de combattre le jour du sabbat."²²⁹

The enrollment of Jews in the National Guard units formed since the beginning of the Revolution challenged the factual basis of such claims, as did Napoleon's Grand Sanhedrin, which pushed Jewish leaders to affirm Jews' commitment and loyalty to military service in guaranteeing "to make Jews consider military service a sacred duty, and to declare to them that, during the time they are engaged in military service, the law exempts them from religious observances that are incompatible with bearing arms."²³⁰

Christopher Tozzi provides a lengthy and detailed overview of the participation of Jews in military activities before and after the Revolution, showing the ability of Jews to

²²⁸ Simon Schwarzfuchs, *Napoleon, the Jews, and the Sanhedrin* (London; Boston : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979)

²²⁹ Philippe Sagnac, "Les Juifs et la Révolution française (1789-1791)," 221 (Will you make soldiers of them? Their religion forbids them to fight on Sabbath. (My translation)

²³⁰ These principles were confirmed as civil law as well by an imperial decree of December 10, 1806, reproduced in *Collection des constitutions, chartes et lois fondamentales des peuples de l'Europe et des deux Amériques*, ed. P. A. Dufau, J.-B. Duvergier and J. Guadet, 6 vols. (Paris, 1821-25), 1:303-4.

fulfill the functions required of French citizens, including military service.²³¹ The numbers of “Jewish soldiering,” using Tozzi’s term, are significant too: “Sixty-nine Jews from Carpentras and Avignon, which had a Jewish population of about 2,500, enlisted in volunteer battalions or line regiments between July 1792 and November 1793, while fifty-one Jews served in just one battalion from the Haut-Rhin department.”²³² Jews who could not bear arms contributed to the nation in different ways, either by gathering donations for the army or by using their linguistic skills to gather intelligence on enemy troops, all “for the honor of the patrie.”²³³ Tozzi argues that the role of service in the army was crucial in generating a model of Franco-Jewish citizenship that became central to Jewish life in France during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

French Jews were recognized not only for their participation in military and state functions, but also for their commitment, skills, bravery, courage, and fervor in defending the homeland. Many Jews were awarded the highest French honor, the *legion d’honneur*, for their bravery on the battlefield. Penslar examined thousands of evaluations of Jewish officers and concluded that the French military possessed a contradictory nature: whereas anti-Semitism was certainly present in its midst and was expressed by some of its officers, it seems that to a considerable degree the military bureaucratic culture remained immune to it. Penslar provided an overview of the evaluations of Jewish officers made without bias, depicting the embodiment of military values:

“Very honorable... very capable in directing his battalion” (Captain Bernard Avraham, 1878); “has all the qualities of an engineer and of an eminent warrior: intelligent, courageous, vigorous, extraordinary (...)” (Captain Adolphe Hinstein, 1872); “Well-intentioned and has no weakness in dealings with his inferiors and demonstrates experience in the way he directs officers placed under his command. His value is real” (Abraham Auguste Samuel, 1881)²³⁴

²³¹ Christopher Tozzi, “Jews, Soldiering, and Citizenship in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France,” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 86, No. 2 (June 2014): 233-257

²³² Tozzi, “Jews, Soldiering, and Citizenship in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France,” 247

²³³ Tozzi, “Jews, Soldiering, and Citizenship in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France,” 249

²³⁴ Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, 107

Paradoxically, and in contrast with this ebullient integration of French Jews in French state-institutions and in society, Max Nordau perceived this French Jewish presence in the highest ranks of the French state as a delusion. He denounced this French Jewish response to anti-Semitic insults as the ultimate form of pathetic assimilation and cynically questioned whether “those brave hearts” foolishly believe that “Christians would consider their assimilation as authentic and honest.”²³⁵ Nordau went further and endorsed the anti-Semitic depiction of Jewish bodies as degenerate. Nordau’s Zionism portrayed Jews as lacking vitality, and he created an entire doctrine on strong male physicality and the need for Jewish bodies to be resurrected from degeneration and life in the ghetto. Nordau introduced the figure of the *Muskeljude*, the “muscular Jew,” a term he coined at the Second Zionist Congress in 1898: “Zionism revitalizes Judaism. In moral terms, it effects this by a rejuvenation of national ideals. With regard to the body, it does so by the physical education of its youth, who are once again going to create the muscular Jewry that has disappeared.”²³⁶

Individual physical exercise was necessary to model the new Zionist Jew after the strong, virile, brave Aryan gentile masculine body. Only two months after the congress, German Zionist students followed Nordau's suggestion and established on October 22, 1898 imperial Germany's first Jewish gymnastics club in Berlin. It was called Jewish Gymnasts’ Association Bar Kochba (*Jüdischer Turnverein Bar Kochba*), named after the leader of the second century AD Jewish revolt against Roman rule. The choice of the name was indirectly dictated by Nordau who believed that “for the first time since the struggle of Bar-Kochba does there exist among the Jews an inclination to show to themselves and to the world, how much vitality they still possess.”²³⁷ In his book *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration*, Todd Presner situates Nordau's focus on masculinity

²³⁵ Max Nordau, *Écrits Sionistes* (Paris : Librairie Lipschutz, 1936),77

²³⁶ Stenographic minutes of the second Zionist congress, 24, also in Max Nordau, *Max Nordau to his People: a summons and a challenge* (New York: Scopus Publishing Company, Inc., 1941), 88

²³⁷ Max Nordau, “Address at the Second Zionist Congress,” in *Max Nordau to his People*, 88.

and discipline in relation to the Jewish body within three concurrent phenomena in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century: increasing orientation toward racialization and eugenics, the entanglement of nationalism and the gymnastics movement, and the dialectic of modernity.²³⁸

Nordau and his French followers, who were seduced by his call for the revival of Jewish physical force, called for the establishment of “société de gymnastique” in Paris, with the aim of teaching Jews to avenge themselves: “Ce sera la mission des sociétés de gymnastique sionistes à apprendre à notre peuple comment il devra rencontrer l'ennemi. Elles lui apprendront de recevoir les coups debout, en face, pas dans le dos; elles lui enseigneront à les rendre quand cela deviendra nécessaire.”²³⁹ Nordau’s regenerationism was concerned with the 'Jewish national problem' that was associated with the ethnic characteristics of French Jews. He outlined the pedagogical advantages of physical education as a regenerative tool for the Jewish race.

For Nordau, physical improvement would reform the humiliated, beaten, and cowardly Jewish bodies:

Le relèvement physique du Juif est une des nécessités qui s'imposent le plus impérieusement à ceux qui sont soucieux du bon renom, de l'avenir et des destinées de notre nation. Le spectacle navrant, qu'offre aujourd'hui le Juif lâche, le Juif humilié, le Juif battu qui offre sa joue droite, le Juif aux membres délirés, est fait pour encourager l'audace brutale de l'ennemi.²⁴⁰

Nordau’s theory found little resonance among French Jews who did not perceive themselves as Nordau’s “poor devils,” the ghetto Jews, who “have nothing to eat, who live in wretched hovels, in dirt and in vitiated air.”²⁴¹ The French Jewish army officer had become the epitome

²³⁸ Todd Presner, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (New York: Routledge, 2007)

²³⁹ A. Rokeach, *L'Echo Sioniste*, 20 November 1900, 1-2 (“The Zionist Gymnastics Societies will be tasked with teaching our people how to meet the enemy. They will be taught to receive the blows standing, face to face, not in the back; they will be taught to return them when necessary.” My translation)

²⁴⁰ A. Rokeach, *L'Echo Sioniste*, 20 November 1900, 1-2 (“The physical revival of the Jew is one of the most imperative necessities of those who are concerned about the good reputation, the future and the destinies of our nation. The sad spectacle, offered today by the Jewish coward, the humiliated Jew, the beaten Jew who offers his right cheek, the Jew with delirous limbs, is only meant to encourage the brutal boldness of the enemy.” My translation)

²⁴¹ Max Nordau, “Address at the Fifth Zionist Congress,” in *Max Nordau to his People*, 136.

of Jewish masculinity and valor, and Jews had plenty of powerful figures in the French body politic to represent them and epitomize a heroic stature of French Jews in the nation. The renewal of Judaism in Europe through the regeneration of Jewish bodies that Nordau professed was met with rejection by the French Jewish assimilative project, which was then well under way. Jewish assimilation was a powerful antidote to Nordau's Zionist performance as it was an individual enterprise that relied on freeing the individual. French Jews had abandoned the metaphor of the ghetto and saw in Nordau's Zionism an attempt to return them to the ghetto by regrouping them into a Jewish body and nation.

In order to impose the idea of the unity of a Jewish "people," Herzlian Zionism had to overcome diasporic heterogeneity and the allegiance of individual Jews to the states to which they belonged. We know how difficult this task was in France, where the full acquisition of republican citizenship, based on a model of individual integration, made the French Israelites largely impervious to both Zionism and the idea of 'a Jewish nation'. French historian Catherine Nicault explains that the French emancipatory act, strongly idealized by French Jews, functioned as a contract between the Republic and Jewishness, which safeguarded to a certain degree Franco-Judaism from the anti-Republicans' anti-Semitism. Thus, faced with Zionism, which generated artificial contradictions in Jewish identity, the established Franco-Judaic identity was able to maintain a satisfactory relationship with the nation, the state and Jewishness: "elle rend loisible d'assumer dans l'honneur une identité double et unique à la fois. Elle seule paraît capable, dans un monde moderne qui sacrifie tout à la rationalité, d'assurer la pérennité de l'identité juive."²⁴² As Theodor Herzl bitterly expressed to France's Chief Rabbi Zadoc Kahn (1839-1905), "French Jews are hostile to the project. I wasn't expecting anything else. Their situation here is too good for them to consider a change ... I

²⁴² Catherine Nicault, *La France et le sionisme, 1897-1948 : une rencontre manquée?* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1992), 6. "Assimilation allowed to adopt with honor a dual and unique identity at the same time. It alone seemed capable, in a modern world which sacrifices everything to rationality, of ensuring the sustainability of Jewish identity" (My translation)

will say in conclusion that, for us, the French Israelites - if such really exists - are not Jews and that our cause does not concern them.”²⁴³

Nationalism, Militarism and Masculinity tied to Honor

The 1789 French revolution brought an end to the *Ancien Régime* and transferred the concept of sovereignty from the monarch to the nation (*patrie*). From that moment on, the nation would gradually embody all citizens on French soil and integrate the individual into the sphere of the nation state. The newly established individual liberties and national sovereignty needed to be protected and unified, and thus the creation of a centralized powerful state and a cohesive sovereign authority were a necessity. The centralization that occurred progressively overturned feudal laws and allowed the implementation of a national law code. Consequently, following Max Weber’s definition of the state as a human community that lays claim to the monopoly of legitimate violence within a particular territory,²⁴⁴ the newly established French state sought to channel, control and monopolize popular arming. Since the French Revolution, a new concept of the *state* evolved around “the transition from revolutionary popular arming to state-controlled military service.”²⁴⁵

As the French nation-state rose out of the ashes of feudalism, its development implied understanding the essential features of modernity. Whilst European countries were violently forging their borders and concurrently expanding their imperial presence, nationalism, militarism and masculinity were being constructed in tandem with the integration of the individual into the modern nation state. The structural, social and cultural construction of citizenship, democracy, state power, nationalism and militarism were being forged as masculinist projects, monopolized by men and their interests and their notions of

²⁴³ Patai, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. 1, 274-275

²⁴⁴ Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures* (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2004), 33

²⁴⁵ Thomas Hippler, *Citizens, Soldiers and National Armies: Military Service in France and Germany, 1789—1830* (Routledge: Abingdon, 2007), 3

manliness.²⁴⁶

The emerging French republic used military service as one of a series of transformational processes to achieve national synthesis. Conscription became an identifier between contradicting aspects of political life fashioning a new civic subjectivity. The history of militarism accounts therefore for understanding modern subjectivity, recounts historian Thomas Hippler, “As it is an institution that integrates the individual directly into the sphere of political ‘power-circulation’, military service provides an ideal field for a nominalistic analysis of history.”²⁴⁷ The military’s ulterior motive was to homogenize and consolidate the nation and find ways to merge social classes under one roof.

The army in France at this time became a testing field and battleground between monarchists and republicans, as the final monarchist sentiment was well prevailing and represented in the military. The dueling nobility and the state-building republicans were competing over the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence, generating a constant tension between particular class interests and the claims for equality. The political turmoil that France faced in that period and the following decades, and specially the return of the monarchy during the Restoration, would spur the emergence of romanticism and neo-medievalism and an idealization of the code of chivalry with a re-enactment of the medieval knight projected onto the figure of the military officer.

This renaissance of ‘manliness’ in the second half of the eighteenth century would be institutionalized into such an organization as the army which embodied male codes of honor.²⁴⁸ George Mosse identifies with the fall of the *Ancien Régime* an upsurge of a modern ideal of virility and ‘normative masculinity’ that would be constructed around ‘manly virtues’ such as honour, courage, dignity, discipline, competitiveness, sang-froid, persistence,

²⁴⁶ Robert W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987)

²⁴⁷ Hippler, *Citizens, Soldiers and National Armies*, 5

²⁴⁸ Robert A. Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honour in Modern France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993)

willpower, adventurousness, and sexual virility tempered with restraint, which would structure the spheres of representations in all European societies. In the complexity of establishing normative masculinity, the middle classes would play a large role, through their aspirations as well as their obsessions. However, this crystallized ideal of masculinity and virility could only be built in opposition to “counter-types” such as the physically disabled or the feminized Jews.²⁴⁹ With the creation of bourgeois gender roles and images of sexuality, anti-Semites would ascribe “femininity” to Jewish men as a means of depriving them of their masculinity. Several studies have identified the evolution of stereotypes that emasculate the Jewish male in nineteenth century Europe, depicting him as hysterical, effeminized, degenerate and unfit for military service.²⁵⁰

The influence of a romanticist approach highlighted both the unique characteristics of the nation as created over centuries or millennia, imagining itself as a national community of common origin and future political destiny, and the bond between humans and the territory they perceive as their homeland.²⁵¹ All of these entangled processes pervaded French political rhetoric that was transitioning from a society based on differences in privilege to a contractual society that centers the citizen and the state. Nationalism and masculinity became the new secular space that defined society. In the age of nationalism, the willingness to fight as and for the collective is an utmost indication of national identity epitomized in defending the ‘honor of the nation’. The military as ‘school of manly virtues,’ Hippler tells us, spread a hegemonic masculinity embodied by “courage, subordination and honor and was thus one of the social settings in which gender difference was produced and reproduced on an institutionalized level both in a psychological and in a political sense.”²⁵²

²⁴⁹ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996)

²⁵⁰ Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), John M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science In Fin-De-Siecle Europe* (New York and London: Yale University Press, 1994) and Todd Samuel Pressner, *Muscular Judaism* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007)

²⁵¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, UK: Verso, 1991)

²⁵² Hippler, *Citizens, Soldiers and National Armies*, 7

Honor by the nineteenth century had a well-entrenched sociological narrative that depicts it as giving way to modern conceptions of the equal dignity of individual persons, in spite of being an aristocratic concept influenced by the medieval codes of chivalry rooted in the social structures of feudalism. The new French state was being developed around these notions of honor, as “concepts of honor have survived into the modern era best in groups retaining a hierarchical view of society, such as the nobility, the military and traditional professions like law and medicine.”²⁵³ The democratization of the aristocratic notion of honor after the French Revolution allowed every brave male citizen, irrespective of birth or rank, to distinguish himself in defense of the motherland or by serving the state.²⁵⁴

Honor becomes a conceptual assemblage that, in such a context of conflicting and competitive perspectives, ties informed understandings and performances of nationalism, masculinity, militarism, and sexuality together. In other words, honor became the thread that connected the threefold relationship between the nation, the state and the individual together. The nineteenth century, in which dueling materialized honor across performativity and physical violence, reflects more or less precisely the actual *Zeitgeist*. The duel, “a ritualized act of force between two men for the purpose of reciprocal preservation of honor,”²⁵⁵ was the embodiment of militarism, nationalism and masculinity, all woven together through honor.

It is imperative to recognize the structure of feeling and the political economy that honor entailed. Why, despite the cult of Reason that the French Revolution called for and promoted, throughout the nineteenth century and until the Great War, have so many seemingly sane men taken the risk of putting their lives on the line, by wanting to mend their spoiled honor and tying it to the uncertainties of a brief battle? The answer to this question is

²⁵³ Peter Berger, “On the Obsolescence of the Concept of Honor,” *European Journal of Sociology* Vol. 11, No. 2 (1970): 339-347

²⁵⁴ William M. Reddy, *The Invisible Code: Honor and Sentiment in Postrevolutionary France, 1814-1848* (University of California Press, 1997), 10

²⁵⁵ Ute Frevert, “The Taming of the Noble Ruffian: Male Violence and Dueling in Early Modern and Modern Germany,” in *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor and Rituals in Modern Europe and America*, ed. Pieter Spierenburg (Ohio State University Press, 1998), 37

multilayered. The forthcoming liberal democracy with its market economy, its state institutions and the idea of the nation are all embodied in the duel. French historian François Guillet states that it is therefore no coincidence that many calls for duels were issued by what he calls the “professionnels de la démocratie,” journalists and parliamentarians. The development of the press and parliamentary life widened public life beyond the courtyard and the literary salons. The creation of a new “public square,” a new place for debate, Guillet tells us, affected and shifted the boundaries between private and public life in a society which has not yet learned to separate the two and where, consequently, everything became personal and an attack on one’s honorability. Consequently, the new professions such as journalist and deputy needed to acquire the necessary prestige to position themselves in the public sphere.²⁵⁶

The revival of the discourse of honor and the contentions around reputation in France in the nineteenth century, as Nye has shown, were sustained by ritual practices and “a set of social and political values that adapted it to a new democratic order.”²⁵⁷ After the defeat of 1870, it is militarism and collective anxiety that have generated an imaginary focusing more on the power of the sword. Fencing became a prestigious activity and the duel the prerogative of journalists and politicians.²⁵⁸ In particular, Nye describes the buoyance of the practice of 'Duels of honor': as the duel had been adopted by middle-class men and integrated into bourgeois society, disagreements in parliament which turned into political rifts, allegations in newspapers, or insinuations of sexual impropriety could all lead to duels. This evolution is already discernable under the July monarchy but the rapid development of the press into real mass media from the 1860s gave the duel an energetic impulse whose momentum would continue for decades. The press would embellish and report on high-profile duels, and

²⁵⁶ François Guillet, *La Mort en face. Histoire du duel de la Révolution à nos jours* (Paris, Aubier : Collection historique, 2008).

²⁵⁷ Robert A. Nye, Fencing, “The Duel and Republican Manhood in the Third Republic,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 25, No. 2/3 (May -June, 1990): 366.

²⁵⁸ François Guillet, *La Mort en face. Histoire du duel de la Révolution à nos jours* (Paris, Aubier, Collection historique, 2008).

national newspapers such as *Le Figaro* prepared journalists for challenges by installing fencing rooms in their buildings.

On April 23, 1886, French newspapers reported on the dispute between ‘Monsieur Drumont’ and the newspaper *Le Monde*, after the publication of Édouard Drumont’s *La France juive*. The editor-in-chief of *Le Monde*, M.A. de Claye, stated that this book not only contains many attacks that the newspaper does not endorse, but that it has triggered many duels: “On sait, d'autre part, que le livre de M. Drumont a donné lieu à un premier duel avec M. Charles Laurent et qu'un second duel est annoncé entre M. Drumont et M. Arthur Meyer, directeur du Gaulois.”²⁵⁹ In the letter of resignation that Drumont had sent to de Claye, the antisemitic journalist wrote that as a “fils respectueux de l’église”, it was his duty to expose and attack the “bande franc-maçonnique et juive qui, après avoir ruiné la France, rendu notre pays le jouet de l'Europe, n'a de courage que contre nos saints prêtres, nos frères et nos religieuses,” but luckily there is a chest behind every signature, whether his or that of his opponents:

Avec le ton qu'ont pris les polémiques actuelles, il est impossible à celui qui veut écrire l'histoire véridique et sincère des infamies de notre temps de ne pas employer les personnalités envers les misérables qui insultent chaque jour tout ce qui nous est cher et sacré, qui couvrent d'ignominies ces nobles filles de la charité que les sauvages eux-mêmes respectent. Mais, derrière ces personnalités, le monde, tel qu'il est fait, cherche une signature et derrière cette signature une poitrine.²⁶⁰

The desire to keep death at bay goes hand in hand with a conjunction of fascination and dread with the domestication of violence. For the nation-state, there was no a question of putting an end to violence, but only an intent to pacify relations between its citizens and to claim a monopoly on violence and the carrying of arms. However, for a fairly long period of time, the nation-state tolerated these dangerous playoffs, which were seen as a means of maintaining the manly qualities of the nation and the fighting spirit of men.

²⁵⁹ M.A. de Claye, “La France Juive – Lettre des réflexions,” *Les Temps*, 23 Avril 1886

²⁶⁰ Édouard Drumont, “La France Juive,” *Les Temps*, 23 Avril 1886

The "nationalization" of virility and masculinity required that the citizen-soldier be restrained and disciplined, while maintaining his masculine qualities. At the heart of the controversy over the duel, there is a value held to be intrinsically masculine: honor. Ute Frevert's classic social and cultural study of the duel in Germany shows how the aristocratic code of honor was interwoven with emerging nationalism. The state tolerated this economy of private violence as the longing for a readiness to defend one's honor with life and limb, and in the same vein, defend one's nation's honor with the same ferocity and violence.²⁶¹ As a consequence of this flurry of the duel, this matter that involved one's honorability, a law on Libel (*diffamation*) was voted on July 29, 1881 that would prosecute anyone who caused harm to the honor or esteem [à l'honneur ou à la considération] of a person.

3.3 French Jewish Patriotism or the Armand Mayer duel

By the mid 1850s, the main attacks of anti-Semites, along with the call for a return to Catholicism, were directed against Judaism as a contested religion, and against Jewish finance, or simply put, it was mostly about the rivalry between "baptized" and "circumcised" capital.²⁶² Though socio-professional categories were also attacked as were the Jewish migrants arriving from Germany and Eastern Europe, the military remained the sole category safe from anti-Semitic insinuations and implications.

The successive political and military scandals in the nineteenth century, including the French defeat of 1870-1871 and the enrollment of Jews in the army, provided grounds for anti-Semitic calls to remove all elements of treason from the honorable French military. The pattern of questioning the loyalty of Jews in the French military was thus set in motion long before the Dreyfus Affair. Edouard Drumont, the editor of the anti-Semitic *La Libre Parole*,

²⁶¹ Ute Frevert, *Men of honour: A social and cultural history of the duel* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995)

²⁶² To use the words of Achille Loria, professor of Political Economy at the University of Padoue in his essay "Les bases économiques de l'antisémitisme". See his reply in French to L'Enquête sur l'Antisémitisme by Henry Dagan (Paris Stock 1899), 15-17.

thought that the French Republic and its Catholic people were submitted to the intrinsic harmfulness of Jews. The next scandal to shake France was about to unfold: on May 23, 1892, Drumont wrote an article titled “Les Juifs dans l’armée” in which he stated that “the day they [the Jewish officers] command the army and communicate the plans for mobilization to Rothschild, we can understand why.”²⁶³

Editors of *La Libre Parole* and the Marquis de Morès (1858-1896),²⁶⁴ founder of the Anti-Semitic League of France, called for the exclusion of Jews from the French army on grounds of disloyalty to the nation and challenged any Jewish protestor to a duel. Duels provided anti-Semites with ways to initiate polemics within the ranks of the French army and turn a military confrontation into a confrontation in which the honor of the nation was played out. Indeed, many followers of Drumont, often better trained anti-Semitic aristocrats, provoked Jews into duels, sending them to their deaths. As a result, Captain Crémieu-Foa, a Jewish officer of the cavalry, the most aristocratic of France’s military corps, challenged Drumont to a duel: “By insulting the three hundred French officers in active duty who belong to the Israelite cult,” he wrote to him, “you insult me personally”, to which Drumont replied: “*Que les officiers juifs blessés par nos articles désignent parmi eux le nombre de délégués qu’ils voudront, nous leur opposerons un nombre égal d’épées françaises.*”²⁶⁵

Dueling was the code of honor of aristocrats and now of the army; it is therefore important to note that Captain André Crémieu-Foa did not challenge Drumont because he felt offended as a Jew, but he raised his sword against those who denied him his right to be a French soldier. Penslar elucidates that “Anti-Semitism lay behind this whole sorry chain of

²⁶³ Edouard Drumont, “Les Juifs dans l’armée,” *La Libre Parole*, 23 May 1892. Accessible on Retronews: <https://www.retronews.fr/journal/la-libre-parole/23-mai-1892/691/1952877/2>

²⁶⁴ The Marquis de Morès, a former army officer and aristocrat, would partake in anti-Semitic activities and spread these ideas as a colonial officer in North Africa where he was killed in Tunisia. See Robert F. Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France* (New York: H. Fertig, 1969), 225-250; Steven S. Schwarzschild, “The Marquis de Morès, the story of a failure,” *Jewish Social Studies* 22, 1 (January 1960): 3–26.

²⁶⁵ “Let the Jewish officers offended by our articles designate a number of delegates, and we will oppose them with an equal number of French swords”; quoted in “Mayer, the Forgotten Dreyfus,” *Le Nouvel Observateur*, July 1993

events, but so did an obsessive yearning for male honor, a yearning that Jewish officers in France were allowed to fulfill.”²⁶⁶ The Jewish soldier was now not only proof of social acceptance, but also an affirmation of French Jewish patriotism and masculinity.

The fact that the military is an arm of state power needs to be emphasized, as the Jewish officer now became part of the collective authority: “If the conscript belongs existentially to the state, the state conversely belongs to the conscript. And this mutual relationship of belonging and service involves the exercise of sovereign rights.”²⁶⁷ The French Jew would now embody and enter the space that historically belonged to the French Christian knight; except now, he, the Jew, would be responsible of disciplining bodies. But there is more to the conscription of Jews in the French army. Honor would be one of the elements that would forge the identity of the French nation state in the nineteenth century and with it, that of French Jewish masculinity. Hence there is something very specific about choosing to duel as a Jew: There is an elevation, not only socially but also morally.

There is a very intimate relationship between Theodor Herzl’s Zionism and his admiration of the conventionally European heterosexual and aggressive practice of dueling. Herzl, the professed godfather of Jewish Zionism, found in the nobility’s code of honor a mode of identification with aggressive masculinity to counter the anti-Semitic pathologization of feminized manhood that linked Jewishness to femininity. Herzl was tenacious in his consistent identification with aggressive manhood as a means of self-reform and escape from Jewish otherness. When anti-Semitism asserted the incompatibility of Jewishness and masculinity, Herzl responded by embracing the latter as an escape from the former.

Surely, the philosophy of race and gender characterized by either the effeminized Jew or Nordau’s *Muscular Jew* erases the complex ambiguities and perplexities of Jewish male

²⁶⁶ Penslar, *Jews and the military*, 98

²⁶⁷ Hippler, *Citizens, Soldiers and National Armies*, 3

identity. Simply put, the traditional Jewish male strives to be a “*mensch*,” as Barbara Breitman explains it in “Lifting up the Shadow of Anti-Semitism: Jewish Masculinity in a New Light” as she explores the damage done to Jewish psyches by the internalization of anti-Semitism. The emasculation or psychological castration of Jewish men by an anti-Semitic culture precludes the positive identification with one's ancestors needed for one's own psychological development. Anti-Semitism in many ways has the effect of reversing masculine and feminine archetypes, as the “blond beast” comes to exercise power over “feminized” men. Breitman documents the devastating personal effects of these conflicting imperatives, and argues that they have also distorted Jewish theology.²⁶⁸

Herzl internalized this anti-Semitic psychological castration and, in his attempt to alter it, turned first to German nationalist fraternities and then finally made the big jump to Jewish nationalism, as the masculinity he was striving for could only be found in the violence embedded in nationalism, and eventually in colonialism. In the age of nationalism, the question whether one could be honorable without a nation was central to both Herzl and Nordau. Additionally, the question of an honorable nation-state was a gendered question.

By insisting on the image of the weak and dishonorable Jew, Herzl and Nordau reinforced a Zionist historical self-representation of Jews as people who were passive rather than pacifist. Fighting duels and mastering violence, preferably on a nation of their own, would allow Jews into the realm of honor; the only way to cure them. Herzl was convinced that by fighting duels, thus by asserting masculine violence, Jews would defend their honor and gain gentile recognition. In Herzl's hypothetical state, Jewish soldiers were trained aristocratic duelists: “I need dueling in order to have real officers and to impart a tone of French refinement to good society.”²⁶⁹ Hence for Herzl and Nordau, the question was not

²⁶⁸ Barbara Breitman, “Lifting up the Shadow of Anti-Semitism: Jewish Masculinity in a New Light,” in *A Mensch Among Men: Explorations in Jewish Masculinity*, ed. Harry Brod (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1988), 101-117.

²⁶⁹ Patai, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. 1, 58

whether Jews could become strong, virile soldiers, as French Jewish army officers proved that possibility, but one of gentile recognition of the possibility of an Aryan Jewish nationalism. The Zionist leaders drafted an ideology that emphasized the notion that militarism cures Jewishness, but could honor be truly possessed without a nation of one's own recognized by Gentiles?

By the end of the nineteenth century, Jews formed barely 0.25 percent of France's population, yet they counted for 3 to 4 percent of the entering classes into the Ecole Polytechnique, France's prestigious institution for the training of officers in the artillery and engineering corps.²⁷⁰ Captain Armand Meyer, a young Jewish captain in the French army's Engineering Corps and a graduate of the prestigious *École Polytechnique*, replaced Captain Crémieu-Foa at the duel when the later was prevented from fighting by the military authorities. The duel ended in the tragic death of Captain Meyer at the hands of the Marquis de Morès, a quasi-professional swordsman.²⁷¹ Nordau considered the death of Captain Meyer as the first augur of catastrophes to come.²⁷² He accused French Jews of turning the other cheek, of remaining silent in the face of injustice, a consequence of the degeneracy caused by life in the ghetto. Yet by the time the Mayer-Morès duel took place, Jews had at least 100 years of military service in France, in several areas and forms. French Jews did raise their voices, albeit as honorable Frenchmen, to the dismay of Nordau.

French Jewish Honor defined in French Patriotism

The death of Armand Mayer evoked immense emotion across France, with tens of thousands of Parisians lining the streets for the funeral cortège; people perceived it as a direct

²⁷⁰ Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, 97

²⁷¹ The marquis de Morès was tried on 29 August 1892. The lawyer defending him was Edgar Demange, a devout Catholic and strong supporter of the French Army, who, two years later, defended Dreyfus at his court martial (1894). The president of the court was Albert Delegorgue, who, four years later, presided at Zola's trial. It was confirmed that Morès had flouted dueling conventions by using a heavy battle sword. See: Michael R. Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation: the Jewish Community in France at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 196–198

²⁷² Anna Nordau, *Max Nordau: a biography* (New York: The Nordau Committee, 1943), 327

attack on the honor of the nation. Mayer's funeral attracted unprecedented crowds repelled by the officer's pointless death. The newspaper, *Le XIXe Siècle*, which had exposed the "Le Scandale des Déclarations d'Honneur," wrote an obituary of Armand Mayer on June 23, 1892, denouncing the shedding of French blood of "Un officier alsacien (ou plutôt lorrain) aura été la première victime des antisémites (...). Il n'est pas possible que cette campagne antipatriotique continue et qu'on laisse, non pas seulement l'honneur des hommes publics, mais l'unité morale de l'armée et la paix religieuse de ce pays à la disposition d'une association pareille."²⁷³

The *Archives Israélites*, a weekly Jewish newspaper which dedicated the entirety of its June 30, 1892 edition to the honorable 'martyr' Armand Mayer, added "Alsacien-Lorrain, par conséquent doublement Français, par la naissance et par l'adoption; Israélite, c'est-à-dire patriote, mais dont l'épée, au lieu de servir à la défense et au relèvement du pays, a été brisée par suite d'une de ces traditions barbares du moyen âge."²⁷⁴ There are two points of importance here: first, that Mayer was from Alsace-Lorraine, the territory lost to Germans during the war, and thus twice as French and second, that his sword should have rather been used for the defense and the "revival" of the nation.

The significance of the origins of Mayer, as a Jew from Alsace-Lorraine whose family members served in the army and had left Alsace after its annexation by Germany in 1871, thus indicated more than a public acknowledgment of his tragic loss: his death at the hands of an anti-Semite was framed as a dishonor to the French nation by the public and the French state. Hence the life of a Jew from Alsace-Lorraine was "elevated" to equal the life of a French patriot and soldier who fought until his last breath for the honor of his country. In

²⁷³ "An Alsatian (or rather Lorraine) officer is the first victim of anti-Semites (...) This anti-patriotic campaign should not continue and we should not leave, not only the honor of public representatives, but also the moral unity of the army and the religious peace of this country at the disposal of such an association." (My translation)

²⁷⁴ Isodore Cahen, "Un Martyr!," *Archives Israélites*, No. 26, 30 June 1892. "From Alsace-Lorraine, therefore double as French, by birth and by endorsement; Israelite, that is to say a patriot, but whose sword, instead of being used for the defence and the revival of the country, was broken as a result of one of these barbaric traditions of the Middle Ages." (My translation).

Michael Marrus' account of the aftermath of the duel, Captain Mayer became a national hero and “a symbol of Jewish devotion to the nation.”²⁷⁵ Remarkably, Nordau would denounce French Jews for “becoming so sincerely French that each of their ideals coincide with that of the French state,” where they had to shun their Jewish heritage because “a return to Palestine” would mean they would cease to be French or they would have to become French colonizers.²⁷⁶

Nordau continued to target the Jews of Alsace in a speech he gave in French at the *Union Scolaire* a few years later. Sarcastically, Nordau noted that, surrounded by the magnificent solidarity of the French people, the Jew from Alsace believed in his oneness with the nation, since the French were able to regenerate the ghetto Jews of Alsace through political rights and equality. However, the emancipated and highly educated Jews of Alsace “did not know about the distinction between the national side and the religious side of Judaism.”²⁷⁷ In sum, Nordau asserted that what needed to be revived, was not loyalty to the French nation but loyalty to Zionism.

Mayer's funeral saw a great outpouring of patriotic fervor as the casket was accompanied by senior military officers, headed by General Borius “Commandant de l'École Polytechnique, accompanied by an officer of the Ministry of War and a governor representing the city of Paris, followed by troops of soldiers “coiffés en bicornes, jugulaire au menton, crepe au bras et épée au clair” to perform “les honneurs militaires.”²⁷⁸ Nearly all the French press as well as the French government opposed and denounced the shameful claims and acts of Drumont and Morès, resulting in a blow to the antisemitic movement.

²⁷⁵ Michael R. Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation: a study of the French Jewish community at the time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 196–201.

²⁷⁶ Nordau, *Écrits Sionistes*, 49.

²⁷⁷ Nordau, *Écrits Sionistes*, 60.

²⁷⁸ “Les funérailles,” *Archives Israélites*, No. 26, 30 June 1892, 205.

Mayer's death was widely recognized as an act of bravery, an emblem of honor to the French nation, which reaffirmed national unity and a national consciousness that embraces all its children "that defend its flag and are inspired by its greatness." The minister of war, Charles de Freycinet, rose in the Chamber of Deputies to condemn antisemitism for sowing divisions between French army officers, calling it a "national crime," because "the French army does not distinguish between Israelites, Protestants and Catholics. It only has French officers."²⁷⁹ Jewish spokesmen, including the Grand Rabbi of France, Kahn, reaffirmed Mayer's loyalty and dedication to his country – and through him, that of the French Jewish community- and saw in his actions the devotion of an honorable soldier to his country.

Theodore Herzl reported in the *Neue Freie Presse* on the Drumont-Mayer tragedy and noted that he regretted "the death of a man of honor, Captain Mayer":

... and if a Jew carries native cunning to the point of sacrificing his life in a noble and knightly manner, he will earn widespread murmurs of approval. This is more or less what happened to Captain Mayer: even his opponent, the Marquis de Mores, declared that he 'regretted the death of this honorable man.'²⁸⁰

The anti-Semite Marquis de Morès recognized that French Jews possessed French honor, and so did Herzl. However, his reading of the Mayer-Morès duel projected his own aspirations for Jewish separatism and exceptionalism. Herzl saw in Mayer's participation in the duel a sign of Jewish transcendence of ancient traits and habits: Jews had finally reached a certain level of self-assertion and transformation. In Herzl's eyes, the only reason Mayer participated in the duel was to transcend Jewish cowardice and acquire Aryan German-like traits, such as vigor, strength, and pride; even if he does not have them, by participating he at least breaks the old curse of all Jews and turns the Jew into an honorable man.

The massive outpour of national recognition for Mayer was only, in Herzl's view, because he transcended his Jewishness and showed courage. Had he not done so, the French

²⁷⁹ *Archives Israélites*, No. 26, 30 June 1892, 205

²⁸⁰ Theodor Herzl, "Französische Antisemiten," *Neue Freie Presse*, 3 September 1892

nation would have considered him just another Jewish coward and even worse, an Alsatian Jewish traitor. But Mayer was sensitive to his Jewish honor and thus Herzl concludes in regard to Mayer's posthumous honors: "A Jew can certainly not ask for more without appearing greedy." Captain Mayer was a "man of honor" in Herzl's narrative because he chose, despite having an injured arm, to fight to an honorable death. Yet the reconstruction of the events that led to the duel tell a different story: Mayer was caught in the spectacle of a duel which had been initiated by Drumont and Captain Crémieu-Foa, who faced Morès as a proud French soldier would in loyalty to his superior.

Two years later, Herzl used the Mayer tragedy as the basis of this play *The New Ghetto*, and Max Nordau seems to have used the death of Mayer as an inspiration for his novel *Dr Kohn* (translated as *A Question of Honor*).²⁸¹ Although most historians agree that it was the Dreyfus Affair that transformed Herzl into a Zionist, historian Jacques Kornberg and author Georges Yitzhak Weisz have suggested that the Mayer-Morès tragedy might actually have been the trigger. I would add that Max Nordau too was deeply affected by the Mayer affair, so much so that in fact, he wrote his play to attack French Jewry and evoke a new concept of "Jewish honor," which he presented as a new sort of Jewish political strategy.

French Jewish Patriotism versus Zionist Nationalism

In that period of time, the majority of assimilated French Jews saw no contradiction between their belonging to the French national community and practicing their faith, which were two not only compatible sets of beliefs but also consubstantial; leading to an outspoken lack of interest in Herzl's Zionism and anti-Zionist rejection. The words of journalist Émile Berr in *le Figaro* of September 4, 1897 are indicative of the position taken by the majority of France's anti-Zionists:

²⁸¹ Both plays are discussed in Chapter 4 and 5.

Le sionisme - ne riez pas - s'est donné pour programme la reconstitution du royaume de Juda. L'invention est due à un petit groupe d'Israélites spirituels et irascibles, qui ont rêvé de jouer aux antisémites du monde entier la farce. De s'en aller, j'entends de s'en aller de partout, de désertier les insuffisantes patries où la sécurité des consciences et des intérêts juifs semblent désormais en péril, et de se donner rendez-vous, à l'abri des malveillances et des haines en quelque coin vacant de Palestine ou d'ailleurs, où l'antique patrie juive serait, au profit de ses émigrants, recréée. Détail piquant: les plus empressés à saluer d'applaudissements les discours du docteur Herzl furent les antisémites; Au fond, rien de plus naturel. La doctrine antisémite se réduit à ceci: les Juifs tiennent chez nous trop de place et il est urgent qu'on les mette à la porte. Un Juif survient qui propose à ses coreligionnaires de s'y mettre eux-mêmes: les antisémites trouvent l'idée géniale et en acclament l'auteur.²⁸²

Although Zionist commitment remained limited among French Jewish patriots, there were those who adopted a more supportive tone to a form of "humanitarian" or "philanthropic" Zionist colonialism. Mayer Lambert (1863-1930), Chief Rabbi of Metz, stated that “we should not, in the name of savage patriotism (au nom d’un sauvage patriotisme), condemn our brothers to a life of distress and humiliation. If, therefore, the Zionist movement merely promoted the colonization in Palestine by attracting there those who have no homeland, it will have all our sympathies. But we, French Israelites, have a homeland and we intend on keeping it.”²⁸³ One could induce from these words that for these French Jews, Herzlian Zionism would only be attractive if it functioned as some sort of a charity organization that would come to the help and removal of impoverished Jews from Europe.

France would have its own share of, to use Herzl’s term, ‘big Jews’ who would support Jewish colonial activities in Palestine and elsewhere such as Baron Edmond de

²⁸² Émile Berr, “Un nouveau parti: les sionistes,” *Le Figaro*, 4 September 1897. “Zionism - don't laugh - has set itself the goal of re-establishing the kingdom of Judah. This invention is due to a small group of witty and irascible Israelites, who dream of fooling anti-Semites around the world. To depart, I mean to depart from everywhere, to desert the inadequate homelands where the security of Jewish conscience and interests now seem in danger, and to meet up, safeguarded from malicious acts and hatred, in some vacant corner of Palestine or elsewhere, where the ancient Jewish homeland would be recreated for the benefit of its emigrants. Spicy detail: the most eager to greet Dr. Herzl's speeches with applause were the anti-Semites; In sum, as expected. The anti-Semitic doctrine boils down to this: the Jews take up too much space in our country and it is urgent that we show them out. A Jew appears who calls his co-religionists to do it themselves: the anti-Semites find the idea brilliant and acclaim the author.” (My translation)

²⁸³ « Nous ne devons pas au nom d'un sauvage patriotisme, condamner nos frères à une vie de détresse et d'humiliation. Si donc le mouvement sioniste se borne à favoriser la colonisation Palestine en y attirant ceux qui n'ont pas de patrie, il aura toutes nos sympathies. Mais nous, Israélites français, nous avons une patrie et nous entendons la garder. » Cited in Nicault, *La France et le sionisme*, 6. (My translation)

Rothschild, the “philanthrope français, israélite d’origine,”²⁸⁴ and those who would spread an ideology of universal Jewish regeneration and solidarity through the workings of *l’Alliance Israélite Universelle*. All of these men actively supported Jewish colonial activities and had no moral objection to the dispossession and appropriation of Palestinian land and other lands; and yet something stood in the way of their full enchantment with Herzlian Zionism.

In order to understand the hesitant attitude of those French Jews who invested in Zionist colonial activities but could not endorse Herzl’s call for a separate nation-state for Jews, one ought to grasp the difference between nationalism and patriotism. Zadoc Kahn, Chief Rabbi of France and a Jew from Alsace, met numerous times with Herzl and introduced him to the Baron Edmond de Rothschild and other French prominent figures.²⁸⁵ Yet Herzl did not set his hopes on Kahn, whom he considered to be “the breed of *little* Jews.”²⁸⁶ Although Kahn “professed himself to be a Zionist,” Herzl believed that his Zionism could never compete with “a Frenchman’s ‘patriotism.’”²⁸⁷ Kahn was willing to lend a listening ear but after several meetings with Herzl, he revealed in an article the day after the First Zionist Congress all the reservations he had in regard to this new ideology: the political and practical unrealism of the project; the reaffirmed faith in the assimilatory project and in the temporary nature of the anti-Semitic crisis that France is going through; the danger of bolstering anti-Semitic propaganda in France and harming the Jews of the Ottoman Empire; finally, he did not see how the relations between politics and religion could be organized in a Jewish state, except by rebuilding a medieval theocratic system.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁴ *Bulletin de l’Alliance Israélite universelle*, 1881, No. 8, 137, cited in Israël Margalith, *Le baron Edmond de Rothschild et la colonisation juive en Palestine, 1882-1899*, (Paris, Librairie Marcel Rivière et Cie, 1957), 17.

²⁸⁵ The mayor of Jerusalem al-Khalidi wrote to Herzl in 1899 via the medium of Zadoc Kahn to warn him that Zionism, as a solution to the Jewish problem, will not materialize as Palestine was not for sale and was venerated by 390 million Christians and 300 million Muslims; and thus “By what right do the Jews demand it for themselves?”. Letter quoted in Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 75

²⁸⁶ Patai, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. 1, 272

²⁸⁷ Patai, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol. 1, 272

²⁸⁸ Catherine Nicault, “Zadoc Kahn et le Sionisme,” in *Zadoc Kahn : un grand rabbin entre culture juive, affaire Dreyfus et laïcité*, ed. Jean-Philippe Chaumont and Jean-Claude Kuperminc (Paris: Éditions de l’éclat, 2007), 188

After the death of Armand Mayer, André Crémieu-Foa sought to challenge other anti-Semites to duels, but then minister of war, M. de Freycinet, exiled him to Tunisia, a French colonial settlement and protectorate, to crush a revolt against French colonial troops. In the ensuing expedition under the command of Colonel Dodds, Crémieu-Foa's 'bravery' and 'courage' in combat were acknowledged in the presence of the troops by his commander-in-chief. After the death of Crémieu-Foa in North-Africa, Zadoc Kahn emphasized in his eulogy of Crémieu-Foa once more the masculinity of the French Jewish soldier. A fervent supporter of France's imperialist wars, Kahn saw in Crémieu-Foa's death the greatest sacrifice for one's nation. Kahn described him as an indispensable part of France's "corps expéditionnaire," on those far lands, who showed remarkable courage, describing his exploits as selfless and honorably patriotic:

Nous admirons . . . les difficultés vaincues, les fatigues sans nombre supportées avec une héroïque endurance, l'habileté et l'énergie du commandement supérieur, ne laissant rien au hasard, la froide indifférence de nos enfants devant le danger, leur mépris stoïque de la mort, leur courage renversant l'un après l'autre tous les obstacles qui se dressaient devant eux, triomphant d'adversaires résolus et terminant glorieusement une campagne difficile, laborieuse, ou se trouvait engagé l'honneur de notre pays.²⁸⁹

At the prestigious Synagogue de la rue de la Victoire in Paris, and in the presence of several prominent French and Jewish personalities, Kahn turned Crémieu-Foa's eulogy into a political speech through which he reaffirmed two important points: French Jews share the same patriotic blood as any other Frenchman, and Judaism, as a religion, dictates and embraces French Patriotism. Kahn quoted la "femme française"²⁹⁰ Anna Crémieu-Foa, André's mother, stating that she destined her son's life to the French nation : "En le destinant à l'armée, je savais bien que je le donnais à la France." Her son's death on the battlefield was

²⁸⁹ Zadoc Kahn, *Religion et patrie: deux allocutions prononcées à la synagogue de la rue de la Victoire* (Paris: librairies-imprimeries réunies, 1893), 4-5

²⁹⁰ Kahn, *Religion et patrie*, 7

for this *mère française* “une mort au champ d’honneur.”²⁹¹ Kahn was intentionally personifying a Jewish female into the French mother, perhaps to *Marianne* herself, a metaphor of the French *patrie*, before turning his words to Jews and non-Jews alike and stating that the old book of Judaism endorses the death for one’s nation as “le triomphe du courage, de l’abnégation, et du patriotisme. Pour le soldat, aujourd’hui comme aux temps antiques de la nationalité juive, tout le monde est soldat, la mort devant l’ennemi est le devoir accompli, la gloire conquise, la patrie honorée et sanctifiée.”²⁹²

The handful of intellectuals and writers who, among them French Jews, at the end of the nineteenth century were attracted, for some time, by the concept of Jewish nationalism, such as the publicist Bernard Lazare, the poets Edmond Fleg, André Spire, Henri Hertz and Henri Franck and a few more others, were searching for a remedy to their malaise with anti-Semitism. They believed at first that Herzl’s call for Jewish nationalism could provide them with a viable alternative. However, they eventually all parted ways with Herzlian Zionism for various reasons, including internationalist anarchism for Bernard Lazare, socialism for others, but surely, for them all, French patriotism came before Zionist nationalism. Those French Jews could only endorse one nation.

Secular patriotism allowed French Jews into the realm of aristocratic and, by extension, military honor in spite of their religion. Their self-identification was with the French nation, and thus an insult to a French Jew, in their eyes, became an insult to the nation. Their sense of honor came from the strong sense of Frenchness that they embodied. At a time that Christian tradition was facing secular nationalism, its notions of honor were transformed into patriotism. To generate true patriotism, the political ideal of the republic had to be absorbed within the spiritual unity of the nation; the love of country preached by

²⁹¹ Kahn, *Religion et patrie*, 7

²⁹² Kahn, *Religion et patrie*, 9

republican thinkers was translated into a different love: love of one's own culture, one's own language, one's own religion.²⁹³

The synchronization of patriotism and Judaism that took place in France in the nineteenth century proved that the vast majority of French Jews had conceptions of honor, which were not related to Christian, secular or Jewish Zionism. Sociologist Emile Durkheim who studied the ambiguous relationship between the state and the individual, and the birth of civil religion, took part in national debates regarding anti-Semitism as a French Jew conscious of his honor and dignity. According to Durkheim, French nineteenth century anti-Semitism was not due to religious hatred but was the result of projected anger after the French military defeats and economic crises. Durkheim, a strong believer in the integration of Jews into the universality of the rational French state, argued that changed circumstances such as wars and social turmoil, force individuals to adjust their aspirations. This shift causes society to suffer, and in return, looks for a scapegoat upon to blame for its shortcomings and disappointments.²⁹⁴

Zionists such as Herzl and Nordau, in this age of nationalism and the rising nation-state, certainly asked themselves what possibilities existed for becoming “a man of honor”, yet without a nation-state? Their Zionism was the product of an era when the concept of the nation gained precedence. Across Europe, masses of people who often shared common ethnic characteristics began to see the nation as a focus of belonging and identification. Jews separated from their traditional communities and “came out of the ghetto,” to use the phrase coined by historian and sociologist Yacob Katz, and thereby embarked on a significant process of secularization. Maurizio Viroli differentiates between patriotism, the language

²⁹³ Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 139.

²⁹⁴ Émile Durkheim, “Antisémitisme et crise sociale,” in *Enquête sur l'antisémitisme*, ed. H. Dagan (Paris, France: PV Stock, (1899), 59–63

used to strengthen or invoke a generous and caring love of the political institutions and the way of life that sustain the common liberty of a people, and nationalism, a language forged in late eighteenth century Europe to defend or reinforce the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic oneness, and homogeneity of a people.²⁹⁵ This distinction is where French Jews and French Zionists in the nineteenth century parted ways.

Jewish Zionists understood that the discourse of Western honor excluded “dishonorable” individuals and groups, as the dynamic of gaining or losing honor only pertained to those perceived to be within the discourse. Honor is not emotional capital that could be traded and exchanged regardless of space and social status. It was only valued by, and within, social groups that shared the same notions and practices. Therefore, Western honor conditioned the honor of the Diaspora European Jew to fulfill divine prophecies by departing from Europe. The nation that Herzl and Nordau wanted was modelled after the nation-states of the nineteenth century, as such, they questioned what it meant to demand honor without having a nation in the age of nationalism. Both Zionists understood that their settler-colonial project relied primarily on the departure of these French Jews to the Promised land. Consequently, their nationalist project was premised on making sure those Jews do not perceive themselves as French and do not fight these duels as Frenchmen.

There seems to be much contradiction in the Jewish Zionist quest for honor; yet a closer look tells us that this discourse on honor was meant to trouble, incite, and reject the sustainability of the idea of a home in the Diaspora. Christian Zionism was not superseded by Jewish Zionism; both existed in tandem as one is the extension of the other. The adoption of the Christian notions of honor by Jewish Zionists is a continuity of this practice, as Herzl envisioned a Jewish army of duelists. In this continuum, different honors overlapped in the formation of French Jewish identity in contrast with Jewish Zionist identity. Whereas

²⁹⁵ Maurizio Viroli, *For love of country: an essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995)

historically, dueling was not part of Jewish tradition, the newly emancipated French Jewish citizen entered the realm of French statehood through the ports of French honor, and embraced dueling as a French citizen.

Though these dueling French Jewish citizen-soldiers embodied Herzl and Nordau's vision of the *New Jew*, they nonetheless shamed them for lacking Zionist honor in the diaspora, but also insisted that Jews should feel and share the gentile anti-Semitic sentiments of contempt and disdain for the Diaspora Jew. The body of Mayer became enmeshed in gentile anxieties regarding Jewish masculinity but his honor was relegated to the wider question of patriotism and assimilation. In this sense, both the French assimilated Jews and the Zionists agreed that the Muscular Jew was a possibility for Jewish men; the crux was how to attain it: through patriotism or colonialism. Herzl's and Nordau's Zionism adopted the discourse of Christian honor that demanded Jewish obedience; as such, this form of Zionist Jewish nationalism could never grant Zionist Jews their honor. On the contrary, it placed them on the outskirts of Western and Jewish honor in Europe.

Chapter 4: Herzl's Zionism: A Search for Gentile Honor

There are plenty of biographies and works that have established that the Zionist nationalism of Theodor Zeev Benjamin Herzl (1860–1904), the professed godfather of modern Jewish Zionism and cofounder of the Zionist Organization, was born out of the ordeal of Gentile rejection—he carried a lifelong need to be seen and accepted as a German.²⁹⁶ When antisemitism created a demarcation between Aryans and non-Aryans along racial lines and excluded Herzl from Gentile recognition due to his Jewishness, he canalized Gentile rejection and used it as the principle motivator for his lifelong quest for Gentile honor.

This chapter will look into the wider discussion of how Zionist thought internalized and adopted the notion of the dishonorable Jew. To analyze the political significance of Herzl's Zionist sentiment, one needs to understand the workings of affect, how it is influenced and the kind of system it creates. This chapter will analyze how Zionist leaders incorporated into their ideology anti-Semitic arguments about Jews being dishonorable, including the notion that Jews were an exiled people due to divine punishment. How did Zionist consciousness or awareness of Jews as *a people lacking honor* evolve? Was it the outcome of European influence and did it bear the stamp of this experience, or did it occur independently from European Gentile history, namely, that it had been derived from Jewish tradition, religion, and thought? What kinds of emotional associations did this quest for Jewish honor make as Zionism turned the quest for a moral and political honor into an existential condition?

²⁹⁶ Jacques Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Alex Bein, *Theodore Herzl: a biography* (Philadelphia: The Jewish publication society of America, 1940); and Derek Jonathan Penslar, *Theodor Herzl: the charismatic leader* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2020).

I will examine below the anxieties and tensions in the language of Zionist ideologues in relation to the question of honor in an attempt to answer these questions. I will provide a survey of Zionist thought regarding the Christian, secular Zionist, and anti-Semitic sentiments of contempt, or disdain for, and superiority over Jews, and how they relate to Jewish Zionists' acceptance of the idea that Jews lack honor and address why they insisted that Jews were to feel shame and remain without honor in the diaspora.

Herzl's Obsession with Gentile Aristocratic Honor

Born to a secular, assimilated, German-speaking Jewish family in Budapest in 1860, Herzl was raised as a German and learned to appreciate secular culture. He was only seven when the government emancipated the Jews and granted them equal civil, political, and religious rights with all other Austrian citizens in his native Hungary, but his family turned away from Hungary's national call and moved in 1878 to Vienna where he was immersed in Viennese culture and its values. He was fluent in German and French but did not speak Hebrew, Yiddish, or Russian. In 1884, he was awarded a doctorate of law from the University of Vienna.

The Jews of Vienna were immigrants or the offspring of immigrants who had arrived in the second half of the nineteenth century and who embraced their newly granted emancipatory rights. During his formative years, as the educated and cultured son of a respected banker and an admirer of Germany's enlightened civilization, Herzl indulged in the privileges of the bourgeois lifestyle prevalent in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Emperor Franz Joseph of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, who considered the military as the most important pillar of the monarchy, was the symbol of the persistence of the old aristocratic order whilst modernism was paving its way to dethrone traditional Western culture.

In *The Jews of Vienna*, Marsha L. Rozenblit sketches Vienna at the end of the nineteenth century as a society enriched by a waltzing bourgeoisie where literary circles,

concerned with aesthetics and symbolic meanings, and musical and intellectual talents defined the social matrix. Jews were both the producers and consumers of culture, writes Rozenblit, so much so, that scholarly and non-scholarly observers alike concluded “that indeed virtually the entire Viennese Jewish community had successfully and almost totally assimilated. Jewish cultural luminaries thus represent the triumph of assimilation, the process by which Jews shed their traditional values and particularist modes of behavior, and embraced the modern secular world.”²⁹⁷ This did not mean however that Viennese Jewry lost its Jewish group identity. The different Jewish social classes in Vienna

created patterns of economic and social behavior which continued to mark them as Jews both to themselves and to the outside world (...) Jews did assimilate, but they also devised new ways of asserting Jewish identity, including Zionism and diaspora Jewish nationalism, which both perpetuated and justified Jewish distinctiveness.²⁹⁸

Herzl’s family were typical Viennese burghers, and religion meant little to them as they shared the emancipatory spirit of the Haskalah and favored the Habsburg monarchy, German classics and social prestige. But late nineteenth-century Vienna, like other European cities, suffered from *le mal du siècle* and witnessed repressed destabilizing social struggles and the rise of violent antisemitism and chauvinistic nationalism. Even though his Jewishness meant little to him, Herzl gradually started to feel that it nonetheless stood in the way of his full social and cultural absorption as a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Whilst the liberal government, with the emancipation Act, removed any remaining medieval restrictions on Jewish occupation, residence, or political and civil rights, the strength of antisemitic politics were sufficient to propel the Christian Social Party as the leading party in the City Council in 1895, who demanded the elimination of the Jews from public life.

Being labeled as the “other,” he understood that the only way for him to acquire Gentile recognition was by attaining aristocratic honor, a social class with which he was

²⁹⁷ Marsha L. Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983), 2

²⁹⁸ Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna*, 3

deeply fascinated. In fact, by idealizing aristocratic traits, Herzl was identifying with the Christian world of knightliness. In a diary entry on May 2, 1882, on his twenty-third birthday, Herzl wrote off his self-pity and reproached himself not having reached or done anything substantial with his life to that point—nothing worthy of “Unsterblichkeit” (immortality).²⁹⁹ He lightened up only when his thoughts drifted to the hero of his unwritten romantic comedy, Count Guy de Montsoreau, a “Sentimentaler Abenteurer, Edelmuthiger Spadassin” (a sentimental adventurer and a noble swordsman). Herzl describes him affectionately as a noble knight in shining armor whose manly arms and voice were irresistible. Alex Bein, who wrote an autobiography of Herzl, quotes him: “I have already told you that I am capable of a great enthusiasm for the quality of knightliness; and this one enthusiasm could easily serve to explain, directly or indirectly, all my other enthusiasms, however contradictory.”³⁰⁰

The Christian aristocratic figure, depicted as a noble carrying himself gracefully and with a natural self-confidence and nurtured pride, appeared constantly in Herzl’s plays and writings. The values of honor, courage, physical grace, and modesty were found in Count Robert Schenk von Hagenau in the novelette *Hagenau* that Herzl wrote as a student in 1882. This fascination with Christian aristocratic status became the leading thread of Herzl’s political ambitions more than a decade later. As he was drafting his plan for the creation of a state to safeguard European Jewry, he defined the form of the future government not as democratic but as “an ‘aristocratic republic,’ as Montesquieu termed it.”³⁰¹ Aware that the Christian aristocracy excluded Jews from its midst, Herzl defines in detail how a Jew could become an aristocrat in his hypothetical state: “The hereditary nobility is not our kind of

²⁹⁹ Theodor Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, Edited by Alex A. Bein, Hermann Greive, Moshe Schärf, and Julius H. Schoeps. Vol. I – IV. (Berlin: Propyläen, 1983), vol. 1, 630.

³⁰⁰ Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, vol. 1, 30.

³⁰¹ Theodore Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, ed. Raphael Patai, trans. Harry Zohn, vol. 1 (New York: Herzl Press, 1960), 170.

aristocracy. Among us any great person can become an aristocrat. (Money is a good criterion if it has been established that it was acquired honestly.)”³⁰²

This was not only some romanticized obsession with manliness and strength that required a facial scar and the defence of honor through the fighting of duels, but also a self-conscious ideological intervention in the Viennese discourse of nationalism. In his political fiction *Altneuland*, an exposition of Herzl’s Zionist dream, it is the Christian Kingscourt “Adalbert von Koeningshoff, a royal Prussian officer and Christian German nobleman”³⁰³ who takes “Jewboy” Friedrich Loewenberg, Herzl’s alter-ego to Palestine: “Arm in Arm Jew and Christian approached Jerusalem the Holy City by the white light of the moon.”³⁰⁴ By the nineteenth century, the generalized forces of modernization, which included technology, industrialization, communication and social mobility, incorporated a dominant-class ideology of honor as a condition of its existence and survival.³⁰⁵ Aware of the forces that bind modernization and honor, the second part of Herzl’s political novel opens twenty years later, in 1923, with the couple’s return to Palestine which was transformed into the most advanced society in the world by Jewish colonizers.

The modern patterns of thinking that have permeated the West steadily have affected Jews as a religious/ethnic community/minority which was relatively well integrated into Western societies. Herzl seemed to understand that a long tradition of Christian honor, which transformed gradually into a secular format, depended on Jewish dishonor. He internalized this affirmation in defining his own identity. The noble aristocratic figure was consistently contrasted with the degenerating Jew in Herzl’s plays and political writings, as he was always condescending toward traditional Jewish heritage, culture, attire, and manners. As early as 1885, after a business dinner at the Berlin branch of his father's company, Herzl sent in a

³⁰² Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol. 1, 213.

³⁰³ Theodor Herzl, *Old New Land* (Leipzig: Federation of American Zionists, 1916), 48

³⁰⁴ Theodor Herzl, *Old New Land*, 26

³⁰⁵ Berger et al., *The homeless mind: modernization and consciousness*, 79-81

telegram to his parents: “Yesterday there was a *Grande soirée* at Treitel's. Thirty or forty ugly little Jews and Jewesses. Not a consoling sight.”³⁰⁶ Although the psychic origins of Herzl's personal formation cannot be easily separated from his indifference and later rejection of his Jewishness and his absorption of antisemitism, his self-prescribed need to find honor through recognition was constantly present through the several phases of his identity formation.

Herzl's Understanding of his Jewishness

Though he was a lawyer, Herzl found his calling in politics and journalism. He became a writer, playwright, and the Paris correspondent for the *Neue Freie Presse* (New Free Press), an influential liberal newspaper of the time. Despite his full assimilation, Herzl gradually began to feel the effects of antisemitism growing around him. The negative perception of Jews, both by the Gentiles and by those Jews who followed the ideals of emancipation, concerned him, as antisemitism was an important current in the dominant social group, leading some Jews in those social classes to internalize these ideas.

Herzl, who had a Christmas tree in his home,³⁰⁷ did not give up on assimilation as a solution to all Jewish problems; he even went a step further. His initial plan was to turn all Jews “Frei und anständig” (free and honorable), advocating for the conversion of European Jews to Catholicism to rid them of their Jewishness.³⁰⁸ His specific use of the term “anständig,” which has connotations of respectable and reputable as well, in his endeavor contrasts with how he perceived Jewry. When his plan did not materialize, he opted to remove all dishonorable Jews from Europe, as we will see in this chapter.

³⁰⁶ Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, vol 1, 212.

³⁰⁷ Amos Elon, *Herzl* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), 174

³⁰⁸ Theodor Herzl, *Theodor Herzl's tagebücher, 1895–1904*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Jüdischer verlag, 1922–23), 8.

Antisemitism grew and expanded across Europe, but Herzl resisted it for a long time by not considering himself as part of the Jewish community that was targeted. Herzl did not consider the anti-Semitic discourse to be aimed at him or his social sphere, but at the Jews who did not integrate, the so-called *shtetl* type; petty bourgeois, religious shopkeepers, those who had not abandoned the characteristic Jewish look.³⁰⁹ Ironically, there was another category of Jews—the well-off, successful, and assimilated yet dishonorable Jews—that he referred to as “big Jews.” He condemned them as well: “Wir Juden sind ein eitles Volk. Wir stellen das mögliche Kontingent zu den Snobs der ‘guten’ Gesellschaft (...) Aber ich glaube, wir sind nur eitel, weil uns die Ehre nicht verdient ist. Haben wir erst wieder unsere Ehre, so werden wir nicht eitel, sondern wissenig sein.”³¹⁰ Herzl believed that if he worked on providing Jews with a setting where they could regain their honor, they would exchange their vanity for “ambition.”

After reaching the personal conclusion that his Jewishness was ultimately in the way of his European whiteness, he expressed his discomfort and impatience in avenging his wounded pride. Most works on Herzl focus on his troubled relationship with his Jewishness and his humiliating experiences with antisemitism in order to understand why and when he formulated his Zionist ideology. However, the question should not be when Herzl’s transformation occurred, as neither Judaism nor antisemitism defined his identity to the extent that his obsession with attaining the high standards of aristocratic honor did. As such, one should investigate how this combination of shame and humiliation canalized his fixation on winning recognition as a way of self-fulfillment. Surely Herzl’s concern with honor was linked to his desire to not be seen as a Jew, by way of which he projected his personal

³⁰⁹ Steven Beller, *Herzl* (London: Peter Halban, 1991), 11–12.

³¹⁰ “We Jews are a vain people. We supply the largest share of snobs to ‘good’ society. (...) But I believe we are vain only because we are denied access to honor” (my translation, Herzl, *Tagebücher*, vol. 1, 8).

experience of rejection onto a philosophy of the mass, which brought him gradually to his formulation of Zionism as a quest for honor.

He outlined the creation of a state for the Jews as a final resort, and this became his life project, wherein Jews could be regenerated, for “When we [Jews] emerged from the ghetto, we were, and for the time being remained, ghetto Jews. We should have been given time to get accustomed to freedom. But the peoples around us have neither the magnanimity nor the patience.”³¹¹ His autobiography recounts his hometown rabbi accusing him of trying to obtain “more honor and freedom for the Jews than they at present enjoy.”³¹² Herzl was busy convincing the European Jewry that it was about time they understood that they were the cause of their own predicament. He was not seeking the approval of his rabbi or his Jewish community, as, in his eyes, their self-emancipation could only be fulfilled once they gained the recognition of those who harmed them.

The recognition of Jewish honor by Gentiles was non-negotiable in Herzl’s self-fulfillment. He pursued it fervently, convinced that removing Jews from Europe would bring an end to their dishonorable and degraded life, on the condition that they left the impression of an irreproachable people behind. In his exodus plan, Jews were to embark on boats to their new homeland once they had paid what he called “a down-payment for our future honor,” which meant that Jewish future honor was linked to the memory they would leave behind in Europe. Herzl insisted that:

Wir werden den neuen Judenstaat anständig gründen. Wir denken ja an unsere künftige Ehre in der Welt. Darum müssen alle Verpflichtungen in den bisherigen Wohnorten rechtschaffen erfüllt werden. Billige Fahrt und Refaktien werden wir nur denen gewähren, die uns ein Amtszeugnis beibringen: “In guter Ordnung fortgezogen.” ... Wir werden gar nicht auf Reziprozität warten. Wir tun das nur unserer eigenen Ehre willen.³¹³

³¹¹ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol.1, 10.

³¹² Quoted from Shlomoh Umberto Nahon, ed., *The Jubilee of the first Zionist Congress, 1897–1947* (Jerusalem: Executive of the Zionist Organisation, 1947), 5.

³¹³ Herzl, *Tagebücher*, vol. 1, 196. A translation can be found at Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, 172: “We shall found the new Jewish State in a respectable manner. After all, we have in mind our future honor in the eyes of the world. For that reason all obligations in our old places of residence must be scrupulously fulfilled. We shall grant cheap passage and settlement

Jews who did not leave an honorable impression behind were not to be allowed in the newly founded state. Zionist leaders perceived antisemitism as the force behind their exclusion from the Gentile world; nonetheless, the recognition they sought was that of the anti-Semites while their sworn opponents were all anti-Zionists, including anti-Zionist diaspora Jews. Herzl, as a case in point, was concerned mostly with the approval of the anti-Semites: “It would be an excellent idea to call in respectable, accredited anti-Semites as liquidators of property. To the people they would vouch for the fact that we do not wish to bring about the impoverishment of the countries that we leave.”³¹⁴ Obsessed with attaining their approval, he thought that these real estate agents should not be given large fees, so as not to be perceived as “despicable stooges of the Jews.” In conclusion, Herzl thought that Jews could only “migrate as respected people,” as the anti-Semites were to become their most dependable friends and allies once Jews were settled outside of Europe.³¹⁵

For Herzl, Zionism did not necessarily mean a rejection of his linguistic and cultural Germanization; on the contrary, it seemed to be the perfect bridge between Westernization and those Jewish traits he could not seem to lose. As such, to him, modern antisemitism was understandable, as he put it in a letter to the London *Jewish Chronicle* in January 1896: “[Anti-Semitism is] a highly complex movement. I consider it from a Jewish standpoint, yet without fear or hatred. I believe that I can see what elements there are in it of vulgar sport, of common trade, of jealousy, of inherited prejudice, of religious intolerance and also of legitimate self-defence.”³¹⁶ Israeli historian Benny Morris writes that Herzl foresaw how antisemitism could be “harnessed” in favour of Zionism:

Herzl regarded Zionism's triumph as inevitable, not only because life in Europe was ever more untenable for Jews, but also because it was in Europe's interests to rid itself

benefits only to those who produce an official certificate saying "Affairs left in good order." (...) We shall not even wait for reciprocity but act purely for the sake of our own honor.”

³¹⁴ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol. 1, 83.

³¹⁵ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol.1, 84.

³¹⁶ Theodor Herzl, “A Solution of the Jewish Question,” *The Jewish Chronicle*, January 17, 1896.

of the Jews and be relieved of antisemitism: The European political establishment would eventually be persuaded to promote Zionism. Herzl recognized that antisemitism would be harnessed to his own Zionist-purposes.³¹⁷

In the face of his self-perceived dissolution of his cosmopolitan existence among Gentiles, Herzl began to obsess over an alternative solution that could still integrate Jews into European societies. He found it in the notion of honor, which granted him access to a social class where his intellect and his refined social skills would be valued over his Jewishness. Herzl understood the duality of Christian Western honor and Jewish dishonor was sustained by the presence in Europe of those elements that are so distinctively Jewish, the “ghetto Jews”. Once removed, the absence of the disrupting elements would debunk conceptions of honor and would propel him, a Jew, into the realm of standardized honor. The remaining assimilated Jews would be the ones who are fully immersed in the embourgeoisement of honor, which has been defined by Norbert Elias as the process of ‘civilization’, both a broadening and a mellowing process.³¹⁸

Herzl’s ambivalence about Judaism and his internalization of Gentile stereotypes of Jews have been mostly interpreted as “self-hatred,” given that he identified as a German nationalist and was proud of some of the most violent features of nineteenth century German society, such as dueling and the conversion of Jews.³¹⁹ In general, the German nationalism of that time provided young middle-class Jews with a way of defining themselves as they identified with the broader social and national frameworks in which they lived.³²⁰ Dueling and its tight relationship with nationalism and violence, and its embedded consolidated notion of brotherhood, was one of the ways Jews could both affirm their nationalism and challenge

³¹⁷ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: a history of the Zionist-Arab conflict, 1881–1999* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 21.

³¹⁸ Norbert Elias, *Der Prozess der Zivilisation* (Bern, Francke, 1969).

³¹⁹ See Ritchie Robertson, “The Problem of ‘Jewish Self-Hatred’ in Herzl, Kraus and Kafka,” *Oxford German Studies*, Volume 16, Issue 1(1985): 81-102 and Paul Reitter, “The Jewish Self-Hatred Octopus,” *The German quarterly*, Volume 82, Issue 3, (6/2009): 356-372

³²⁰ Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). See also A. Phillips. "Sociological Analysis of Jewish Identity," in David M. Gordis and Yoav Ben-Horin (eds.), *Jewish Identity in America* (Los Angeles, 1991), 17. Phillips makes this point in reference to American Jewry, but it is applicable in varying degrees to the situation anywhere within the diaspora.

anti-Semites. Dueling was also the sole remaining domain where the aristocratic class could establish its social capital as “[T]he duel was still, as it had always been, an occasion to publicly demonstrate the personal courage that testified to the qualities of a man.”³²¹ Herzl’s self-identification with knightliness developed beyond his daydreams and the pages of his diary. As a student at the University of Vienna, he joined the German nationalist dueling *Burschenschaft* (fraternity), Albia, whose motto was “Honour, Freedom, Fatherland.”³²² For Herzl, endorsing dueling may have been an attempt to overwrite his Jewish heritage with European masculinity.

I therefore disagree with the idea that Herzl’s inner struggle with his Jewishness should be cast as self-hatred—he had proclaimed his indifference to his religion on many occasions – as the concern with honor is different than self-hatred. His quest for honor, however, became an important precept in shaping his persona and political ambitions. As historian Jacques Kornberg puts it:

Herzl's deepest obsession was with Jewish honor. Honor was a social category. It was not conferred by one's own conscience, but by social standing, which included self-awareness of status and confirmation of that status by others. For Herzl both were essential. It was in part because Herzl sought Jewish honor that the goal of his Zionist politics was diplomatic recognition for Jewish sovereignty in the capitals of Europe.³²³

Although Kornberg’s understanding of Jewish honor falls within the notions of Zionist thought regarding strength, pride, and masculinity rather than the internalized Christian mode that came to influence Jewish identity formation in discourse and religion, it is still worth taking his views into consideration, as Kornberg insists on the importance that honor played in the personal and political formation of Herzl. It seems to be a complicated mixture, yet in practice, Herzl and other Zionist leaders constructed their Jewish identities in relation to

³²¹ Robert Nye, “The End of the Modern French Duel,” in *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor, and Rituals in Modern Europe and America*, ed. Pieter Spierenburg (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 85.

³²² Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, Vol. 2, 770.

³²³ Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism*, 185.

nationalism and antisemitism. This placed them in a double-bind, where they used the same process of *othering* on their fellow Jews in an attempt to pull themselves into a narrative of Western honor.

Herzl's Zionism and the Ghetto

The ghetto, which represented the divide between the Western and the Eastern Jew, assimilated and non-assimilated, became a keyword in Herzl's Zionist ideology and went on to play a central role as a representation of a traditional Jewish society spatially confined and temporally lagging, with the metaphor of freeing the Jew from the ghetto as its principal element. In *Ghetto: The History of a Word*, Daniel B. Schwartz explains that, with the rise of antisemitism by the 1890s, the notion of the "ghetto" gained a centrality in Jewish imagination that, ironically, was not present in an earlier period:

The ghetto had been justified as a treatment aimed at curbing, if not curing, the threat that the toleration of a Jewish presence posed to Christendom. Some viewed the ghetto as an inoculation of sorts, a preventive measure that would protect society from contamination through careful regulation and enclosure of Jewish difference. Others, like the popes, saw the ghetto as a more aggressive regimen whose ultimate goal was to dissolve Jewish difference, not simply contain it, by intensifying the pressure on Jews to convert.³²⁴

As Jews were granted political rights in France and later on in other European countries, they began to seek opportunities outside of the ghetto in large numbers. It was then that "the word *ghetto* came to loom ever larger in the Jewish mind as a site of memory that could be used as a rhetorical and ideological weapon."³²⁵

To Herzl, the ghetto represented everything he despised about Jewishness: the fanaticism of Judaism and religious zealotry, the repulsive features of superstition, and the poverty, filth, and ugliness of the vernacular Yiddish, which he considered to be "the stealthy tongue of prisoners" that was so common in German and Polish ghettos.³²⁶ He believed that

³²⁴ Daniel B. Schwartz, *Ghetto: The History of a Word* (Harvard University Press, 2019), 52.

³²⁵ Schwartz, *Ghetto: The History of a Word*, 51.

³²⁶ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol. 171.

most of his people, even the educated and assimilated ones, were “Ghetto types: quiet, decent, timorous” who presumably did not understand “the call to be free and become human beings.”³²⁷ He was obsessed with ensuring he was not mistaken for a Jew from the ghetto to the extent that he did not even want Hebrew to become the official language of his hypothetical state, as he thought Hebrew was a linguistic ghetto.³²⁸

As such, the ghetto represented not only the ancient injustice faced by Jews but their passivity too:

In the ghetto, which was not of our making, we have taken on a number of anti-social qualities. Our character has been corrupted by oppression ... our original character cannot have been other than magnificent and proud; we were men who knew how to face war and how to defend the state; had we not started with such gifts, how could we have survived two thousand years of unrelenting persecution?³²⁹

The ghetto came to symbolize in Herzl’s eyes not only the physical segregation between Jews and non-Jews, but also their mental and emotional confinement. Consequently, exiting the ghetto meant not only political emancipation and social mobility but also embourgeoisement, cultural assimilation, and acceptance by Gentile society, all requisites to being perceived as noble and honorable. Honor, a concept that had once been rooted in the aristocratic claim to distinction but which, by this period, carried a more diffuse set of connotations: bourgeois respectability and non-Jewish status. However, even after the fall of the walls of the ghetto, assimilated Jews confined themselves in a metaphorical ghetto, which similarly stood in the way of their full transformation.

Herzl’s *Das Neue Ghetto*, or Acquiring Gentile Honor

Before he became the founder of Zionism, Herzl was a journalist and a not-so-successful playwright. His theatrical work includes several plays, among them *Das neue Ghetto* (1894), written two years before his manifesto *A Jewish State*. The play deals with

³²⁷ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol. 1, 46.

³²⁸ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol. 1, 306.

³²⁹ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol. 1, 8–9.

Herzl's two obsessions: the ghetto and Jewish honor. In writing *Das neue Ghetto*, Herzl diagnosed himself and sought a cure for what he perceived as *his* Jewish problem. Herzl penned the play in just seventeen swift days (October 21–November 8, 1894), like a man who could finally see through the fog:

I had thought that through this eruption of playwriting I had written myself free of the [Jewish] matter. On the contrary, I got more and more deeply involved with it. The thought grew stronger in me that I must do something for the Jews.³³⁰

In his attempt “to do something” for the Jews, Herzl wrote a four-act melodrama that accentuated the author's wounded pride and fixation on honor. The plot of the play unfolds on two levels: the world of the lavish Viennese stock market is contrasted with the dark world of a coal mine in Dubnitz. Herzl connects these two worlds through his main character Jacob Samuel, a newlywed lawyer and Herzl's alter ego, who navigates both spheres while struggling to define his identity in these worlds of Jews and non-Jews.

Herzl introduces several “kinds” of “Jewish” characters that represent, according to him, the diverse existing modes of nineteenth century Viennese Jewishness. Though Herzl uses the typical stereotype of the perverted physiognomy to describe some of them, what is more important is how he categorizes them in terms of their chosen identity as Jews and where they stand in relation to the material and metaphorical ghetto.

He starts with the converted Jew, Doctor Bichler, who tried to solve “the question” by converting but ended up metaphorically shunned by both Jewish and Gentile communities. There are also the assimilated, wealthy Jews, as represented by Jacob's wife and his in-laws, and the chameleon, a ghetto Jew who escaped the physical ghetto and entered the world of the stock market but does not seek to elevate himself culturally and morally, as his only drive is to make money. Then there are the traditional ghetto Jews, portrayed by Rabbi

³³⁰ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol. 1, 11.

Friedheirmer and Jacob Samuel's parents, who, despite having left the physical ghetto, imprison themselves in an invisible ghetto, since they perceive the outside world as a great danger to them. Finally, there is Jacob Samuel, a new kind of Jew—one whose only guideline and concern in life is to achieve honor and remain honorable.

The play revolves around a moral story and a question that Rabbi Friedheirmer, who officiated Jacob's wedding, asks:

Im Monat Av des Jahres 5143 — vierzehntes Jahrhundert der christlichen Zeitrechnung — waren in Mainz schon Vorzeichen der Judenverfolgung zu bemerken. Ein eigener Fall war der Fall des Jünglings Moses ben Abraham. Moses war ein wackerer Jüngling, Sohn eines Handelsmannes, und wollte Gelehrter werden. So sass er in einer Sommernacht über den alten Büchern unserer Weisen und lernte. Da hörte er Weherufe durch die Nacht. Er beugte sich zum Fenster hinaus. Es war nicht im Ghetto. Draussen schrie man, vor dem Ghetto. Das Klagen wurde immer grösslicher. Da jammerte es ihn in seinem Herzen, dass er sich aufhob und hinausschritt. Die Mutter wachte auf, als er durch die Stube gieng. "Wohin gehst Du, mein Kind, so spät bei der Nacht?" . . . "Mutter, ich höre Jemand um Hilfe wimmern!" . . . Und er verschwand in der Nacht . . . Als er nicht wiederkam und die Mutter sich in Angst verzehrte, stand sie auch auf und gieng hinaus, ihn zu suchen . . . Auch sie kam nicht wieder . . . Am anderen Morgen fand man Moses erstochen vor dem aufgerissenen Thore des Ghettos, und an der Leiche sass fröhlich lächelnd die Mutter . . . Sie war irrsinnig geworden . . . Nun, was sagen Sie zu der Geschichte?³³¹

Moses ben Abraham, or Moses of Mainz, answered a call from outside the physical ghetto and paid for it with his life. Hence Rabbi Friedhammer is telling us that Jews were safer within the walls of their ghettos. Leaving it endangered their existence, as such every Jew should think twice before exiting both its physical and metaphorical walls. All of Herzl's Jewish characters in the play have exited the physical ghetto, but they are still trapped in the ghetto as a metaphor, and he wants them to exit both.

³³¹ "In the month of Av of the year 5143, the fourteenth century of the Christian era, there was evidence of Jewish persecution in Mainz. This story concerns Moses ben Abraham. Moses was a brave young man, the son of a merchant, who wanted to become a scholar. On a summer night, as he was studying the ancient books of our wise elder, he heard cries for help through the night. He leaned out the window, but the voice was coming from outside the ghetto. The cries intensified. Concerned, Moses gathered his strength and stepped out to help. His mother woke up and asked him: 'Where are you going, my child, so late at night?' . . . 'Mother, I hear someone whimpering for help!' . . . And he disappeared into the night . . . As he did not return, his mother, consumed with fear, went out to look for him . . . She did not come back either . . . The next morning Moses was found stabbed to death in front of the open gate of the ghetto, and his mother sat by his corpse, smiling happily . . . She had gone insane. Well, what do you think of this story?" (My translation, Theodor Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto: Schauspiel in 4 Acten* [Vienna: Industrie, 1903], 74).

Herzl uses the word ghetto metaphorically, wanting his coreligionists of the nineteenth century to view the modern ghetto as a metaphor that resembles the medieval ghettos. When Friedhammer tells Jacob proudly “we have survived with our ancient virtues intact,” Jacob sneers: “And our ancient vices.” Herzl introduces us to Jews who are living on the margins of Gentile society for refusing to leave the metaphorical ghetto behind, regardless of their degree of assimilation. Even Rabbi Friedhammer, who is nostalgic about the days of the ghetto, when family values blossomed despite the gloominess and dirt, is protective of the physical ghetto but challenges Jacob’s views:

Friedhammer: (...) Do not vilify the Judengasse to me, my good friend. It is our poor home.³³²

Jacob: I’m not vilifying it! I’m only saying, we must get out!

Friedhammer: And I am answering you: we can’t! When the real ghetto still stood, we could not leave it without permission—at great danger to our lives. Now the walls and barriers are invisible, as you say. But this moral ghetto also is our prescribed abode. Woe to him, who wants to get out.

Jacob: We need only break these barriers differently from the old ones. The outer barriers had to be pulled down from the outside, but the inner ones we must uproot ourselves! We ourselves! From ourselves!³³³

Gentiles freed the Jews, Herzl tells us, and brought down the walls of the ghetto, and now Jews had to break down the walls of the metaphorical moral ghetto as a token of gratitude to Gentiles. Jacob wants a complete rupture with everything Jewish, but it seems that Friedhammer’s words hold a warning to anyone who “wants to get out of the ghetto.” Herzl is setting off the emancipated Jew against the archetypal Jew, whose character remains unmodified, despite interaction with the Gentile milieu. This is precisely the paradox that Herzl was attempting to solve for himself, as he had done all he could to integrate in Gentile society.

³³² Judengasse, or Jewish lane in German, refers to Jewish ghettos in Germany and Austria.

³³³ Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 29–30.

It is in his address at the first Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897 that Herzl proclaimed his ambitions and reinstated his wish to remove all Jews from both the physical and the metaphorical ghetto in Europe by establishing a state for them elsewhere. Ironically, in his diary, he writes that “they” should be giving us a piece of land to create a “Weltghetto” (a “World ghetto”, i.e. a ghetto for the world’s Jewry) to satisfy everyone’s needs: “Man müßte uns schließlich ein Stück Land auf dem Erdball suchen, wenn Sie wollen – ein Weltghetto.”³³⁴ Even in a hypothetical state of their own, Jews would still end up living in a ghetto, as it seems for Herzl, Jews carried the seeds of their Jewishness wherever they went.³³⁵ This new life project became the principle motivator for his quest for honor, the discourse of which is one of social stratification. In his future state, Herzl planned on setting up a social hierarchy that would categorize Jews accordingly:

Der erste Eindruck, den die Juden von heute davon hatten, war Überraschung, die in Schmerz und Zorn überging. Unsere Gegner wissen vielleicht gar nicht wie tief im Innersten sie gerade diejenigen unter uns verletzt haben, die sie möglicherweise nicht in erster Linie treffen wollten. Das moderne, gebildete, dem Ghetto entwachsene, des Schachern entwöhnte Judentum bekam einen Stich mitten ins Herz.³³⁶

This opening statement is of utmost importance as it summarizes the affects underpinning the Zionist ideology as a reaction to rejection that was projected onto ghetto Jews, which came to represent the epitome of Zionist discourse on honor. Herzl describes Jews confined to the ghetto as “petty traders,” as a large number of Jews in the *shtetls* were petty peddlers, in order to insinuate dishonesty and poverty, which were common Gentile stereotypes of Jews. “Petty trading” pertains additionally to the social class linked to a particular space, which represented a supposedly materialist Jewish culture.

³³⁴ “They should eventually find us a piece of land on the planet, a World Ghetto, if you will” Herzl, *Tagebücher*, vol. 1, 196. (My translation)

³³⁵ Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988), 75.

³³⁶ “The first impression which it (Anti-Semitism) made upon the Jews of today was one of astonishment, which gave way to pain and resentment. Perhaps our enemies are quite unaware how deeply they hurt the souls of those of us of the vanguard. That very part of Jewry which is modern and enlightened, which has outgrown the Ghetto and lost the habit of petty trading, was stabbed in the core of its heart.” Theodor Herzl, “Speech at the First Zionist Congress,” in Nahon, *The Jubilee of the first Zionist Congress, 1897–1947*, 51.

Herzl's words were nurtured in a Western European setting that looked down on such professions, but his disapproval was not of the anti-Semites. At that same Zionist Congress, Herzl acknowledged that what strengthened the bonds of Jews was antisemitism, the only factor they had in common: "Das Gefühl der Zusammengehörigkeit, welches man uns so häufig und grimmig vorwarf, es war in voller Auflösung begriffen, als uns der Antisemitismus anfiel. Dieser hat es wieder gestärkt."³³⁷ Herzl's injured self-esteem was more about what *Jews had done to and for themselves* rather than what Gentile antisemitism was doing to Jews. With this in mind, Herzl concluded his speech with the affirmation that the Congress, and with it his Zionist ambitions, should be "a source of honor" to all Jewry:

Aber wo wir auch seien und wie lange unser Werk bis zur Vollendung dauere, unser Kongreß sei ernst und hoch, den Unglücklichen zum Wohle, niemandem zu Trutz, allen Juden zur Ehre und würdig einer Vergangenheit, deren Ruhm wohl schon fern, aber unvergänglich ist!³³⁸

This approach would put him on a lifelong quest to restore his blemished honor, as he ultimately proved incapable of separating his personal idiosyncrasies from the ideology he formulated.

A Man of Honor: *Anständige, Ehrenmann, and Stolz*

Jacob Samuel in *Das neue Ghetto* is dragged by Rheinberg, his money-savvy stock market speculator brother-in-law, into a financial scheme that involves a mining company, an anti-Semite, and the stock market. Rheinberg and his Jewish business partner Wasserstein want to convert a coaling mine that is owned by Captain Von Schramm into a publicly trading company, from which they would all three benefit. They ask Jacob who, oddly, was

³³⁷ "The sentiment of solidarity with which we have been reproached so frequently and so acrimoniously was in process of disintegration at the period when we were attacked by anti-Semitism. And anti-Semitism served to strengthen it anew." Translation in Nahon, *The Jubilee of the first Zionist Congress, 1897–1947*, 51.

³³⁸ "But wherever we shall be, and however distant the accomplishment of our task, let our Congress be earnest and high-minded, a source of welfare to the unhappy, of defiance to none, or honor to all Jewry. Let it be worthy of our past, the renown of which, though remote, is eternal!" Translation in Nahon, *The Jubilee of the first Zionist Congress, 1897–1947*, 55

challenged some time ago by Von Schramm to a duel from which Jacob backed out with great shame and regret, to draw up the contract.

Herzl's main character, Jacob, is a perfectly emancipated and assimilated Jew, who is socially conscious and compares his whiteness to that of Gentiles. Jacob distanced himself from the ghetto a long time ago. He married into a rich Jewish aristocratic family and his wife Hermine adds "a new infusion to our blood ... she looks Christian. I hope our children resemble her."³³⁹ But there is more to Jacob's character than proper assimilation: He feels more at ease surrounded by Gentiles, as he has succeeded in surmounting the "invisible slavery" of the ghetto when he internalized Gentile traits from his best friend Franz Wurzelechner by "speaking his language, thinking his thoughts." From Franz, Jacob sentimentally admits, he learned "both great and small things. Accents, looks, gestures, how to bow without being servile and how to stand up without looking suspicious—and more!" Jacob admits that aside from his parents, Franz was the only family he had. He credits him for being his "christliche Mitbürger" (Christian fellow citizen), guiding him outside the ghetto, and all Jacob wants is to show him his gratitude.³⁴⁰

Jacob is described as an honest lawyer who only wants to represent "anständige Leute" (respectable, honest, decent people) because he is a very proud man (*Stolz*).³⁴¹ The only direct definition of honor that we get in the play is from Jacob's mother, Frau Samuel, who reminds him on his wedding day that she raised him to become an *Ehrenmann* (a man of honor):

Jetzt, mein Kind, sollst Du mit Ernst und Verstand. Dein neues Leben beginnen. (...)
Lebe nach Deinen Verhältnissen, damit Du nie Unwürdiges thun musst. Wir haben

³³⁹ Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 15.

³⁴⁰ Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 41.

³⁴¹ Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 10, 17.

Dich zu einem Ehrenmann erzogen, und Du hast auch nicht den Charakter, Dich für Geld zu erniedrigen.³⁴²

His mother advises him to live within his means because an honorable man would never belittle himself for money. Thus, following Herzl's logic, from the perspective of a traditional Jew, a proud Jew was one who was not tempted by greed and money. This reflects Herzl's internalized perception of Jews, whether they be "ghetto Jews" or "Big Jews" with money. Frau Samuel's advice originates in the historical greed and malignance of Jews, which Herzl despised:

We (Jews) cling to money because they flung us onto money. Moreover, we always had to be prepared to flee or to conceal our possessions from plunderers. This is how our relationship to money arose. Then, too, as Kammerknechte of the Emperor we constituted a kind of indirect taxation. We extracted money from the people which later was stolen or confiscated from us. All these sufferings rendered us ugly and transformed our character which had in earlier times been proud and magnificent [*stolz und großartig*].³⁴³

The assimilated Jacob, a struggling lawyer himself with a limited income, is a product of his mother's upbringing; he is never tempted by money and constantly prioritizes his ideals before financial gain, but he nonetheless has a different self-perception and self-conception of honor.

It seems evident that Herzl internalized Christian notions of honor, as all his characters want to attain the highest degrees of honorability, including himself. In "The Origin of the German Word *Ehre* 'Honor,'" Gustav Must explains that the word *Ehre* derives from Middle High German during the age of chivalry, originating in the Christian religious sphere, as the highest form of honor was due to God. Must explains that due to its religious connotations, *Ehre* was emotionally loaded and was therefore able to expand and mutate into new marginal meanings. In the time of the Reformation, it took on the sense of

³⁴² Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 10.

³⁴² "Now, my child, you should be serious and mindful. Begin your new life. (...) Live according to your resources, so that you never have to do anything unworthy. We raised you to be a man of honor, and it is not in your personality to humiliate yourself for money." Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 15. (My translation)

³⁴³ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol. 1, 9.

“glory.” It was Luther himself who “made *Ehre* the regular rendition of *Gloria*.”³⁴⁴ Luther’s ‘Theology of Glory’ (*theologia gloriae*) in his sermon on the ‘Two Kinds of Righteousness’ describes how man should handle in ‘proper righteousness’, meaning that one should constantly improve himself through work and progress to receive divine blessings and earthly rewards – it is about the progress of the Christian life.

This approach places greater emphasis on human abilities and human reason, as the more faith and obedience one puts in creating progress, the more God blesses him. It is called a theology of glory because glory is pointing towards humans.³⁴⁵ Herzl’s *Altneuland* is all about the reward of human work, progress and achievements accomplished by Jewish immigrants in Palestine. Metaphorically, the Zionist spiritual quest for glory is associated with hard work and sacrifice in the land of God; isn’t the creation of a state the ultimate need for glory? When Friedrich Loewenberg met and helped the poor Jewish family of Hayim Littwak, the peddler and his wife, Rebecca, their daughter Miriam and their determined son David, who would play a key role in the Jewish settler community in Palestine, the only request Loewenberg demanded in return for his favor was that David promises him to become “ein Ordentlicher Mensch.” (A Righteous man).³⁴⁶

With the age of the Enlightenment, however, external honor was contrasted with internal honor. *Ehre* expanded to include the secular, inward-facing virtues of *Pflicht* (duty), *Würde* (dignity), and *sittlicher Stolz* (ethical pride), all three of which carry a connotation of grandeur. What we notice here is how an old aristocratic ideal that evolved to accommodate bourgeois values was used by Herzl to describe his characters, as the notion of honor was

³⁴⁴ Gustav Must, “The Origin of the German Word *Ehre* 'Honor,’” *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 76, no. 4 (1961): 329.

³⁴⁵ Martin Luther, *Martin Luther's basic theological writings*, ed. Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989)

³⁴⁶ “A Righteous man” (my translation). Theodor Herzl, *Altneuland* (Berlin: Leipzig, 1900), 38. “Ordentlicher” has been translated as “upright” by David Simon Blondheim in Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (Federation of American Zionists, 1916), 21

essential for them to transcend the shame the Littwaks felt about their poverty, and Jacob's Jewishness and the humiliation they all experienced at the hands of anti-Semites.

We see that in his description and depiction of Jacob Samuel's personality and character, he alternates between *anständige*, *Ehrenmann*, and *Stolz*. In the novel *Altneuland* (Old New Land), Mr. Laschner, a prominent man on the stock exchange who is invited to a dinner party of assimilated Jews, tells other guests who were mocking the idea of a Jewish colonization of Palestine that: "Ich bin stolz, das ich ein Jud' bin, erflärte Laschner, denn wenn ich nicht wär' stolz, wär ich doch auch ein Jud'. Also, bin ich lieber gleich stolz."³⁴⁷ In sum, for Herzl, if you are a Jew, you are hollow unless you strive to attain gentile honor.

This is also reflected in *Das neue Ghetto*, in which Jacob confesses to Franz that Captain Von Schramm had challenged him to a duel but he, Jacob, apologized to Von Schramm to get out of it as his father was on his deathbed, and that he did not tell him, Franz, about it "aus Scham" (out of shame).³⁴⁸ Shame is what one feels when deprived of honor. Franz tells him that the whole encounter was futile and asks Jacob to forget about it, but he cannot: "I can't because I am a Jew." He explains that Franz could perceive such an event as a futility and move past it, but he, Jacob Samuel, could not because he will always be seen as "ein Feigling" (a coward).³⁴⁹ Franz, surprised, insists and asks him whether Von Schramm called him a coward after he had apologized. Jacob replies that he wished he did, but Von Schramm, a *Ehrenmann* (a man of honor), acted according to the codes of chivalry and thus for him, the matter was settled.³⁵⁰ Jacob sneers that in all cases, for Von Schramm "there is not much honor in fighting a Jew."³⁵¹ The "men of honor" to whom Jacob refers in the play

³⁴⁷ "I am proud to be a Jew, because if I were not proud, I should still be a Jew. I therefore prefer to be proud." Theodor Herzl, *Altneuland*, 17.

³⁴⁸ Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 25.

³⁴⁹ Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 25.

³⁵⁰ Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 25.

³⁵¹ Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 25.

are two Gentiles who look down on him: his friend Franz and his rival Von Schramm. Ironically, these are the two men whose recognition and acceptance he seeks throughout the play.

The Yellow Badge of *Judenehre*

The contrast between what Jacob's mother perceives a "man of honor" to be and represent and Jacob's own perception of that same notion becomes evident over the course of the play. Through the appropriation of honor, Jews transcended both the isolated medieval Jewish ghettos and the modern nineteenth century ghetto. What we see here is that there are two different notions of honor – the bourgeois concept of Jacob's mother and the aristocratic ideal of Jacob, which both are to some extent converging, and to some extent in tension. By giving the word *ghetto* a signifying power, Herzl hoped, honor would resonate in the heart of every Jew, compelling them to act like Jacob and embrace Christian values of honorability.

In a blueprint for what eventually became the 1896 pamphlet *The Jewish State*, Herzl describes in his diary how with the establishment of a society of Jews, an enterprising and progressive society that would evolve into an independent state to serve Diaspora Jews, "Judenehre beginnt" (Jewish honor begins).³⁵² Herzl then elaborates on the diverse functions, duties, and institutions that would comprise such a society, one which would represent "Jews from everywhere" in a yet-to-be-defined location, and would include, among others, an "office of nobility." Herzl wrote of it:

We shall recognize the present noblemen among the Jews if they bring proof to our free Office of Nobility by a certain date. This office will see to it that no overly grotesque nobility is smuggled in. For certain exalted purposes of our policy we need a State nobility, just as we shall have one single decoration (along the lines of the *legion d'honneur* [legion of honor]). This decoration will be called "Jewish honor"! It will consist of a yellow badge, and so we shall make our new honor out of our old disgrace. Our best men, and only they, will be allowed to wear it, which will bring it the respect of the entire world. It will not be available for money. Otherwise it would

³⁵² Herzl, *Tagebücher*, vol. 1, 38.

no longer be a reward for our people whom we shall sometimes ask to give their lives, or who will offer their lives to us.³⁵³

The institutions that Herzl envisioned establishing seem to be rooted in Gentile notions of honor. Herzl's words not only reflected that his Zionism was the language of an essentially aristocratic mindset, but his conceptualization of *Jewish honor* mirrored Gentile medieval chivalry that historically excluded Jews from the realm of honor. In *Altneuland*, an organization named the New Society establishes an "Ordenskapitel der Judenehre" (a Jewish legion of honor) in Palestine, modeled after the French "Ehrenlegion." Its emblem is "ein gelbes Band im Knopfloch" (a yellow ribbon in the button hole).³⁵⁴ Herzl insists that this Legion of honor was necessary as "Statesmen in the old days recognized that honor needs a currency of its own."³⁵⁵ In the same vein, only *noble* Jews in the novel are worthy of the yellow badge, a token used by Christians to distinguish and shame Jews, but which Herzl appropriates and endorses as an mark of honor that seems to be credited along Gentile criteria of knighthood, defined in the novel by whom is willing to die for Herzl's Zionist vision.

One cannot miss the relation between the 'Yellow badge' as a historical and social concept and its ramifications, and its emotional moorings; especially the shame it elucidates, which seems to stand midway between a social or moral idea and an emotion. In *The Politics of bad feeling*, Sarah Ahmed questions what it means "to claim a national identity through shame," specially that "shame exists alongside, rather than undo, national pride."³⁵⁶ The question here is how does Herzl delineate shame and honor and how does this separation go about? How does he find honor in putting the yellow badge centre stage in his yet-to-be established state for the Jews? And why does he seek to maintain a long tradition that was

³⁵³ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol. 1, 168.

³⁵⁴ Herzl, *Altneuland*, 119.

³⁵⁵ Herzl, *Altneuland*, 142.

³⁵⁶ Sara Ahmed, "The Politics of Bad Feeling," *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association Journal*, Vol.1 (2005): 72-85

established to mark and shame Jews? Ahmed tells us that “shame becomes not only a mode of recognition of injustices committed against others, but also a form of national building.”

The dichotomy mentioned here is striking yet seems to be inevitable in the formation of nationalist discourses. The current of German nationalism and its state-building process in the mid eighteenth century started to gradually determine the nation in racial lines. The citizens of the German nation state came to be defined as a German *Volk* that formed the national community. Whilst Germanness was expressed “in more geographically expansive terms, they explicated their cultural understanding of Germanness far more narrowly, (...) by turning increasingly to a new and decidedly racial form of antisemitism.”³⁵⁷

The intertwining of nationalism and antisemitism has been researched and theorized extensively, especially in critical theory.³⁵⁸ The importance of this intertwining for this chapter relates to the role that “shame” plays in forging social cohesion and stability. The shaming and disdain of Jews functioned as a unifying factor for Germans divided by region, class, and confession in a national community. Michelle Z. Rosaldo explains that “Assuming people everywhere to have destructive impulses requiring their society’s control, several theorists have suggested that affective sanctions – “shame” or “guilt,” the eye of social expectation, or the voice of inner principle and rule – will operate (either together or apart) in checking the asocial striving of the self.”³⁵⁹ Shame has been proposed as a guardian of social norms and has thus been associated, Rosaldo tells us, “with those societies that subordinate the person to a hierarchical whole, displaying more concern for continuity than for change.”

³⁵⁷ Pieter M. Judson, "Nationalism In The Era Of The Nation State, 1870-1945", *Oxford Handbook Of Modern German History*, (2011): 499-526

³⁵⁸ This bibliography has been provided in the first chapter. See also: Karin Stoenner and Johannes Hoepoltzeder, "Nationalism and Antisemitism in the Postnational Constellation: Thoughts on Horkheimer, Adorno, and Habermas," in *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity*, ed. Charles Asher Small (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2013), 119

³⁵⁹ Michelle Z. Rosaldo, "Toward an Anthropology of self and feeling," in *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*, eds Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. LeVine (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 148

This analysis also engages the pivotal role that Thomas Scheff argues shame plays in generating war and violence. In *Bloody Revenge: Emotions, Nationalism, and War*, Scheff looks at how blaming Jews for national and personal shame (military losses, cultural decline, and supposed racial defilement) serves as a means of rigidifying German and Jewish identity categories. National shame, therefore, functions to justify systematic legal exclusion and, ultimately, systematic violence.³⁶⁰ This can explain why antisemitism was a constitutive component of German nationalism and why it became a component of Zionism.

Herzl's interconnection of the creation of a Jewish *Legion d'honneur*, a token of nationalism, militarism and masculinity, with the yellow badge, the epitome of historical Jewish shaming, does not stem from self-hatred as one could read it, but rather from a calculated understanding of emotions as "processes that are best understood with reference to the cultural scenarios and associations they evoke."³⁶¹ However shame does not turn into violence against the *other* on its own. Affect patterns the way we perceive the world, thus when discussing the role of emotion in mobilizing social movements, one needs to ask how and when does shame transition from being an affect to collective action. Sociologist James Jasper tells us that once a moral shock – strong feelings of shame - has taken place, it needs to be tied to blame in order to result in political action and transition to rage, and thus to violence.³⁶² Consequently, by shaming Jews for lacking honor, Herzl promised them a sense of justice in the promised land and shifted the blame for any failure to create his state on the natives that would stand in the way of his project, and thus redirected that violence towards them, and only then would the yellow badge become a symbol of honor.³⁶³

³⁶⁰ Thomas J. Schaff, *Bloody revenge: Emotions, Nationalism, and War* (London: Routledge, 2018)

³⁶¹ Rosaldo, "Toward an Anthropology of self and feeling," 142.

³⁶² James M. Jasper, "The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and around Social Movements," *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 13, No. 3. (Sep., 1998) : 397-424.

³⁶³ We will see how this point will develop once Zionist settlers would implement their colonizing project in Palestine. A section in Chapter 6 discusses how the word "Pogrom" was juxtaposed to events in Palestine to justify violence against the native population.

An Honorable Assimilation

The second part of *Das neue Ghetto* pertains to the role of the mine and its workers. As Jacob agrees to prepare the paperwork for the deal, he gets more involved with the miners, the struggling proletariat, who come to see him as their advocate and savior. Jacob believes in social justice; he is made aware of their deplorable working conditions and finds the situation inadmissible and unsustainable. Von Schramm neglected the coal mine in question for years, prompting the workers, who were in close contact with Jacob, to strike. A disaster ensues when the mine collapses and many miners die.

The workers here represent the masses, approaching Jacob because they too want a way out of the suffocating darkness of Von Schramm's mine. To Rabbi Friedheimer's question, Jacob has a final answer: "Dass ich diesen Moses von Mainz liebe und auf ihn stolz bin. Und so muss Jeder von uns handeln. Der Nothruf kann auch einmal echt sein." Jacob acknowledges that he loves Moses of Mainz who left the ghetto to help a "goy" (non-Jew) and that he is proud of him. He announces that everyone should act like him and answer cries for help and, consequently, he refuses to remain passive and goes to the aid of the miners.

Throughout the play, the only description of a physical ghetto that we get is that of the mine: it is dark, cramped, and horrible, with children and women in torn clothes, charcoal black bodies shivering under rags. The children's faces are ripened by suffering, and Herzl shows them looking on in horror at the black hole from which their fathers' dead bodies are being pulled.³⁶⁴ Ironically, Herzl's description of the mine seems intended to evoke the stereotypical image of the Jewish ghetto, even though here Jacob wants to free non-Jewish miners from a Gentile ghetto owned by Von Schramm. Interestingly, a stereotypical ghetto image seems to merge with an image of the oppressive features of industrial modernity.

³⁶⁴ Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 72–73.

With the loss of the mine, Von Schramm goes bankrupt. Enraged, he walks into Jacob's office and accuses him of orchestrating the miners' strike that led to the flooding of the mine and the death of the workers. Von Schramm remarks that he did wonder at the time, "Was thut der Jud' dort?" (what is the Jew doing there?), to which Jacob proudly answered: "Der Jude that die Christenpflicht"³⁶⁵ (the Jew was fulfilling his Christian duty). Like Moses ben Abraham, Jacob answered a cry of help, but one from outside a Gentile ghetto. He went to the rescue of the miners like an honorable Christian, and he can therefore finally face Von Schramm, a chivalry captain and a "man of honor" who represents, in Jacob's eyes, the kind of honor he has been striving for. Again, what seems to be happening here is the collision of different historical takes on honor.

In *Altneuland*, which depicts the process of Jewish colonization of Palestine as an inevitable historical process aiming to rescue European Jews from persecution, Herzl clarifies what he meant with answering the call for help: "Aber in der Judengasse waren sie ehrlos, wehrlos, rechtlos, und als sie die Gasse verließen, hörten sie auf Juden zu sein. Beides mußte da sein: Freiheit und Gemeingefühl."³⁶⁶ He explains that in the ghettos, Jews lacked honor, protection, and rights. Once they exited the ghettos, they ceased to be Jews because, though they gained their freedom, they forgot about their sense of community and solidarity. That sense of community could also be understood as the call from outside the ghetto that Jacob answered in *Das neue Ghetto*—the filthy and claustrophobic mine could represent a different social class, one for which Jacob sacrificed his life. While at one point Von Schramm calls him a conspiring Jewish thug, Jacob faces him not only because he finally perceived himself as his equal, but also for the gentile masses whose respect he wanted to win.

³⁶⁵ Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 84.

³⁶⁶ Herzl, *Altneuland*, 116. "In the Judengasse, they had been without honor and without rights; and when they left it, they ceased to be Jews. Freedom and a sense of solidarity were both need", Herzl, *The Jewish State*, 139

Jacob's death is steeped in morality and reads as his bid to assert his pride in the eyes of Gentiles of all classes. In this sense, Jacob, like Herzl, wants to be praised and granted dignity by both Gentiles and Jews for his actions, though Gentile society is his primary target. Jacob's final words are a cry to his brothers in the ghetto: "Jews, my brothers, they will first let you live again—when you ... Why do you hold me—so firmly? ... I want—out! ... Out—out—of the—ghetto!"³⁶⁷ Although Jacob has never lived in the physical Jewish ghetto, in the play, he hints that segregation is the metaphorical ghetto against which he is fighting and for which he risked his life: "Das Ghetto ist die Absonderung, die ich nicht will, die mich kränkt und die ich ertragen soll."³⁶⁸ By saving the Christians in the mines and fighting a duel with a Christian, Jacob answers his life calling. Herzl wanted to erase the line of demarcation between both worlds.

Finally, and surely a hint of the role that Christians would play in Herzl's future Zionist endeavours, in the final scene of the play, Jacob's bleeding body is carried by two Red Cross nurses to his final place of rest, recalling the image of a crucified Christ. It seems that Herzl deliberately created this scene as a tribute to his Christian Zionist ally and the founding father of the Red Cross, Henri Dunant (1828–1910). Dunant was a Swiss Calvinist missionary whose biblical beliefs in the return of Christ to Palestine led him to call for the conquest of Arab lands by Western "civilization."

In 1866, Dunant launched the *Société internationale universelle pour la rénovation de l'Orient*, through which he advocated for the restoration of Israelites to Palestine because "Israélites, ceux-ci, rassasiés de richesses, mais avides de considération et d'honneurs, semblent ne plus aspirer qu'à se fondre dans le flot général des nations."³⁶⁹ Dunant was

³⁶⁷ Theodor Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 100.

³⁶⁸ "The ghetto is this exclusion, that I don't want, that offends me but that I have to endure" (my translation, Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 44).

³⁶⁹ "Israelites, though submerged in wealth but eager for recognition and honor, their only aspiration is to merge into the general flow of nations" (My translation). Henri Dunant, *Société internationale universelle pour la rénovation de l'Orient* (Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire de Genève, 1866) E2246/12, 3.

certain that the establishment of Jewish colonies in Palestine under the patronage of Napoleon III would regenerate Jews politically and morally. Dunant's advocacy for the creation of "*un petit État hébreux*" (a small Hebrew state) in Palestine led Herzl his way.³⁷⁰ Herzl made Dunant a Christian guest of honor at the first Zionist Congress in 1897 and insisted on thanking publicly the Christian Zionist "Mr. Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross."³⁷¹

The Ghetto As a Contrived Metaphor

Kornberg dedicates an entire chapter to the place of *Das neue Ghetto* in Herzl's intellectual and ideological development.³⁷² He positions the play as a rejection of assimilation:

Herzl's insight into the psychic price Jews paid by assimilating. Embracing the majority culture, they had internalized its Jewish stereotypes. Assimilation had bred Jewish self-contempt and an idealization of Gentiles, persuaded them that Jewishness carried a taint of materialism and cowardice, and robbed them of self-respect. For this reason, Jews themselves had to alter the terms of gentile acceptance. By contrast, Herzl now wished to point to the ambiguities of assimilation, for while improving Jews, they were now rendered both inwardly and outwardly defenseless in the face of anti-Semitism.³⁷³

Kornberg's "new Jew" thus frees himself from the fantasy of assimilation, yet oddly, this new Jew becomes a Gentile and takes up duels to find his honor and gain recognition. Kornberg analyzes this transformation when Jacob, to avenge his wounded pride, defies Von Schramm in a duel on behalf of Jewish honor: "All the virtues Jacob had aspired to, that once marked his distance from Jewishness—pride, honor, rectitude, courage, manliness—were now to be redefined as a Jewish possibility. Jewishness itself was to be recast into something noble and

³⁷⁰ Dunant, *Société internationale universelle pour la rénovation de l'Orient*, 3.

³⁷¹ "Theodor Herzl's Closing Remarks at the First Zionist Congress," in Nahon, *The Jubilee of the first Zionist Congress, 1897–1947*, 83. See also: Dominique Shaul Ferrero, "Henri Dunant and Zionism" in *The First Zionist Congress in 1897: Causes, Significance, Topicality*, ed. Heiko Haumann (S. Karger: Basel, 1997), 208.

³⁷² Jacques Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 130–158.

³⁷³ Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism*, 131

good.” According to Kornberg’s reading of the play, by breaking the invisible walls of the ghetto, the Jew was to gain what they lacked: national pride and a more complete collective identity. This is, however, a false reading of the ghetto as a metaphor. The real ghetto kept Jews inside physically and spiritually, while the metaphorical ghetto did neither. The Jews of Western Europe were, at this point, assimilated physically and spiritually. Even Rabbi Friedheimer, who warns of the dangers outside of the physical ghetto, acknowledges that unlike Russian migrants, they, at least, could stay in their *Vaterlande* (fatherland), protected by law as equal citizens in spite of the condescending looks they occasionally have to endure.³⁷⁴

Jacob is adamant that only the visible walls have fallen. In the play, he is proud of his friendship with Franz until the latter informs him that his political ambitions prohibit him from being associated with a Jew any further. Jacob is devastated and disoriented, his self-perception shattered: "They cast me out, they want nothing to do with me!" he laments. "He was the best of the lot, and look what he did to me! Oh, one could laugh—or weep. Get away from me, Jew! Back to the ghetto!" This rejection represents (both for Jacob and for Herzl) Gentile society’s rejection of all Jews. It affects the protagonist deeply—“this wound will never heal”—and makes him realize that he will be forever excluded from the social class and life he wants to be part of. He realizes that, despite having eliminated his Jewish “faults,” he must have retained some element of a spiritual or moral ghetto inside himself, one that is so invisible to assimilated Jews yet clearly visible to Gentiles: "The outer barriers [the walls of the ghetto] had to be pulled down from the outside, but the inner ones we must uproot ourselves. We ourselves! From ourselves!" Here we finally understand that those barriers are Gentile prejudice and the generalizations about Jews that crop up at times.

³⁷⁴ Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto*, 28.

Kornberg, once more, misreads the duel that ends Jacob's life—it is not reinforcing Jewish uniqueness, but is rather a final attempt by Jacob to assimilate and to face Von Schramm, who, according to Jacob, saw no honor in dueling a Jew. Jacob was seeking to be perceived as courageous or knightly by opting for the ultimate form of self-sacrifice, namely forfeiting his life, to be worthy of Gentile recognition. Herzl's two-faceted metaphor of the ghetto has an assimilated Jew on the one side and an anti-Semite on the other. What is decisive in the attainment of "honor," then, is a change in the spiritual and moral content of Jewish self-image. Herzl's endeavour in this play is filled with paradoxes and contradictions and comes across as a clinical trial of his internalized Gentile pathologies. The ghetto Jew is contrasted and defined as everything Jewish modernity could not yet reach: premodern, primitive, and passive, while simultaneously a premodern representation of ancient strength, pride, and greatness. To reconcile these two inconsistencies, Herzl states that the once honorable ghetto Jews lost their pride due to their confinement in the ghetto and so, once they break free, they would restore it.

The play's storylines, however, do not seem entirely consistent with Herzl's understanding of Jewish honor. Nineteenth-century European anti-Semitic discourse predominantly focused on Jewish bankers and politicians; money-making Jews on the rise were contrasted with aristocrats in decline, shaping the social-urban conflicts of *fin-de-siècle* Europe. As such, the anti-Semites did not despise the weak and deprived ghetto Jew only but the other types of Jews as well—the strong, assimilated, well-connected, upwardly mobile and powerful Jews—and in order to shame them, anti-Semites used the stereotype of the ghetto Jew. This depiction of the aristocratic Jew as a ghetto Jew was a thorn in the side of every Zionist. This is where we understand that Zionist leaders, in this case Herzl, have always projected an inferiority complex onto the ghetto Jew.

Das neue Ghetto is a psychodrama in which Herzl re-enacts his personal traumas and dilemmas, but without being able to free himself from his self-imposed shackles. After completing the first version of the play on November 8, 1894, Herzl urged his close friend and celebrated Viennese playwright Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931) to present the work to Viennese or German theaters anonymously, stating that he wanted “to do something for the Jews,” but still felt uneasy about his Jewishness.³⁷⁵ Schnitzler had some serious reservations about *The New Ghetto*, especially Jacob’s closing line, “[...] they won’t let you live unless you learn to die.” After centuries of persecution, Schnitzler thought, Jews had learned plenty about death. He was surprised by Herzl’s portrayal of Jews and told him: “I miss the figure of the strong Jew in your play. It isn’t even true, as you suggest, that all ghetto Jews were either despicable or despised. There were others—precisely the ones whom the anti-Semites hated most of all.”³⁷⁶ Herzl responded that he’d yet to meet any in Vienna.³⁷⁷ After Herzl’s passing, Schnitzler had a character in one of his novels say:

I myself have only succeeded up to the present in making the acquaintance of one genuine anti-Semite. I’m afraid I am bound to admit [...] that it was a well-known Zionist leader.³⁷⁸

Schnitzler would not be the only one disagreeing with Herzl’s perception of the Jews. Bernard Lazare (1865- 1903), a French assimilated Jewish literary critic who participated in the discussions of early Zionist ideology as a sympathizer of Herzl’s Jewish nationalism before parting ways with his separatist ideology,³⁷⁹ published in the weekly *La Justice* an article titled “Le Nouveau Ghetto”, only nine days after Herzl finished his “Das Neue Ghetto”. However, beyond the convergence of the titles, is the interesting fact that both

³⁷⁵ Ernst Pawel, *The labyrinth of exile : a life of Theodor Herzl*, (New York : Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1989), 202

³⁷⁶ Schnitzler Briefe, 1981, 237-239

³⁷⁷ Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism*, 154.

³⁷⁸ Arthur Schnitzler, *The Road to the Open* (London: Howard Latimer Ltd., 1913), 69.

³⁷⁹ French Jews will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

authors had a different understanding and solution to the newly resurrected ‘moral ghetto’ in Western Europe.

Lazard’s plea was a call for French patriotism to fight against antisemitism, which no longer can confine Jews into physical ghettos and thus has enveloped and surrounded them with what he calls a “moral ghetto” that renders Jews into “une race à l'agonie”:

(...) Nous voyons se reconstituer peu a peu un ghetto moral. On ne cloître plus les israélites, on ne tend plus des chaînes aux extrémités des rues qu'ils habitent, mais on crée autour d'eux une atmosphère hostile, atmosphère de défiance, de haine latente, de préjugés inavoués et d'autant plus puissants, un ghetto autrement terrible que celui auquel on pourrait échapper par la révolte ou par l'exil. Cette animosité se dissimule communément et cependant le juif intelligent, et il n'est pas rare, la perçoit; il sent une résistance devant lui, a l'impression d'un mur que des adversaires ont dressé entre lui et ceux au milieu desquels il vit. La race juive est à une période décisive, elle est à ce moment redoutable dans l'existence des peuples ou l'on entre dans la mort: c'est une race à l'agonie.³⁸⁰

Anti-Semites resurrected this moral ghetto to prevent the assimilation of Jews, Lazare writes, as he denounces misoneism and nationalism as the two conservative forces that forged antisemitism as an ideology:

Nous touchons là en effet à une des causes les plus profondes de l'état d'esprit antisémite: la résistance des corps sociaux à se laisser pénétrer. (...) et il croit devoir se préserver de tout contact étranger: le misonéisme et le nationalisme sont les deux formes de cette tendance conservatrice, forme idéologique et forme pratique.

Unlike Herzl who believed that Jews carried the seeds of antisemitism wherever they went, Lazare placed the seeds of antisemitism where they belonged: in the existence of “un chauvinisme protectionniste,” and called therefore on the French nation to assimilate itself to all new elements it receives. At the end of his plea for a collective national fight against antisemitism, Lazar provides a solution to the Jewish moral ghetto that is very divergent from Herzl’s:

Le problème semble d'abord insoluble. En réalité il ne l'est pas. Toute évolution Idéologique, ou morale, ou sociale, se fait non pas d'une façon continue, mais d'après

³⁸⁰ Bernard Lazard, “Le Nouveau Ghetto,” *La Justice*, 17 Novembre 1894.

un rythme de balancier. Nous sommes depuis quelques années dans cette période où le balancier recule, mais il ne faut pas oublier que ses amplitudes rythmiques diminuent peu à peu. L'Antisémitisme n'aura qu'un temps. Tout comme un certain patriotisme étroit et sectaire. Il disparaîtra avec l'égoïsme national et c'est aux uns, qui déjà ont fait tomber les chaînes, qu'il appartient aussi de détruire le nouveau ghetto.

Lazar's divergent approach to the same discourse, whose argument, too, are politically motivated, reflects a larger question that has concerned Herzl from the onset: How could European Jews gain Jewish honor that was universally recognized (by Gentiles)? The answer that Herzl's Zionism provided was to commit cultural suicide. In other words, it implied a preference for the eradication of Jewishness in order to gain European honorable traits.

Herzl, Nordau, and the Forging of Zionist Honor

Herzl's internalized Gentile sentiments of contempt and shame toward diaspora Jews, his ambivalence toward antisemitism, and his quest for honor carried over from his play and diaries into the Zionist documents and sessions that forged the ideology. A new phase in the development of modern Zionism began with his initiation of the Zionist congresses, which brought together supporters and opponents of the Zionist idea and representatives from Jewish communities from various countries. The Zionist congresses were of central importance to the nascent movement, as they established and spread the newly forged ideology through the existing groups and transnational networks.

At the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897, attended by over two hundred delegates from at least seventeen countries, Herzl could not hide his internalized, condescending attitude toward the delegates from Eastern Europe:

... wir hatten uns nie etwas anderes vorgestellt, als daß sie auf unsere geistige Hilfe und Führung angewiesen seien. Und da tauchte vor uns auf dem Baseler Kongreß ein russisches Judentum auf, das wir in solcher Kulturstärke nicht erwartet hatten. ... Und welche Beschämung für uns, die wir geglaubt hatten, ihnen überlegen zu sein.³⁸¹

³⁸¹ "... we had always expected that they would be dependent on us for intellectual assistance and leadership. But at the congress in Basel, we experienced a Russian Jewry with a cultural strength that we had not expected ... And how shameful of

Although the congresses were meant to be a forum and an organ for all Jews worldwide, at the second Zionist Congress, Herzl did not refrain from calling for a revolt against Jewish communities that refused to acknowledge Zionism as the new Zion.³⁸²

Herzl's conflated ghetto metaphor was utilized in the formulation of his Jewish nationalism along racial lines. It becomes clear that even if antisemitism provided the final impetus for the emergence of Zionism, its root can be traced to the search for a new self-image as a Jew. Citizenship was contrasted with the economic, social, political, religious, and cultural changes occurring at the end of the eighteenth century. Zionists such as Herzl were actively seeking to change Jewish tradition and emancipate themselves based on a new self-image, predicated on Gentile notions. Herzl defined Zionists at the third Zionist Congress as "a people striving for existence, for honor, and for liberty."³⁸³ The status quo for him provided Jews with only two options: either "apathetic submission" or "revolt against an unjust social system."³⁸⁴ Zionism was the ultimate salvation: it offered Jews their own civilization abroad through fulfilling the messianic prophecy.

Herzl believed that by removing Jews, the disruptive factor, from non-Jewish societies, these spaces could remain honorable and Jews could be regenerated elsewhere to become honorable:

Wo wir endlich als freie Männer auf unserer eigenen Scholle leben und in unserer eigenen Heimat ruhig sterben können. Wo auch wir zur Belohnung großer Taten die Ehre bekommen. Wo wir in Frieden mit aller Welt leben, die wir durch unsere Freiheit befreit, durch unsern Reichtum bereichert und durch unsere Größe vergrößert haben. So daß der Spotttruf „Jude“ zu einem Ehrenwort wird, wie Deutscher, Engländer, Franzose, kurz, wie die Namen aller Kulturvölker.³⁸⁵

us to believe ourselves to be superior to them. ..." (my translation, Theodor Herzl, *Der Baseler Kongress, in Ders., Gesammelte Zionistische Werke*, vol. 1[Zionistische Schriften: Tel Aviv, 1934], 198).

³⁸² Theodor Herzl, "Second Congress Address," in *The Congress Addresses of Theodor Herzl*, trans. Nellie Straus (New York: Federation of American Zionists, 1917), 11.

³⁸³ Theodor Herzl, "Third Congress Address," in *The Congress Addresses of Theodor Herzl*, 21.

³⁸⁴ Herzl, "Third Congress Address," 21.

³⁸⁵ Herzl, *Tagebücher*, vol. 1, 208. Translation in Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol.1, 181: "Where we, too, can expect honor as a reward for great deeds; where we shall live at peace with all the world (...) So that the derisive cry "Jew!" may become an honorable appellation, like "German," "Englishman," "Frenchman"—in short, like that of all civilized peoples. So that by means of our State we can educate our people for tasks which still lie beyond our horizon."

The ulterior motive of the Zionist Organization (ZO), which was founded at the congress in Basel, was to implement his preoccupation values of honor grounded in the codes of European and especially German aristocracy: “I should gain greater glory if I moved to the Promised Land only with the poor and the wretched and made a proud and respected people out of them.”³⁸⁶

Herzl was not the only Zionist leader to have internalized the notion of the dishonorable Jew, a mode that came to influence Jewish subject production in discourse and religion. Max Nordau (1849–1923), his closest ally and cofounder of the Zionist movement, stated at that same first Zionist Congress that due to their diaspora, “the majority of Jews are a race of accursed beggars.”³⁸⁷ Nordau came up with an entire doctrine to revive a kind of Jew that was not “odd,”³⁸⁸ “cowardly,”³⁸⁹ or “sick and degenerate,”³⁹⁰ all perceived as the symptoms of the Jewish condition in the diaspora. Nordau championed a complete reform of the Jewish body through his “muscular Judaism” to nurture a new generation of physically fit Jews in opposition to what he perceived as the “weak” Jews of the ghetto. In *Écrits sionistes*, Nordau asks whether the Jewish race is genetically small or if this was due to their degeneration over the centuries.³⁹¹ Nonetheless, for him, the only way to nullify all Jewish deviancy was through the revival of the “dignity of the Jew.”³⁹²

³⁸⁶ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol.1, 102.

³⁸⁷ Max Simon Nordau and Bentzion Netanyahu, “Address at the First Congress,” *Max Nordau to His People: A Summons and a Challenge* (New York: Published for Nordau Zionist Society by Scopus Publishing Company, inc., 1941), 73.

³⁸⁸ “We have drawn the conclusion that we are hated and persecuted (...) because we are burdened by fanatical traditions coming from dark times of the Middle Ages.” Nordau and Netanyahu, “Address at the Third Zionist Congress,” *Max Nordau to His People*, 92.

³⁸⁹ Nordau described anti-Zionists as “senile children,” suffering from “a poor, tremulous voice” with “eyes of moles and brains of sparrows” who, in times of Jewish prosecutions, would helplessly and cowardly “cry to Heaven: Can such barbarism be imagined in our country!?” Nordau, “Address at the Third Zionist Congress,” *Max Nordau to His People*, 94.

³⁹⁰ This ailing Jewish body is described as literally and metaphorically degenerating. As Nordau claimed, physical smallness in Jews reflected a bodily degeneration, as they “necessarily lost their ability for physical fitness, having lived for a thousand years deprived of exercise in the ghetto.” Nordau, *Écrits sionistes*, ed. Baruch Hagani (Paris: Librairie Lipschutz, 1936).

³⁹¹ Nordau, *Écrits sionistes*, 114.

³⁹² Nordau, *Écrits sionistes*, 111.

Nordau used the contrived ghetto metaphor in his opening speech at the first Zionist Congress, where he gave a general overview of the developments occurring in Western and Eastern Europe in regard to Jews, summarizing the kinds of discriminations and attacks they were facing. Though “Jewish misery prevails” wherever Jews settled in large numbers, Nordau distinguished two kinds of Jewish miseries: the material and the moral. Although the “Jew without rights,” as Nordau called the East European Jew, no longer had to carry the yellow badge, the separatist nature of European Jews made them more distinct than a yellow badge ever could: “where the authorities did not lock him up in a ghetto, he built one for himself.”³⁹³ The physical and material peculiarity and otherness of the Jewish body was despised by the assimilated Jew who was repelled by the ghetto, as the word came to be “associated with feelings of shame and humiliation.” Nordau understood that by reviving the ghetto metaphor and connecting its ethnicity to an ideology, he politicized the ghetto. Political Zionists such as Herzl and Nordau understood that their movement would benefit from the making of new permanent identities: through the contrived metaphor of the ghetto, they were able to erase both the ghetto and the identities forged through assimilation and recreate them as political identities by using a language modeled after the European nation state.

Nordau’s words were double-edged: notwithstanding his own internalization of the ghetto as a space of medieval confinement and degeneracy, he sought to reverse the humiliating perception of the ghetto in favor of Zionism. He proclaimed that although Eastern Jews suffered from a “material misery” that rendered their bodies and minds weak, the ghetto was able to preserve their “moral respect.” The medieval ghetto, in which they were confined (and where they later confined themselves for self-preservation) was not a prison but a refuge with “the spiritual and moral value of a parental home ... where all specific Jewish qualities

³⁹³ Nordau, “Opening Speech at the First Zionist Congress,” *The Jubilee of the first Zionist Congress, 1897–1947*, 58.

were esteemed,” even those qualities despised outside the ghetto. Nordau believed that despite their shabby attire and unreligious habits, the separation psychology of the ghetto Jew made his existence “secure through invisible walls which were much thicker and higher than the stone walls that visibly shut them in.”³⁹⁴

Nordau told the audience that this separatist approach functioned as a safety net that safeguarded Judaism and, with it, a community feeling. West European Jews on the other hand suffered from “moral misery,” as their survival instinct no longer kept them in isolation; they had found their salvation in assimilation.³⁹⁵ At the launch of the Zionist movement, its leaders purposely campaigned against assimilation as an act of treason, understanding that the revival of the ghetto metaphor would be beneficial for their project. They used this aggressive language to demarcate the shape of the new ideology and erase past identities, believing that real salvation for Jews could only be found within Zionism.

Jewish Critique of Zionist Honor

The priorities inherent in the structure of the WZO and the alliances it established with anti-Semites “in the name of the national idea” were met with outrage and rejection by Jewish groups on all parts of the spectrum. Herzl, however, did not see any harm in collaborating with anti-Semites and stated that, as Zionists, they “welcome the friendship of Christian Zionists.”³⁹⁶ This new conception of Jewishness was not acclaimed everywhere by Jewish communities, which did not refrain from publicly expressing their anti-Zionism, despite the rise of antisemitism.

For instance, Herzl's contemporary, Moritz Güdemann (1835–1918), chief rabbi of Vienna, saw the role of medieval Judaism not through the lens of persecutions but through

³⁹⁴ Nordau, “Opening Speech at the First Zionist congress,” *The Jubilee of the first Zionist Congress, 1897-1947*, 59.

³⁹⁵ Nordau, “Address at the First Zionist Congress (1897),” *Max Nordau to His People*, 67.

³⁹⁶ Herzl, “Second Congress Address,” in *The Congress Addresses of Theodor Herzl*, 12.

one of cosmopolitan learning and exchange. He published a pamphlet, *Nationaljudentum* (Jewish Nationalism) in 1897 (the year of the first Zionist Congress), wherein he credited the rise of political Zionism to disillusioned Jews' acceptance of the anti-Semitic charge that diaspora Jews were perpetual aliens.³⁹⁷ Güdemann was one of the many Jews who contributed to the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the "science of the Jews," an anthropological discipline born in the 1820s within the framework of the Union for Culture and Science of the Jews (*Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden*), established in 1819, in order to provide an Enlightened and scientific understanding of Judaism that would be meaningful to both Jews and non-Jews.³⁹⁸

Although not a historian by training, Güdemann devoted his scholarship to the history of Jewish culture and education during the Middle Ages and defended Judaism against the attacks of Christian theologians. His three-volume *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Cultur der abendländischen Juden*, published in the 1880s, marked "the actual watershed in the history of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, because it was the first systematic attempt to examine some of the underlying trends and institutions of medieval Jewish life in terms of their non-Jewish milieu."³⁹⁹ Güdemann insisted that the bible remained the core textbook for the "university of life," he nonetheless referred to Jews as standing on a higher moral and cultural level than their Christian contemporaries, which was an insult to Herzl's German patriotism.

Herzl, after all, never denied his European whiteness: "I am a German-speaking Jew from Hungary and can never be anything but a German. At present I am not recognized as a German. But that will come once we are over there."⁴⁰⁰ The first power Herzl tried to interest

³⁹⁷ Moritz Güdemann, *Nationaljudentum* (Wien, 1897), 4–6, 7, 24, 35, 40. Quoted from: Ismar Schorsch, "Moritz Güdemann: Rabbi, Historian and Apologist," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 11, no.1, (January 1966): 52.

³⁹⁸ *Wissenschaft des Judentums* is the scholarly study of Jewish religion, history, and literature, which originated in the 1820s. It challenged many traditional principles and was therefore accused of having assimilatory motives.

³⁹⁹ Güdemann, *Nationaljudentum*, 4-6, 7, 24, 35, 40. Quoted from Schorsch, "Moritz Güdemann: Rabbi, Historian and Apologist," 42.

⁴⁰⁰ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol.1, 171.

in his project was Germany. Indeed, even before he wrote down his thoughts, the first

European statesman whose opinion he tried to gauge was Bismarck. To him Herzl wrote:

Only the man who has stitched a torn Germany together with his iron needle in such a wonderful way... only he is big enough to tell me whether my plan is a truly saving idea or an ingenious fantasy.⁴⁰¹

Bismarck did not reply to this letter but that did not refrain him from seeking German recognition. The acknowledgment of his ambitions by Germany specifically was at the core of Herzl's obsession and quest for recognition. As early as June 1895 Herzl had already prepared a memorandum about the Jewish question, which he hoped to present to Emperor William II.⁴⁰² Herzl was thrilled by the idea he could have the opportunity to meet William II personally and present him with a solution that could alleviate Germany's domestic problems and, on the other hand, serve the Empire's goals in the East.

Not everyone shared Herzl's separatist views. In a spirited correspondence with Herzl,⁴⁰³ Güdemann refuted his *Kuckucksei of Jewish nationalism*: "Jews were not a nation, they had in common only their belief in God and that Zionism was incompatible with the teachings of Judaism."⁴⁰⁴ Güdemann positioned Judaism as a part of Europe, with its Jewish population as a mixture of Europeans and non-Europeans who had evolved through mutual influence, and despite exclusion and affliction. Güdemann's Judaism was European while Herzl saw in all of Judaism's religious aspects the Oriental, ghetto character. He insisted that all the ghetto traits he despised were Oriental, and once Jews were freed from the ghetto, they would leave them behind and acquire proper and honorable Gentile manners and skills; breaking the walls of the ghetto was an *affaire d'honneur*.

⁴⁰¹ Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, Vol. 1, 120

⁴⁰² Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, Vol. 1., 189-190

⁴⁰³ For more on the correspondence between Herzl and Güdemann, see: Josef Fraenkel, "Moritz Güdemann and Theodor Herzl," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 11, no. 1 (January 1966): 67-82.

⁴⁰⁴ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism: From the French Revolution to the Establishment of the State of Israel* (New York: MJF Books, 1972), 96

Ahad Ha'am (1856–1927), born Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg, the founder of cultural Zionism and a major opponent of Herzlian Zionism,⁴⁰⁵ valorized Jewish religion and culture and was very critical of the condition of assimilated Jews who refuted their Jewishness. Ahad Ha'am believed that Judaism and Jewishness survived for centuries despite the conditions of the diaspora; however, their encounter with secular modernity posed an unprecedented challenge to their religious faith and their spiritual purpose. Jews in Europe, he believed, would not be able to maintain their own culture unless they developed a spiritual center in their ancestral land to safeguard Jewish distinction. Ahad Ha'am was equally critical of Herzl's Zionism, as Jewish notions of the "the value of life and the essence of honor" were incompatible with the thinking of Herzl's heroes in his writings:

It is not only Jews who have come out of the Ghetto: Judaism has come out, too ... Judaism has come out (or is coming out) of its own accord wherever it has come into contact with modern culture. This contact with modern culture overturns the defences of Judaism from within, so that Judaism can no longer remain isolated and live a life apart. The spirit of our people strives for development: it wants to absorb those elements of general culture which reach it from outside, to digest them and to make them a part of itself, as it has done before at different periods of its history. (...) When it leaves the Ghetto walls it is in danger of losing its essential being or-at best-its national unity: it is in danger of being split up into as many kinds of Judaism, each with a different character and life, as there are countries of the Jewish dispersion.⁴⁰⁶

Both Herzl and Ha'am were nationalist Zionists who understood that the creation of a state for the Jews in Palestine was a settler-colonial endeavor. They disagreed, however, on the essence and content of this state. While Herzl wanted to transfer European honor to a new geography, Ahad Ha'am's conception of the Jewish people and its cultural identity was based on what he calls "spiritual power." For Jews, the useless sacrifice of a human life, specifically a Jewish one, was not an act of honor but of infamy, and whoever committed it "betrays his people and sullies its true honor, which is that of its character and morality. This is far more

⁴⁰⁵ Cultural Zionism (or, according to the Hebrew expression, *tsiyonut ruhanit*, [spiritual Zionism]) denotes a concept of Judaism which is primarily characterized by ethical and spiritual rather than religious or political motives.

⁴⁰⁶ Ahad Ha'am, *Ten Essays on Zionism and Judaism*, trans. Leon Simon (London: Routledge, 1922), 43.

precious and holy to them than their imaginary honor in the eyes of the gentiles.”⁴⁰⁷ Ahad Ha’am’s Zionism did not internalize European traits because his self-image did not depend on Gentile recognition.

Ahad Ha’am accused Herzl and his followers of perceiving their worth, self-respect, and honor through Gentile eyes:

Western ‘Zionists’ always have their eyes fixed on the non-Jewish world, and that they, like the assimilated Jews, are aiming simply at finding favour in the eyes of the nations: only that whereas the others want love, the ‘Zionists’ want respect. They are enormously pleased when a Gentile says openly that the ‘Zionists’ deserve respect.”⁴⁰⁸

As such, the true “invisible slavery” was the new Zionist self-image that was forged as a representation of Gentile honor. Herzl’s Zionist discourse was filled with the same contempt, disdain, and shaming toward non-Zionist Jews, as a way to subjugate and discipline them to obey the intrinsic notions of the Gentile code of honor. In sum, Herzl and Nordau never gave up or lost faith in the basic values of modern, Enlightened, Gentile Europe, and so the escape from the ghetto meant a return to Zion, and Zion had always been Europe.

⁴⁰⁷ Ahad Ha’am, 1950, 163.

⁴⁰⁸ Ahad Ha’am, *Ten Essays on Zionism and Judaism*, 51.

Chapter 5: Nordau's Zionism: Who is Honorable?

Max Nordau (1849-1923) would have witnessed the creation of the state that he defined in the 1897 Basle Program and launched at the first Zionist Congress in 1897 had he lived another 25 years. Nordau declared political Zionism's aim to be the creation of a state that would safeguard Jews under international law. He coined the term, "National Home for the Jews" and added, it should be "legally guaranteed" according to Theodor Herzl's (1860-1904) demand [*Oeffentlich-rechtlich gesicherte Heimstaette*].⁴⁰⁹ As Herzl's right-hand man, Nordau became one of the most important leaders of Jewish Zionism, a product of "the ideas and social structures unleashed by the French Revolution, modernism and secularism."⁴¹⁰ He later on became the father of "muscular Judaism" (*Muskeljudentum*), as extrapolated in his theories on race and racial Zionism.⁴¹¹

The name of Max Nordau might not resonate as strongly as other Zionist leaders' names, yet Nordau's role in shaping Zionist ideology deserves to be revisited. Nordau was an avid reader and had published several essays, articles and books reflecting on the strong influence of his German identity in addition to his admiration for French values. There has been a revival of his writings in the past 20 years. Scholars and historians such as Ben-Horin, Schulte, Söder and Stanislawski, and most recently, Zudrell and Murphy have shown significant interest in his work.⁴¹² They aim to understand his contribution to racial theory,

⁴⁰⁹ Anna Dons Nordau, *Max Nordau: A biography by Anna and Max Nordau*, translated from the French (New York: The Nordau Committee, 1943), 130.

⁴¹⁰ Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Modern State* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 19

⁴¹¹ The Hungarian physician-essayist might better be known for his book *Entartung* (Degeneration, 1892), rooted in French positivism based on research by the French doctor Benedict Augustin Morel and his famous *Traité des degenerescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales* (1857). Nordau critiques late nineteenth century modern literature and aesthetics at the *fin de siècle* in Europe. The book is an attack of the degenerate characteristics of artists who had contempt for traditional views of custom and morality. See: Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, Tr. from the 2d edition of the German work (New York: D. Appleton and company, 1912), and Gabriella Pelloni, "Die Rhetorik der Degeneration in der antisemitischen Literatur Das Bild des entarteten jüdischen Künstlers," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, Volume 61, issue 3 (2009): 257-272

⁴¹² Meir Ben-Horin, *Max Nordau: A study in Human Solidarity*, (Columbia University : PhD Dissertation, 1952); Christoph Schulte, *Psychopathologie des Fin de siècle: der Kulturkritiker, Arzt und Zionist Max Nordau* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer

nationalism, liberalism and critiques of modern art, which were endorsed by National Socialism in Germany. Some of these scholars are more forgiving of Nordau's racism, in that they place his racial theory within the Western intellectual tradition of his time, justifying his adherence to Theodor Herzl's Zionism on ethical and cosmopolitan grounds, while others attempt to reconcile the many apparent contradictions in his texts which revolve around Social Darwinism and his faith in science.

Nonetheless, a closer examination of Nordau's intellectual career and his contributions to Zionism shed a different light on his commitment to rationalism. His writings, even before his conversion to Zionism, are replete with what he identified as deviance, insanity and criminal psychological and physiological characteristics, which reinforced the gentile narrative that positions the Jew as deviant. In an attempt to find a 'cure' for Jewishness in Western societies, Nordau believed that the rational solution to the Jewish problem would be to regenerate Jews morally and physically. Most commentators mentioned above focus on Nordau's theories on the physical elevation of Jewish bodies as this approach served his ultimate goal: to create a state where Jews would be safe from persecution and would be able to regenerate their minds and bodies.

This chapter aims to analyze the works of Nordau in which he called for the moral, rather than the physical, regeneration of Diaspora Jews, more specifically, of assimilated Jews. In Nordau's political philosophy, there is ambiguity in what his Zionism actually entails. Indeed, it strives to initiate the regeneration of Diaspora Jews by transferring them outside Europe, and for pragmatic reasons, to Palestine, but this population transfer is not

Taschenbuch Verlag, 1997); Hans-Peter Soder, "Disease and Health as Contexts of Modernity: Max Nordau as a Critic of Fin-de-Siècle Modernism," *German Studies Review* (1991): 473-487; Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the fin de siècle: cosmopolitanism and nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Petra Zudrell, *Der Kulturkritiker und Schriftsteller Max Nordau: zwischen Zionismus, Deutschtum und Judentum* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003); Melanie A. Murphy, *Max Nordau's fin-de-siècle romance of race* (New York: Peter Lang, c2007).

meant for all European Jews. In this chapter, I will show how Nordau synthesized his own mixed identities, that is, his dormant Jewish roots and his European identity into an ideological blend steeped in Christian honor. He used sentiments to describe how the Jewish question remained a major concern in Western Europe with Christian opposition to Jewish emancipation on the one hand and the fear of modern anti-Semitism on the other hand. He tied both to a discourse of Jewish honor.

We will trace Nordau's contradictory struggle to reconcile his East European heritage with his adopted West European identity. This is closely related, as we will see, to his opinions about modern European politics and Christian honor and about the expressions of his Jewish self-image and his understanding of the *dishonorable* Jewish assimilation in Europe. My analysis of the political events occurring in France in the first part of this chapter will show the influence of French racial theories on Nordau, as well as the impact on his work of the way French Jews were able to maneuver their identity, positioning themselves within French nationalism. This would contrast with the ideology that he was developing and his perception of the role he would attribute to assimilated Jews. Nordau's thoughts on assimilation and the concept of honor, as will be examined below, are to an extent the products of the political scandals that occurred in France in the decade that preceded his official affiliation with Zionism. These events would synthesize his ideas of degeneration, nationalism and Zionism into a project of 'racial improvement' that was closely linked to the Christian notion of honor as a political, social and cultural undertaking.

Nordau's early years

In his diaries, we see how troubled Nordau was with his identity from an early age. It is as though he could never reconcile the many elements that were part of him: his Jewish heritage, his Hungarian origins, his self-identification with everything German and his

admiration of the French values of freedom and equality. The son of a rabbi, Max Nordau was an Eastern European Jew born in the city of Pest in 1849, where he went to a Jewish school, the “Israelite Elementary School of Pest” [Pesti Izraelita Főelemi Iskola] until he joined the Catholic high school in the same city. In his memoir, Nordau writes at length about his school years, the influences and relationships that affected him. He also writes about the process of Hungarianization that the education system imposed upon him and finally why he could no longer identify as Hungarian:

The language of instruction was German, the lingua franca of nearly every circle in Pest at the time, and German culture was the only culture taken seriously – Hungarian seemed to be the sign of an inferior, nay, a barbaric state.⁴¹³

He changed his birth name of Simon (Simcha, meaning joy in Hebrew) Maximilian Südfeld to Max Nordau in his teenage years in a rejection of his orthodox Jewish heritage. This name change did not just characterize Nordau’s need to become a Western European, perhaps even an Aryan, it was also indicative of the change his system of values underwent and of the way he wanted to be perceived in private and in public. Indeed, the name change from Sudfeld to Nordau was an exchange from “a putatively decadent South for the Aryan North.”⁴¹⁴ This name change meant not just a disdain for Judaism, but Hungarian nationalism and an endorsement of German identity; it was hence “a political and ideological act”.⁴¹⁵ This political act would influence the Zionist ideology he would later help to shape. Nordau believed he belonged to the great German cultural heritage, epitomized by the language of Goethe and Schiller. This sense of belonging was passed on to him by his father. His native languages of Hungarian and Yiddish were identifiers of the lower classes.⁴¹⁶ He chose the German language to express himself as an author and despised the Yiddish of his

⁴¹³ Nordau, *A Biography*, 16

⁴¹⁴ Robert van der Laarse, “Masking the Other: Max Nordau’s Representation of Hidden Jewishness,” *Historical Reflections/ Réflexions Historiques*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Spring 1999), 9.

⁴¹⁵ Schulte, *Psychopathologie des Fin de Siècle*, 37

⁴¹⁶ Nordau, *A Biography*, 18

mother. As Schulte puts it, Nordau's provincial Yiddish background and his mother's illiteracy filled the boy with embarrassment for his Jewish roots.⁴¹⁷

It is noteworthy to mention that Nordau's name change was not due to Jewish persecution occurring in Hungary, on the contrary, the process of Hungarianization in the era of national awakening during the nineteenth century gave some substantial protection to minorities. Hungarian politicians and intellectuals endorsed the concepts of the "Political Nation" and Nation State from Western Europe and a process of Hungarian state building was set in motion. The Emancipation Act of December 1867, which included the linguistic and cultural assimilation of minorities, fostered by Baron József Eötvös acted as a catalyst to assimilate the Hungarian Jewish population, and until 1914, the political and economic status of the Jewish population gradually improved and their numbers increased substantially between 1869 and 1910.⁴¹⁸

However, Nordau did not appreciate this process of Hungarianization; even worse, he rejected it completely and felt *betrayed* by the rise of a strong Hungarian nationalist movement that eradicated the German language from education and social life.⁴¹⁹ As such, Max Nordau, the Germanized Jew from Budapest, could no longer tolerate life in a Hungary that was slowly eroding all its Germanic features.

Nordau and French Culture

It was against this background that Max Nordau pursued a lifelong calling, combining his sense of identity that would strongly contribute to the diffusion of French thought in the German speaking world. When Nordau decided to leave Pest, he travelled through Russia and

⁴¹⁷ Schulte, *Psychopathologie des Fin de Siècle*, 59

⁴¹⁸ Nathaniel Katzburg, *Hungary and the Jews: Policy and Legislation, 1920-1943* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1981).

⁴¹⁹ Nordau, *A Biography*, 18. For an extensive analysis of the process of Hungarianization on the identity formation of both Herzl and Nordau, see: Ujvári, Hedvig. "Issues of Assimilation, Language and Identity in the Lives of Young Max Nordau and Tivadar Herzl," *AHEA: E-journal of the American Hungarian Educators Association*, Volume 5 (2012). Available online: <http://ahea.net/e-journal/volume-5-2012>

Europe, to finally settle in Paris in 1880. His admiration for France solidly established and cultivated Nordau's intellectual approach even before he travelled outside Pest.⁴²⁰ Nordau's first short story, signed with his new name at the age of twelve, was set in Paris which he had never laid eyes on. Nordau was familiar with the figures of the Renaissance and with French literary and political thought.⁴²¹

Once in France, he became an assiduous visitor of the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Sorbonne, the School of Medicine and the Collège de France.⁴²² His spontaneous sympathy went to the French and the Italians as he felt "the vivacity of the Latin mind to be more akin to his own than the German, despite his wholly German education."⁴²³ He considered himself one of the few journalists that had done "much for the spreading of France's literary fame," adopting a role as mediator for the bettering of relations between France and Germany.⁴²⁴ Nordau expressed immense sympathy for the France that cherished the values of the French Revolution despite successive social catastrophes and the defeat of 1870.

We will see later how the French defeat of 1870 marked the ideology he was developing. France was to him a courageous country with "vigorous and industrial people who [showed] the greatest achievements in every department of industry and art."⁴²⁵ For him, Paris was the center of all liberal thought and of all independent expression: "A city which welcomed with boundless warmth whatever of light or life a stranger could bring it. All frontiers were open; no passports were required."⁴²⁶ He mostly enjoyed the countryside as for him there was something peculiar about provincial France that made him imagine it as "a sort of Canaan flowing with milk and honey."⁴²⁷

⁴²⁰ Nordau, *A Biography*, 6.

⁴²¹ Nordau, *A Biography*, 87.

⁴²² Nordau, *A Biography*, 62.

⁴²³ Nordau, *A Biography*, 37.

⁴²⁴ Nordau, *A Biography*, 325.

⁴²⁵ Nordau, *A Biography*, 38.

⁴²⁶ Nordau, *A Biography*, 2.

⁴²⁷ Nordau, *A Biography*, 65.

It is in Paris that Nordau resumed his studies in medicine and completed his thesis on “The Castration of Women” for his French degree. He received his diploma in 1882 under the supervision of Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893). Charcot, under whom both Max Nordau and Sigmund Freud studied,⁴²⁸ established that neurasthenia is a Jewish disease par excellence as Jews carry the seeds of instability and impulsive wandering in their genes.⁴²⁹ In the biography written by his daughter, Nordau acknowledges that Charcot’s work and research greatly influenced his own, especially as he was analyzing “the latest literary developments in France and elsewhere. He felt keenly that scientific criticism of these phenomena was called for. The works of Charcot (...) seemed to him indispensable for the comprehension of these movements.”⁴³⁰ Could one read in this recognition, Nordau’s acceptance of Charcot’s diagnosis that the Jewish race’s presumed urge to move is a hereditary predisposition to neuropathological conditions?

Despite his medical qualifications, Nordau opted for a career as a correspondent for several Austrian and German newspapers that allowed him to travel continuously, conjuring here the image of Charcot’s view of the degenerate hysterical, neurotic Jewish wanderer. Nordau acknowledged that despite his mundane life in Paris, he always felt himself to be a “lonely stranger”, aware that people sought his company because he was “a bond between them and the vast world he knew so well”.⁴³¹ Charcot diagnosed the urge to travel as a Jewish predisposition and symptom of nervous disorders of the race. According to him, it is what

⁴²⁸ Sigmund Freud was Charcot’s intern at the Salpêtrière hospital from 1885-1886, where Charcot frequently showcased hysterics and emphasized their Jewishness. Sigmund Freud’s early work, such as *Studies in Hysteria*, analyzed hysteria by drawing on an almost exclusively Jewish clientele. Based on the work of Charcot, Freud further developed his theory on hysteria. In his diaries, Freud mentioned that he met Nordau once but he “found him vain and stupid and did not cultivate his acquaintance.” (Sigmund Freud, *The life and work of Sigmund Freud*, Eds. Lionel Trilling and Steven Marcus (New York: Basic Books, 1961), Vol. 1, 124.

⁴²⁹ Charcot’s studies on Jewish inherent neurasthenia and hysteria stemming from their exile is discussed in Chapter 2.

⁴³⁰ Nordau, *A Biography*, 89. Nordau’s biography also states that “his favorites masters were Professors Budin and Charcot; he remained their friend as long as they lived.” Nordau, *A Biography*, 310.

⁴³¹ Nordau, *A Biography*, 84.

made Jews susceptible to this specific ailment, since “it is a characteristic of their race to move with extreme ease. At home nowhere, and at home everywhere.”⁴³²

Nordau identified himself as a cosmopolitan man of the world and most historians agree that central to Nordau’s worldview was his nineteenth century liberal cosmopolitan conviction that he had superseded his Jewish origins and was “the perfect European of the nineteenth century.”⁴³³ However, in nineteenth century antisemitic discourse, the “Cosmopolitan Jew” was the modern denomination of the ancient Wandering Jew and the alleged cosmopolitanism of the Jews was frequently used to denote the Jewish lack of natural ties to *Blut und Boden*. Reflecting on the fact that a twelve-year old boy was ready to change his name at such a young age and with it his persona in order to uproot himself from the *boden* he came from, may indicate that Nordau had always, even if unconsciously, struggled with a troubled sense of self. In order to reconcile his past and his newly constructed persona, he availed himself of the notion of Christian honor, which was necessary to transform him metaphorically and in actuality, from the Wandering Jew into a European settler of the colonial world.

The Beginning of Nordau’s Moral Regeneration Theory

Although most historians position Nordau’s affiliation with Zionist thought after the Dreyfus Affair and after his first meeting with Theodor Herzl, Nordau’s biography tells us a different story. Two years after his arrival in Paris, in 1882, France faced the collapse of the Catholic bank, *L’Union Générale*, leading to an eventual crash of the stock market.⁴³⁴ The

⁴³² Henry Meige, *Étude sur certains Névropathes Voyageurs. Le Juif errant à la Salpêtrière* (Paris : L. Bataille et Cie, 1893), 192-193

⁴³³ Nordau, *A Biography*, 8

⁴³⁴ That same year of 1882 witnessed the First international anti-Jewish Congress in Dresden; its manifesto stated that “all Christian nations had no choice but to recognize the Jew as biologically alien. It called for a reversal of Jewish emancipation and for the expansion of an anti-Semitic “movement of self-protection.” See: “Manifesto to the Governments and Peoples of the Christian Nations Threatened by Judaism: The First Anti-Jewish Congress in Dresden (September 11-12, 1882), GDHI, Volume 4, http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=581. With over 45.000 copies of the manifesto

bankruptcy of the General Union Bank triggered not only a financial crisis but also a rift in French society initiating a wave of anti-Semitism.⁴³⁵ Édouard Drumont (1844-1917), a French journalist would blame the crash of the Catholic Union Générale on a Jewish conspiracy spearheaded by the Rothschild family. In the same year of the crash of the *Union Générale* in 1882, in a chapter titled “Jewish awakening,” Nordau’s biography tells us that “his pleasant dream” of “not constantly being aware of being a Jew” was “rudely disturbed” in 1882 when the news of “the frightful pogrom of Kishinev burst upon the world; this was followed by a train of anti-Semitic excesses which spread all over Europe.”⁴³⁶

These events would prompt Nordau, the cosmopolitan European who was proud that his Jewishness until then never interfered with his assimilation into gentile society, to realize that anti-Semitism was “the violent recurrence of an endemic illness old as the dispersion, always latent, prone to break out in bloody, and fervid form at the slightest provocation.”⁴³⁷ Nordau was living and writing at the height of the French and German antisemitic movement; as a consequence, “his thoughts began to turn toward the Jewish people, more menaced than any other and in greater need of his help.” His published works in the next year would clarify the ideology he was beginning to develop, which engaged with his own subjectivity and modern politics in tandem.

As a first endeavor, in 1883, Nordau published his critique of the religious, political, economic and cultural institutions of contemporary European society titled *Die Conventionelle Lügen der KulturMenschheit* (The Conventional Lies of our Civilization) wherein he attacks the culture that was forged and manipulated by the dominant class to protect its privilege and power.⁴³⁸ He elaborates on his ideas of social differentiation based on

distributed, the event was meant to gather anti-Semites as part of an election battle in Germany. See: James N. Retallack, *Red Saxony: Election Battles and the Spectre of Democracy in Germany, 1860-1918* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 216.

⁴³⁵ J. Verdès-Leroux, “Un prototype des scandales politico-financiers: le krach de l'Union Générale 1882,” *Le Mouvement social*, No. 66 (Jan. - Mar., 1969): 89-103.

⁴³⁶ Nordau, *A Biography*, 115

⁴³⁷ Nordau, *A Biography*, 115

⁴³⁸ Max Nordau, *Die Conventionelle Lügen der KulturMenschheit* (Leipzig: B. Elischer, 1884)

a series of hierarchical oppositions to the civilized world. In line with social Darwinism, Nordau argues that the natural, progressive development of humanity ought to incorporate only fixed evolutionary criteria: gender, race and nationality. By denouncing the authoritarianism of the Second Reich, Nordau indirectly attacks reactionary anti-Semitism in the growing wave of German nationalism.

In the chapter titled *Die Religiöse Lüge*, Nordau reflects on the power of religion as an institution which dictates and controls the lives of those adhering to it. The chapter is an upfront attack on religion in general and Christianity and its dogmas in particular, but it is also an attack on those who claim to be part of the secular intelligentsia, but cannot let go of their “ancient prejudices” inherited from the Church and still follow religious practices:

France is the country where liberty of thought has obtained from the laws, but not from society, the most extensive concessions from the yoke of Religion. But even in France a large majority of the freethinkers remain in the bosom of the Church to which their parents belonged, they go to mass and confession, they are wedded before the altar, they bring their children to be baptized and confirmed and they summon the priest to the bedside of their dying friends.⁴³⁹

The reason for this need to hold onto religion is fear of the unknown: “Upon this sentiment of fear are based all the primitive forms of religious worship.”⁴⁴⁰ Interestingly, Nordau gives us an insight into his early observations of Jewish assimilation, camouflaged in the critique of all institutionalized religions:

A law was passed in Austria to legalize the act of withdrawing from the Church, but less than five hundred persons have availed themselves of its privileges; and of this number, the majority were not persons constrained by their sense of honour to bring their outward lives into harmony with their inward convictions, but were either of different religions who wished to be united in matrimony, and met on neutral ground by mutually renouncing the religion in which they had been brought up.⁴⁴¹

We notice his irritations with those that lack “a sense of honor” and cling somewhat to their religion; but his attack is harsher on the assimilated Austrian Jews. Nordau continues by

⁴³⁹ Nordau, *Conventional lies of our civilization* (London, W. Heinemann, 1895), 32

⁴⁴⁰ Nordau, *Conventional lies*, 36

⁴⁴¹ Nordau, *Conventional lies*, 31

insisting that those Jews that “withdrew” from their religion and chose the official designation of “creedless” [*Confessionslos*] have “deluded themselves that they could escape the prejudices which their tribe [*Stamm*] would be subjected to, if they were no longer officially classed with the Jewish religious community [*jüdischen Glaubensgemeinde*].”⁴⁴² When mentioning the Jews, Nordau shifts from a religious concept [*jüdischen Glaubensgemeinde*] to a racial concept [*Stamm*]; emphasizing that for the Jew, there is no possible escape from one’s Jewishness. Nordau thus posits that assimilated Jews, by rejecting religious designations, have needlessly, and perhaps desperately, endorsed an artificial identity:

This latter motive came into play so frequently that the terms Jew and "creedless" persons became almost synonymous in Austria, so that the secretary of the Vienna University used to remark good-naturedly, "Why don't you say right out that you are a Jew?" when some candidate for admission to the University replied, "Creedless" when asked to what religion he belonged.⁴⁴³

Hinting at the new ideas he was fusing to forge a novel concept of Jewish honor, Nordau believed that “Creedless” became an identifier for “Jewish,” and in this schema it could be argued that “Jewish” had been synonymous with lacking “a sense of honor.”

Fully assimilated himself, with a name that transformed Jewish traits into German ones, he wanted to differentiate himself from those he thought to be self-deluding individuals by claiming that his affiliations were naturally nationalist ones and not constructed as religious.

In an interesting twist, Nordau juxtaposes the modern “Creedless” Jews to their Old Testament ancestors who were governed by “national-Jewish-patriotic” (*nationaljüdisch-patriotische*) sentiments, when he describes that the bible is a book of collected stories of “alt palästinischen” (the ancient inhabitants of Palestine).⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴² Nordau, *Conventionelle Lügen*, 40

⁴⁴³ Nordau, *Conventional lies*, 32

⁴⁴⁴ Nordau, *Conventionelle Lügen*, 70

In the preface to the sixth edition of his *Conventional Lies*, Nordau writes that he was accused of inciting hostility against religious communities, an accusation he refutes as “at the most”, he has “only attempted to arouse compassion for them.” His biography tells us that Nordau was made aware of the “Jewish Question” by his friend Dr. Lowenthal, who would go on in the 1890s to set up Jewish colonies in Argentina financed by Baron de Hirsch’s Jewish Colonization Association. Nordau providing “complete moral cooperation” to his friend’s colonizing activities as he too wanted to “go to the defense of this oppressed people,” following the pogroms in Eastern Europe, but he believed that these colonies would not “regenerate” Jews as “they are guided by no ideal.”⁴⁴⁵ Although he does not specify in his diaries what he means by their lack of ideal, we will see how the regeneration of the physical and mental state of the Jews through honor would become the core of his contribution to Theodor Herzl’s Zionism.

Before reaching the final stage of his “Jewish awakening”, Nordau indicted all of European society of degeneration. The Hungarian physician-essayist wrote *Entartung* (Degeneration, 1892) in which he critiques late nineteenth century modern literature and aesthetics at *the fin de siècle* in Europe. The book that had five volumes attacked the degenerate characteristics of the artists who had contempt for traditional views of custom and morality. To Nordau, the *fin de siècle* was in itself an era of uncertainties, decadence and craziness and a deliberate rejection of order; this decadence and loss of moral boundaries governing the world were affecting all elements of society. He saw before him a world that was changing for the worse; and to diagnose all the symptoms of this societal decline, Nordau used a medical lens to identify what he saw as an illness:

In the fin-de-siècle disposition, in the tendencies of contemporary art and poetry, in the life and conduct of men who write mystic, symbolic and 'decadent' works and the attitude taken by their admirers in the tastes and aesthetic instincts of fashionable society, the confluence of two well-defined conditions of disease, with which he [the

⁴⁴⁵ Nordau, *A Biography*, 115

physician] is quite familiar, viz. degeneration and hysteria, of which the minor stages are designated as neurasthenia.⁴⁴⁶

There was something novel to Nordau's critique, he applied medicine to art and literature.

Through the power of science, the social Darwinist claimed to diagnose objectively and scientifically what were amoral and atavistic elements in society. Nordau believed in reason, in progress, and saw the more traditional, classical rules of governing society as the way to safeguard the bourgeoisie from rapid urbanization and technological developments.

In the chapter titled *Etiology*, Nordau investigates the root causes of the deviant "literary and artistic tendencies and fashions." Among the set of causes that were triggered by modern civilization and resulted in degeneracy and hysteria, he names "the consumption of opium and hashish,"⁴⁴⁷ and states of fatigue and exhaustion which are "the effect of contemporary civilization, of the vertigo and whirl of our frenzied life, the vastly increased number of sense impressions and organic reactions, and therefore of perceptions, judgments, and motor impulses," which put constant pressure on the nervous system.⁴⁴⁸ After a long enumeration of causes, Nordau pulls the attention of the reader by stating that there is a special cause of this contemporary pathological phenomenon that is specific to France, which explains why hysteria and neurasthenia are much more frequent in France, and appear under such a greater variety of forms than anywhere else. It is due to the *loss of honor*:

By the frightful loss of blood which the body of the French people suffered during the twenty years of the Napoleonic wars, by the violent moral upheavals to which they were subjected in the great Revolution and during the imperial epic, they found themselves exceedingly ill-prepared for the impact of the great discoveries of the century, and sustained by these a more violent shock than other nations more robust and more capable of resistance. Upon this nation, nervously strained and predestined to morbid derangement, there broke the awful catastrophe of 1870. It had, with a self-satisfaction which almost attained to megalomania, believed itself the first nation in the world; it now saw itself suddenly humiliated and crushed. All its convictions

⁴⁴⁶ Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, Tr. from the 2d edition of the German work (New York: D. Appleton and company, 1912), 15

⁴⁴⁷ Nordau, *Degeneration*, 35

⁴⁴⁸ Nordau, *Degeneration*, 40

abruptly crumbled to pieces. Every single Frenchman suffered reverses of fortune, lost some members of his family, and felt himself personally robbed of his dearest conceptions, nay, even of his honour. The whole people fell into the condition of a man suddenly visited by a crushing blow of destiny, in his fortune, his position, his family, his reputation, even in his self-respect. Thousands lost their reason. In Paris a veritable epidemic of mental diseases was observed, for which a special name was found -*la folie obsidionale*, 'siege- madness.' And even those who did not at once succumb to mental derangement, suffered lasting injury to their nervous system.⁴⁴⁹

One cannot dismiss the fact that Nordau's lengthy research on who were the degenerate elements in society was probably to counter and refute the antisemitic polemic discourse of the end of the nineteenth century that pathologized specifically Jewish artists and art as the degenerate factor for the presumable decline of German culture, whereby "degeneration" was depicted as the Jewish condition.⁴⁵⁰ Nonetheless, we notice here his attempt to formulate a different kind of degeneracy, one that is caused by the loss of national honor. Although Nordau does not yet directly diagnose Diaspora Jews with *la folie obsidionale*, he had by now fused the several elements of his ideology that would come to perceive Diaspora Jews as degenerate for lacking national honor.

What is additionally relevant to our analysis is Nordau's dismissal of sentiments in his conceptualization of man and society; the core of his self-perception was a rejection of irrationalism and amorality in order to prevent a fallback to a pre-Enlightenment era. As such, to Nordau, man is a rational being that should suppress any unchecked or undisciplined emotion as evolution could only occur based on an exact knowledge of the world. To the rationalist Nordau, the pathology of a degenerate was characterized in others by "the predominance of the emotions."⁴⁵¹ Yet he, himself, was led by his emotions as his "Jewish awakening" was accelerated by a "direct moral shock" that he experienced in the summer of

⁴⁴⁹ Nordau, *Degeneration*, 42

⁴⁵⁰ Gabriella Pelloni, *Die Rhetorik der Degeneration in der antisemitischen Literatur Das Bild des „entarteten“ jüdischen Künstlers* in *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* Volume 61, issue 3, p.257-27

⁴⁵¹ "A brain which cannot function normally, from this follows weakness of the will, lack of attention, the predominance of the emotions, lack of knowledge, an absence of sympathy, lack of participation in the world and with humanity, atrophy of the concepts of duty and morality" *Entartung*, 2:469-70

1893. Nordau was invited by his friends the Stephanys of Berlin to join them at the seaside resort of Borkum which was “frequented by the Prussian aristocracy and its hangers-on,”⁴⁵² when he received on the first night until the tenth day when he left, letters that made clear that Jews were not welcome in this resort. One can claim that mentioning the kind of social class that was present at Borkum was intentional and that the fact that, explicitly, those honorable men and women of the Prussian aristocracy rejected Nordau from their midst, made this encounter “indelible,” to the extent that it had shattered his belief in “humanitarianism and tolerance.”⁴⁵³

I argue that by the time Nordau met Herzl some two years later, he had already developed an ideology that was based on elevating Diaspora Jews through national honor. Nordau was by then aware of the colonial projects that were set up in Palestine: “He knew of the first heroic but stumbling attempts of the *Choveve Zion*, the Lovers of Zion, of the establishment of Palestinian colonies of the *Bilu* movement, and of the colonies aided by Baron de Rothschild.”⁴⁵⁴ However, he was not convinced by this model of “charitable establishments” as they lacked any political structure that could “regenerate the Jews and make them a people once more.”⁴⁵⁵ A geographical displacement of Jews to a *terra nova*, he thought, would not be sufficient to inculcate in them notions of dignity and honor, their regeneration needed to be put into motion first in order to elevate Diaspora Jews morally and restore their Jewish honor.

Nordau and French Anti-Semitism

In 1889, France was hit by yet another financial scandal; however, *Le scandale de Panama* would become the single most corrosive parliamentary and financial scandal in the

⁴⁵² Nordau, *A Biography*, 117

⁴⁵³ Nordau, *A Biography*, 118

⁴⁵⁴ Nordau, *A Biography*, 118

⁴⁵⁵ Nordau, *A Biography*, 119

history of Third Republic France and would have far more repercussions on French society. *La Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interocéanique de Panama* was created in 1880 by Ferdinand de Lesseps to build the Panama Canal to connect the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Two thirds of a million francs needed for the project would be financed by stock options, but the cost of the canal went drastically over budget, while technical difficulties were deliberately masked or minimized in public disclosures. An appreciation of these events is important for understanding how they influenced Nordau's personal ideas and political trajectory.

In an attempt to save his project and his reputation, de Lesseps decided to gather money from modest private investors from the general public but in order to do so, a law needed to be passed. This is when the polemics began. De Lesseps approached two affluent businessmen, Cornelius Herz and Jacques de Reinach, both Jewish, and for a fee (or rather a bribe), they both agreed to lobby their financial and political networks to influence French parliamentarians to issue the needed law. Herz financed the newspaper *La Justice*, whose director was none other than George Clemenceau, who would become Prime Minister in 1906. Herz's network included many more affluent allies, such as Jules Grévy, President of the Republic. The *chéquards*⁴⁵⁶, recipients of bribes in Parliament and in the press, had hidden from the public the fact that the Panama Company was an inherently unsound investment and the project was bound to fail.

As de Lesseps was still pushing for the success of his project, his triple financial, parliamentary and media offensive allowed the law to pass in 1888; yet less than a year later, the Universal Company of the Transoceanic Canal of Panama was placed in judicial liquidation.⁴⁵⁷ The bankruptcy resulted in heavy losses for most investors, who were mostly

⁴⁵⁶ A term coined by Edouard Drumont.

⁴⁵⁷ Seine (France): Tribunal civil de première instance, « Extrait du jugement du Tribunal civil de la Seine rendu le 4 février 1889 prononçant la dissolution de la Compagnie Universelle du canal Interocéanique de Panama et nommant un liquidateur (Manuscript Archives, Columbia University, 1889)

of modest income. The scandal that broke out was triggered by none other than the Jewish whistleblower, Baron Jacques de Reinach, who gave the anti-Semite Édouard Drumont a list of the politicians implicated – and then committed suicide.⁴⁵⁸ Drumont founded *La Libre Parole* (Free Speech) in which he revealed the wheeling and dealing surrounding the Panama Canal. Drumont kept exposing names, ruining careers and worked to “vindicate the anti-Semitic charges” wherein “Parliament, the press and high finance were working hand in glove to rob ordinary French people. The Panama scandal shook the authority of Parliament and fueled anti-Semitism.”⁴⁵⁹ The same forces of anti-parliamentarianism, anti-Semitism, and nationalism were triggered again two years later with *La Libre Parole*’s coverage of the Dreyfus Affair.

Nordau closely followed the Panama Affair and covered it for the *Die Welt*, where he analyzed the rise of anti-Semitism as that of a “reactionary coterie trying to project its own infamy on that eternal scapegoat, the Jew.”⁴⁶⁰ The accumulation of anti-Semitic accusations against Jewish financiers that targeted Baron Reinach, Baron de Hirsch, Cornelius Herz, the Rothschilds and others in relation to the financial fiasco of the Panama company and the parliamentary corruption in France, mounted to accusations against the entire French Jewish community, and transmuted into a contemporary enactment of ritual murder.⁴⁶¹ We see that Nordau began categorizing the different *kinds* of Jews, depicting “who is Jew” and “what is a Jew” according to anti-Semitic criteria. Nordau was appalled that anti-Semites tried “to make another Judas of the notorious Cornelius Herz,” who according to him, was “a convert and thus extruded from Judaism,” meaning consequently that there was only one Jew involved in

⁴⁵⁸ For more on the Panama Scandal see: Pierre-Alexandre Bourson, *L’Affaire Panama* (Paris, Éditions de Vecchi, 2000); Marc de Banville, *Canal français, l’aventure illustrée des Français au Panama 1880-1904* (Éditions Canal Valley, 2003) and Jean-Yves Mollier, *Le Scandale de Panamá* (Paris : Fayard, 1991).

⁴⁵⁹ Jacques Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 193

⁴⁶⁰ Nordau, *A Biography*, 327

⁴⁶¹ Nordau, *Conventionelle Lügen*, 384

the scandal, Reinach, described by Nordau as a Jew who earned his money “honestly.”⁴⁶² Somehow, the only Jew involved would be the one providing the anti-Semitic Drumont with the names of the gentiles implicated in the scandal only to subsequently commit suicide.

It was just a matter of time, Nordau continues, before the “ruined and duped public” would answer “the call of old somnolent instincts” and blame their financial losses on Jews. Nordau was “grievously struck by the inertia of the Jews who raised no word of protest.”⁴⁶³ Nordau, the pessimist, believed that there was a gap between the French ideals of “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” and the true feelings of Frenchmen towards Jewry. In that sense, he expressed his contempt for the cowardice of French Jews, the assimilationists more specifically, for not raising their voices against the “the clerical slander of Jewish responsibility in the Panama affair”.⁴⁶⁴ Though Nordau had not yet come out as a Zionist in this period, his words surely sound like those of a committed Zionist. At the least, he held the Jewish community responsible for the anti-Semitic charges and implications of the scandal and, moreover, for their lack of solidarity and collective feeling of national Jewish honor.

Nordau’s Contempt and Disdain for Dishonorable French Jews

In most of Nordau's literary works, the scientific critic observes society, not through contingent and capricious emotions, but through a psycho-physiological lens to understand and depict the manifestations and symptoms of the *état maladif* that contemporary society calls *fin de siècle*; and which, for an attentive observer like Nordau, had deep connections with degeneration and hysteria. Nordau’s analysis at this stage confined itself to the social identification of assimilated Jews.

⁴⁶² Nordau, *A Biography*, 327

⁴⁶³ Nordau, *A Biography*, 328

⁴⁶⁴ Max Nordau, “Blutmärchen,” *Die Welt*, n° 27 (1903)

In her father's biography, Maxa Nordau describes his literary work as an intellectual expression of his environment. This applies in particular to his voluminous novel *The Malady of The Century* (*Die Krankheit des Jahrhunderts*, 1889), which was the first novel he wrote "with a deep and subtle understanding of the human soul, a novel with a thesis in which the sociologist demonstrates his moral theories."⁴⁶⁵ A closer reading of this *Bildungsroman*, written in German, demonstrates that it is in this novel that Nordau not only shaped his ideas on degeneration, which would lead to the later published volumes with the same title, but more interestingly for this chapter, his moral theories on the concept of honor as a reflection of the political and mental climate of late nineteenth-century France in relation to Jewish assimilation and anti-Semitism.

Die Krankheit des Jahrhunderts is a critique of modern civilization that connects French romantic melancholia, *le mal du siècle* to German authoritarianism, following the destructive consequences upon the European body politic in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Its lead character, Wilhelm Eynhardt, is a young German doctor of natural philosophy, who despite his aristocratic features and genius mind, lacks wealth, status and courage because of his Jewish origins. Nordau himself states that "*The Malady of the Century* is a study of that pessimism, of the lack of will, which seem to have been characteristic of the spirit of the late nineties,"⁴⁶⁶ however, it is the Jewish Eynhardt that embodies degeneration in Nordau's play and not the gentile characters. Eynhardt is a pessimist, a degenerate who represents the social alienation that the Jewish minority was subjected to, but he is also a case study for Nordau's differentiation theories based on assimilated Jews. The reader becomes entangled in Eynhardt's personal choices as he falls in love with Loulou Ellrich, the daughter of a powerful privy councillor from Berlin and his political choices, which are articulated through his *Mannerbund* with Paul Haber, his Nordic

⁴⁶⁵ Nordau, *A Biography*, 382

⁴⁶⁶ Nordau, *A Biography*, 382

reference point. Brothers-in-arms during the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, their friendship is tested with the French declaration of war in 1870.⁴⁶⁷

Nordau's explicit choice to set his novel temporally and geographically during the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian war is replete with references to both Jewish attempts at assimilation and anti-Semitic depictions of Jews, echoed in the historical conditions and constraints under which he penned his ideas. The geographic location is of importance as it played a major role in the Franco-German wars that took place a century later when anti-Semitic discourse positioned the French Jews of Alsace and Lorraine, in particular, as German traitors and spies. By 1872, there were approximately 23 000 Jews in France, 0.1% of the French population,⁴⁶⁸ with the largest Jewish community living in Alsace and Lorraine since the twelfth century.⁴⁶⁹

The loss of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany touched the French nation's honor. Consequently, many anti-Semites directed their allegations against French Jews around a loyalty/disloyalty binary initiated by Drumont and other anti-Semites. The defeat was framed in the strong language of revenge (*Revanchisme*) tied to the concept of military honor by French nationalists and their affiliated media. One of these outspoken nationalists was Paul Déroulède, an ally of Drumont but also an author and politician and founding member of the "League des patriotes," a movement endorsing militarism, nationalism and anti-Semitism.⁴⁷⁰ Déroulède was the author of "*Les Chants du Soldat*", a collection of patriotic songs published immediately after the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War. For the likes of Drumont

⁴⁶⁷ Max Simon Nordau, *The Malady of the Century* (1898). E-book Project Gutenberg available at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/4231>

⁴⁶⁸ Doris Bensimon, *Socio-démographie des juifs de France et d'Algérie, 1867-1907* (Paris: Publications orientalistes de France, 1976), 73

⁴⁶⁹ Jews spoke Judeo-Alsatian (a combination of Alsatian, Hebrew and German) and French.

⁴⁷⁰ In the 1880s Déroulède directed his league against the parliamentary system established in 1875 and developed it into a movement combining Nationalism with mass agitation, populism and militarism. It was at its height during the Boulangist period (1886–89), but was dissolved shortly after the fall of Boulanger in March 1889. It was later re-formed under Déroulède and became increasingly active towards the end of 1898. See: Zeev Sternhell, *La droite révolutionnaire, les origines françaises du fascisme 1885–1914* (Paris: Seuil, 1984), 77–99.

and Déroulède, the Panama scandal allowed them to resurrect the stereotype of the devious Jewish thief, personified by the capitalist, Cornelius Herz who Déroulède would accuse of being “a foreign agent (...), a German Jew.”⁴⁷¹

A few years later Déroulède would denounce the “Judaization” of the French parliament, yet his anti-Semitism did not deter Nordau from admiring “the knightly poet, Paul Déroulède, whose unabated patriotism and epic poems greatly impressed him” according to his daughter’s biography of him.⁴⁷² This exaggerated praise of Déroulède’s “knightly” patriotism indicates Nordau’s regard for the medieval chivalry code that holds Christian knighthood in the highest esteem. It is through this exact same “knightly” lens that Nordau would interact with French Jews. Referring to Déroulède’s nationalism and anti-Semitism, Nordau noted that after all “The Jew with the long memory understood the bitterness of the Frenchman wounded in his national pride.”⁴⁷³ If successful in elevating Jews by means of a new concept of national pride and honor, Nordau would have a taste of the grand gentile life he yearned for.

By the 1880s, as the events discussed above were unfolding, the French Jewish community had at least two generations of French born citizens, being the first Jewish community in Europe to be emancipated. The reforms introduced by Napoleon at the beginning of the century provided them with much more mobility and opportunities, bringing about socio-economic transformations and a diversification in social structures that allowed them to prosper. Jewish leaders in France promoted educational reforms as a way to accelerate the integration process of French Jews,⁴⁷⁴ which had an impact on other aspects of their social life such as a growing secularization of the community that suited the

⁴⁷¹ JO, Débats à la chambre des députés, séance du 20 décembre 1892 (1889)

⁴⁷² Nordau, *A Biography*, 327

⁴⁷³ Cited in Nordau, *A Biography*, 327

⁴⁷⁴ The first modern Jewish schools opened in 1818 in Metz and in 1819 in Paris. By 1821, there were a total of twelve schools in seven départements, all supported by Jewish philanthropy. See: Jay R. Berkovitz, *French Jewry and the Ideology of Régénération to 1848* (Brandeis University: PhD dissertation, 1982), 190.

requirements of the modern nation-state and a solidification of the ties between Sephardic and Ashkenazy Jews.⁴⁷⁵

This development would be part of the wider process of assimilation that the Jewish elite underwent as well, reflecting the growing embourgeoisement of French Jewry. The dynamic of the evolution of the inner life of French Jewry in the nineteenth century was reflected in their self-identification as Frenchmen. Jewish identity developed over time and became inseparable from the dominating manifestation of loyalty to the ideals of French society as a whole, considering themselves equal in relations with non-Jews. Judaism was therefore preserved for the private domain, limited spatially to the home and synagogue, having little or no direct influence on the behavior of Jews in wider society.

Although this social evolution embodied the French Revolution's ideal and the objectives of Napoleon's Sanhedrin, which he admired and praised so much, Nordau opted to attack this development in order to emphasize the uprooted condition of the modern Western Jew and accentuate how emancipation had deprived assimilated Jews of all solidarity with their co-religionists. Nordau accused French Jews of being disloyal to their Jewishness, using the same language of anti-Semites. In the hope of gaining political equality, French Jews turned into "Israélites,"⁴⁷⁶ which amounted to national suicide wherein the assimilated Jew sloughed off Jewish identity from infancy and thereafter resented any assumption of his/her Jewish nature.

⁴⁷⁵ Michael Graetz, *Les Juifs en France au XIXe siècle: de la Révolution française à l'Alliance israélite universelle*, trans. Salomon Malka (Paris: Seuil, 1989), 100-101.

⁴⁷⁶ Max Nordau, "Eine "Geschichte der Israeliten," *L'Echo sioniste*, Paris, August 1901

Political scandals in the name of Honor

From October 1887 until 1888, a scandal dubbed “Le Scandale des Déclarations d’Honneur”⁴⁷⁷ exposed the role played by Daniel Wilson (1840-1919), the son-in-law of France’s President Jules Grévy. He awarded certain individuals *La Légion D’honneur* (the Legion of Honour decoration), the most prestigious of French decorations, in exchange for money or personal and political influence. The award was created by Napoléon in 1802 to distinguish and reward military and civil personnel for “des services éminents”, outstanding achievements in service of the nation. The order, whose motto is *Honneur et Patrie*, sought to recompense merit, as a way of introducing and enforcing a sense of honor in the army. One crucial element of the concept of honor is social stratification. Although the aristocracy was gradually losing its position of power by the end of the eighteenth century, it was able to survive in a few institutional domains where “nobility took shelter from the instrumentalism and pacifism of bourgeois society, and where honor reminded their social inferiors of the supremacy of those whose forebears exercised the military arts and for whom gallantry came naturally.”⁴⁷⁸

The situation started changing progressively in the second half of the nineteenth century as social classes began to merge and the bourgeoisie began to gain access to power and attain some of the highest ranks in society and adopted noble qualities. Robert Nye explains that through codes of honor, the integration of the bourgeoisie and aristocracy went farthest in France. Members of the upper middle classes married into aristocratic families and laid claim to equal political and social status. Through these affairs of honor, men of the bourgeoisie were able to lay claim to the quality of personal honor possessed “naturally” by

⁴⁷⁷ Also known as the “Wilson Affair”, named after the son-in-law of France’s president Jules Grévy, who was implicated in the scandal.

⁴⁷⁸ Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred* (New York: Norton, 1993). See also: Arno Mayer, *The persistence of the Old Regime* (New York: Vintage, 1981)

nobles and to defend it, a development that Nye perceived as a “process of assimilation” of the bourgeoisie into nobility.⁴⁷⁹ By appropriating gentile codes of honor, Zionists too, like Nordau, would initiate a “process of assimilation” for the culturally elevated French Jews.

This newly introduced secularized concept of honor, which was the synthesis between the aristocratic ideal of honor and the evaluation of merit, would engineer a modern “fabrique de l’honneur,” that would spread in different ways and at different levels into the political, social and cultural domains of France.⁴⁸⁰ Once *Le XIXe siècle* newspaper, on October 8, 1887, exposed that “un officier général portant d’un nom historique vend du ruban au ministère de la guerre pour 25000 à 50000 francs,”⁴⁸¹ the general public denounced the abuses of power and the practices of patronage at the highest level of government, demanding an end to this corruption. An investigation followed as the honor of the army and national security were at stake, leading eventually to the fall of President Grévy.⁴⁸²

Edouard Drumont wrote an article in his *La Libre Parole*, entitled “La Croix d’honneur” in which he was mostly unconcerned about the scandal itself but regretted the dishonor reflected on the French nation by Daniel Wilson, who he said was “probablement matiné de Juif, il n’a pas la moindre notion de ce qu’est l’âme française, l’âme aryenne.” The envy of attaining the highest degree of French honor, Drumont says, pushed Wilson to dishonor the legacy of *le ruban et la rosette*: “Déshonorer la Croix d’honneur, qu’il l’a prostituée à tous les juifs véreux et à tous les financiers suspects.”⁴⁸³ Among the Jews that received this accolade was Baron de Hirsch, who was awarded “grand-officier de la Légion

⁴⁷⁹ Robert A. Nye, *Masculinity and male codes of honor in modern France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) and Robert A. Nye, “The End of the French Duel” in *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor, and Rituals in Modern Europe and America*, edited by Pieter Spierenburg (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 84

⁴⁸⁰ B. Dumons and G. Pollet, “La fabrique de l’honneur, les médailles et les décorations en France, XIX^e - XX^e siècles,” *PUR*, (2009): 119-142

⁴⁸¹ *Le XIXe Siècle*, Journal Républicain, 08 October 1887, Headline of *Le XIXe siècle*, Breaking the ‘Traffic of the Legion of Honour’ Story, 7 October 1887 <https://www.retronews.fr/journal/le-xixe-siecle/08-octobre-1887/29/1125671/1>

⁴⁸² For more on the “Wilson-Affair”, see: Adrien Dansette, *L’Affaire Wilson et la chute du président Grévy* (Paris: Perrin, 1936); Maurice Toesca, *Le scandale des décorations* (Tours: Mame, 1971) and Michael B. Palmer, *The Daniel Wilsons in France, 1819–1919: Industry, the Arts, the Press, Châteaux, the Elysée Palace, and Scandal* (Routledge, 2021).

⁴⁸³ Edouard Drumont, “La Croix D’Honneur,” *La Libre parole*, 19 mai 1892

d'honneur.” More ironically, Cornelius Herz, who was implicated in the Panama scandal, was made Knight of the Legion of Honour in January 1871 for his work as surgeon-major as a part of the staff of General Chanzy in the French army of the Loire during the Franco-Prussian war.

Perhaps as an indirect attack on those assimilated French Jews that traded their “national identity”, i.e. Jewish, for “a religious denomination”, i.e. Israëlite, Nordau’s hero in *The Malady of the Century*, Wilhelm Eynhardt also saves soldiers from death during the war and his altruistic heroism is rewarded with the Iron Cross. Not believing in “theatrical decorations,” he turns it down as being a social distinction meant to honor a man’s actions but not his humanity: “Für bloße Pflichterfüllung meiner Bürger- und Menschenpflicht kann ich mich nicht mit einem Uebeichen behängen lassen, das den Vorübergehenden auf der Straße meine Großthaten vorprahlt.”⁴⁸⁴ He rejects the symbolism of the codes of honor and takes pride in his actions; yet ironically, in refusing to take the Iron Cross, Einhardt the Jew, becomes “unique” in the eyes of his German commandants as “It is hardly a usual thing to refuse the Iron Cross.”

To Nordau, the *Légion D’honneur* that were awarded to French Jews by the French states were theatrical actions to give Jews the illusion that they are fully endorsed by the state and by their nation. Nordau perceived it as superficial symbolism and warned French Jews that if it were not for their “money,” they would have never been acknowledged. Additionally, one cannot miss the Christian narrative in Nordau’s use of the “Iron Cross” as a symbol of honor. It is not only the most evident symbol of Christianity but it also evokes the imagery, and with it, many parallels of the betrayal scene in the passion of the Christ. There

⁴⁸⁴ Max Nordau, *Die Krankheit des Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, Verlag von B. Elischer, 1888), 144 (“In trying to merely fulfill my duties as a citizen and as a human, I cannot hang a sign of my great deeds on me for all passers-by to see.” My translation)

is a structural element to the symbolism of the Christian passion narrative: whenever Christ is involved, so is the Jew. Their existence is symbiotic, and so should their honor be.

Voiced by his alter ego in the novel, Dr. Schrotter, Nordau insists that honor is a symbol of the momentary capabilities of a people; and that kind of symbolism matters. To emphasize this further, his main character, Wilhelm Einhardt refuses to engage in a duel which leads to his dismissal from the army for failing to behave like a true German soldier. Scornful, the Commandant of the 61st Regiment condemns all degenerates of the likes of Einhardt, who could never sense the glory that it is tied to a strong feeling of honor:

Wir wissen, das Sie kein Feigling sind. Sie haben sich im Feldzug brav gehalten. Gerade darum thun Sie mir leid. Sie finden einen Querkopf. Ihre Ablehnung des eisernen Kreuzes, auf das jeder deutsche Krieger stolz sein muss, hat es bewiesen. Wir möchten nicht gerne eine Maßregel treffen, deren Bedeutung Sie offenbar nicht ersassen und die alle Ihre Lebensausfichten vernichten kann. Ich spreche jetzt nicht als Ihr Oberst, sondern als ein Mann, der Ihr Vater sein könnte. Glauben Sie mir: erfüllen Sie ihre Ehrepflicht.⁴⁸⁵

This quote positions assimilated Jews half-way: Because of their acculturation, they have been able to shed off the ancient curse of cowardice; yet they remain degenerates who cannot fully grasp the meaning of honor. Nordau saw in the narrative of honor a redemptive potential that could prevent national decline.

The several scandals that shook France offer a remarkable illustration of the "dynamics of a scandal"⁴⁸⁶ as they capture the transformation of a news item into a major politico-judicial battle. They also show us how nineteenth century French political life was immersed in the notion of honor as individual integrity was now linked to an unconditional

⁴⁸⁵ Max Nordau, *Die Krankheit des Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, Verlag von B. Elischer, 1888), 188 ("We know that you are not a coward. You showed great bravery on the battlefield. It is because of that, I feel sorry. You are a faddist, you proved that by your refusal of the Iron Cross, which is the pride of every other German soldier. We are not willing to condemn a mode of procedure, the meaning of which you evidently do not understand, and which all your views of life tend to destroy. I am not speaking now as your superior officer, but as a man—as your father might speak to you. Believe what I say. Fulfill your duty as a man of honor." Translated by the Online Gutenberg Project, see: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/4231>

⁴⁸⁶ To use the expression of Hervé Rayner, *Dynamique du scandale. De l'affaire Dreyfus à Clearstream* (Paris: Le Cavalier bleu, 2007).

loyalty to the nation and how, through the polemics of scandals, anti-Semites sought to exclude French Jews from the domain of honor. As we will see in the next section, it was not just the anti-Semites who used these scandals to accuse, shame, and exclude Jews, but proto-Zionists, such as Nordau, adopted the same accusations.

Zionist honor or Identity Swap

Nordau's 1897 play, *A Question of Honor: A tragedy of the present day* is about assimilation and its long-term consequences for Jewish nationalism.⁴⁸⁷ Nordau attempts to present in one story all the ideas and debates about the Jewish presence in Europe that he was personally dealing with and observing in French society. The play sheds light on Nordau's views on Jewish assimilation, mixed marriages, conversion, anti-Semitism, racial theories, masculinity, social class, stereotyping and whiteness in a German setting.

The play is about a forbidden love between the lead character, Dr. Leo Kohn, the Jewish lecturer of mathematics who is refused a professorship at his university because of his religion, and the German Christian, Christine Moser Quincke, whose father Julius Christian Moser is a converted and assimilated Jew, a wealthy banker and a former Captain in the Landwehr in the German army. Christine has two brothers, Carl and Ernst, both in the army and an uncle, Protestant pastor, Lebrecht von Quincke, who all disapprove of her union with the Jewish Dr. Kohn. Christine's father gives her his blessings after she persuades him. However, the twist in the plot unfolds when Leberecht von Quincke refuses to marry his daughter to Christine's brother Carl because having a Jew in the family would stain the family's honor. Carl is furious at losing his own bride; he confronts Dr. Kohn, "A man of honour would not bring discord into a united family." With these words he challenges Dr. Kohn to a duel and ends up killing him.

⁴⁸⁷ Max Simon Nordau, *A Question of Honor: A Tragedy of the Present Day* (Boston and London: J. W. Luce & Company, 1907).

Nordau's effort to mediate the *Zweiheit*, duality, of his East-European Jewish heritage and his chosen German/West European identity has in many ways shaped his work and intellectual trajectory. This struggle with his self-representation is very much present in the play and is portrayed in the opening scene that introduces us to the Moser family. During the fancy party at Professor Kielholt's mansion, Riegel, a guest, is introduced to Julius Moser and his sons. Riegel notices much more than just their "Jewish" noses and gossips about it with Binz, another guest:

Binz: [...] Moser-Quincke is as good an Anti-Semite as you and I. He out-trumps us, if possible. The only Jew whom we need consider is his father. I say Jew but he has really nothing more of the Jew about him.

Riegel: Except his nose.

Binz: Even that has already assumed a form of transition. With his name, the Privy Councilor has stripped off the last scent of the soil of Palestine.

Riegel: Is not his name Moser?

Binz: His real one is Moses. He changed the "s" to an "r".⁴⁸⁸

The name change is an important theme in the play. Noting that Nordau himself had gone through this experience, he brings it up twice to illustrate two kinds of Jews: those who change their names to assimilate but fail and those who refuse to do so and end up dying; both are doomed scenarios as both disappear physically –one becomes a Christian and the other dies.

The first name change relates to Moses, who according to Nordau, "has stripped off the last scent of the soil of Palestine" when he transformed himself into Moser. The play upon words that Riegel notes, is the meaning of the word "Moser"(plural: *Moserim*) in Hebrew which stands for an informer or a denouncer, stemming from the word *Mesirah* (or *mesira*, Hebrew: to turn over) the action in which one Jew reports the conduct of another Jew to a non-rabbinic authority. The term has a genealogy that refers back to the persecution and expulsions of Jews throughout time and is punishable with the death penalty

⁴⁸⁸ Nordau, *A Question of Honor*, 14

under Talmudic law.⁴⁸⁹ It seems that Nordau is insinuating that those who want to assimilate at any cost, are traitors, who sacrifice their co-religionists, even worse, they are denouncing them and causing their detrimental end; indirectly referring to assimilated French Jews.⁴⁹⁰ As Christine questions Leo on why he has not proposed to her yet, he answers that he was waiting to become a Professor of Mathematics at the university to compensate for his Jewish last name. Even Christine, who is supposed to fight for him, “was rather repelled by the name, it had an unpleasant sound,”⁴⁹¹ and until now had not come to fully love its Jewish connotation, namely, “priest.”

If every sentiment has a discourse and a history, then what seems as most intimate and personal becomes an expression associated with representations, behaviors and discourse. What we notice here is that in expressing his feelings, Dr. Kohn links his personal relationship with feeling ridiculed by the collective notion that *all* Jews are constantly being ridiculed. The historical conditions and constraints under which Nordau was writing and to which he referred are most germane, especially as regards the character of Dr. Kohn and how his feelings were shaped by the problems of Jewish identity in European society.

It is from the review that Herzl wrote on Nordau’s play, wherein he proclaims the later as the new prophet of Zionists, that we understand that Nordau had converted to Zionism by now. In the first part of the review, Herzl attacks the critics of the play who failed to adopt the play as a piece of high literature because it exposed the *Judenfrage*: “Unsere Judenfrage, darf nicht in die höhere Literatur eintreten. Erstens, weil sie schon endgiltig behandelt ist in Lessings “Nathan”. Zweitens, weil es eine Judenfrage überhaupt nicht gibt.

⁴⁸⁹See the online website of the Jewish Encyclopedia for more details on the term “Moser”:
<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11047-moser>

⁴⁹⁰ This is in contrast to the German association of the name Moser, which is native to Swabia where “the name became noted for its many branches within the region, each house acquiring a status and influence which was envied and enrolled by the princes of the region.” See: <https://www.houseofnames.com/moser-family-crest>

⁴⁹¹ Nordau, *A Question of Honor*, 61

Drittens, weil diese Frage die Eigenschaft besitzt, alle Leute furchtbar aufzuregen.”⁴⁹² Herzl writes that the era of Lessing’s ‘Nathan the Wise’, who represented religious toleration and coexistence between the three monotheistic religions, has come to an end, and that, as of now, “Die Judenfrage jucht eine andere dichterische Gestaltung.”⁴⁹³ The podium is now set for Zionists to provide a novel literary platform and “Max Nordau hat das Wort.”

In the second part of the review, Herzl positions the play as a plea against assimilation. Nordau’s Dr Kohn was defining Jewish literature and marking a new beginning in the history of Judaism as Dr Kohn and Herr Moser, the two Jews of the play, are contrasted: “der Jude Kohn, der ein Jude von heute ist und das zionistische ideal in seinem Kampsgespräche mit Moser wie eine Fahne ausrollte”⁴⁹⁴ refused to give up his “Judenthum” to marry the woman he loves, while Moser, “Né Moses,” was ready to pay the ultimate sacrifice. Finally, Herzl ends on the notion that this *zionistischen* “mächtigen Drama” (mighty drama) tells the only “Wahreit” (Truth):

Den Leuten außerhalb des jeßigen Ghettos wird es jagen, daß das Judenthum nicht todt ist, weil es in einer Zeit schwerter moralischer Leiden noch imstande ist, Blüten zu treiben, welche nur ein un- verzagtes, unverwüstbares volk hervorbringen kann: nationale Kunstwerke.⁴⁹⁵

Ironically, Nordau, just like Moser, married a gentile and Herzl blessed his union. Opening the play with the name change is Nordau’s rejection of a diaspora identity and the endorsement of a new assimilated yet Judaic nationalist identity. Manifestly, the foremost Jewish intellectual who professed Jewish assimilation, exchanged the contemptible south

⁴⁹² “Our Jewish Question must not enter higher literature. Firstly, because it has already been definitively dealt with in Lessing’s ‘Nathan’. Secondly, because there is no Jewish Question at all. Thirdly, because the Jewish question has the property of terribly upsetting people.” Theodor Herzl, “Nordaus Doctor Kohn,” *Die Welt*, No 3, (1899): 13

⁴⁹³ “The Jewish Question requires a different poetic form.” (My translation)

⁴⁹⁴ “Kohn the Jew, who is a modern/ present-day Jew who rolled out his Zionist convictions like a flag during his debate with Moser” (My translation).

⁴⁹⁵ “It will hunt people outside of the present ghetto that Judaism is not dead, as in a time of grave moral suffering, it is still able to bloom through what an undaunted, indestructible people can bring about: national works of art.”

(Sud-feld) for the glorious North (Nord-au), a transition that was necessary for the gentile validity that he is yearning for.

The Degeneration of the Assimilated

Nordau's play is a depiction of modern degenerates and his personal commitment to cure them. In order to do so, he starts by defining ailments using a number of anti-Semitic tropes, such as Jewish greed and Jewish money, but he also describes his main Jewish characters, including the lead character, Leo Kohn, in the most stereotypical way: "Dark, with a small moustache, somewhat curly, black hair, slightly hooked nose, decided Jewish type."⁴⁹⁶ One can notice that Nordau was purposely referring to these tropes to trigger mental associations already available to his audience. His mentioning of a "decided Jewish type" reflects Isaac de La Peyrère's description of the doomed Jew as a normative syndrome of spiritual, racial and bodily degeneration: dark skin, disturbing scent and spiritual agony, all of which go hand in hand and are marks of a falling from grace.⁴⁹⁷

Throughout the play, Nordau reproduces, through his characters, the long legacy of Christian and non-Jewish Zionist tropes about Jews, i.e. superstition, poverty, dirt, absurdity, eccentric culinary habits etc., without interrogating them or attempting to critique them. Nordau's internalization of anti-Jewish tropes is reflected also in the rootlessness of his Jewish characters. While he prides the Von Quincks for their rich family lineage and descent from Old French nobility, tracing back generations who served in the army,⁴⁹⁸ his Jewish characters are confined to poverty, misery and persecution. They do not come from honorable family lines. In this vein, when Dr. Kohn speaks of introducing Christine to his parents, he is ashamed of their Yiddish and provincial habits.

⁴⁹⁶ Nordau, *A Question of Honor*, 20

⁴⁹⁷ Sander Gilman's book *The Jew's Body* has been discussed in chapter 2.

⁴⁹⁸ Nordau, *A Question of Honor*, 13

This class shame was conflated purposely as both religious and racial shame. This was Herzl's only point of critique in his review of Nordau's play. Herzl notes that when the "poor parents" of Dr. Kohn came to bid their son farewell, the sight of their "alten jüdischen, ihm selbst fremd gewordenen Gebrauchen" (old Jewish habits which have become alien to him) by Moser confirmed his choice of apostasy from Judaism. Suddenly Moser's inner struggle toned down, but Herzl insists that if the Kohns weren't Jews, someone like Moser would anyhow have no common interests and ideas with poor people from the circle of the Kohns. This is when Herzl states that he finds it difficult to agree with "the poet," as their project should embrace all people and their diverse habits, thoughts, feelings and virtues.

Nordau feels contempt and disdain for those Jews, however, there is another kind of Jew who provokes those same feelings in Nordau: Julius Moser, the man who did everything in his power to blur his Jewishness and be accepted as a gentile German, the Jew that took the final leap of faith and converted to cleanse himself of any Jewish residues. What Nordau is preparing us for is the transition from the ancient kind of degenerate, stereotypical Jew, to the modern degenerate, the assimilated one who is in full denial of his degeneracy.

To Nordau, the assimilation of French Jews and their successful ability of rendering their Jewishness in the background, is itself a marker of an identity; one that is lacking honor. By portraying assimilation as a form of degeneration, Nordau brought to the forefront the inferiority and weakness of the modern degenerate who through his assimilation, projects a different concept of honor. It is therefore not surprising that the first wave of French Zionists, such as Baruch Hagani, Myriam Schach, André Spire and Alexandre Marmorek, were overwhelmingly influenced by Nordau's critiques of French Jews. André Spire (1868-1966), a prominent French Zionist who carried Nordau's legacy, wrote an article in *La Renaissance du Peuple Juif*, a newspaper previously known as *L'Écho sioniste*, wherein he accused

assimilated French Jews of “treason” towards their co-religionists for misleading the French people and the French government in their national self-identification:

Notre élite juive... se dit française, se croit française, et elle a prouvé vraiment qu'elle l'était devenue, et de coeur et de choix, en donnant à la France le meilleur de son sang: celui de ses fils.⁴⁹⁹

By calling assimilated French Jews selfish and ignorant, Spire was actually stating: “No to the shedding of Jewish blood for the French nation; and yes to the shedding of Jewish blood for the Jewish people/nation.” This sentence is very reminiscent of Stanislas Clermont-Tonnerre’s (1757-1792) famous speech at the French parliament on the eve of the French Revolution, arguing for Jewish emancipation, in which he declared “il faut tout refuser aux Juifs comme nation et tout accorder aux Juifs comme individus.” This quote, though often misunderstood to mean that Jews must assimilate in exchange for rights, was in fact an ultimatum for French Jewry to assimilate politically. As David Sorkin and others have shown, Clermont-Tonnerre emphasized that Jews need not to give up on their religious and cultural practices but *only* on their communal political institutions in favor of French laws: “Il faut méconnaître leurs juges; ils ne doivent avoir que les nôtres; il faut refuser la protection légale au maintien des prétendues lois de leur corporation judaïque; il faut qu’ils ne fassent dans l’État ni un corps politique, ni un ordre; il faut qu’ils soient individuellement citoyens.”⁵⁰⁰

What Spire was actually demanding, in line with Nordau’s theories, was a reversal of this process. To emphasize this demand, Nordau applied biological and pathological terms, borrowed from his own research on degenerative actors, to describe the degenerative effects of assimilation on French Jews.⁵⁰¹ His concepts of “degeneration” and “paradox” were freely

⁴⁹⁹ André Spire, « La France et le Sionisme » *La Renaissance du peuple Juif*, 1^{er} Janvier 1918, n.34

⁵⁰⁰ Pierre Birnbaum, *La République et le Cochon* (Le Seuil, 2013) and Maurice Samuels, *The right to difference: French universalism and the Jews* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016)

⁵⁰¹ Max Nordau, *L’Univers Israélite*, 54^e année, n.27, 24 Mars 1899, 13

used by French Zionists in the analysis of the Jewish condition in France, calling for the need of a “société de gymnastique” in Paris to revive French Jewry.

In a column he wrote about Zionism and Anti-Semitism that was published in *L'Écho Sioniste* in 1899 and was reprinted by *Le Siècle* as part of a debate between Nordau and the Dreyfusard Yves Guyot (1843-1928), Nordau divides the group of privileged assimilated Jews in two: the first group represents French Jewry “les hauts et puissants barons de la finance juive et les beaux esprits esthètes, symbolistes et mystiques de ma race,”⁵⁰² of the likes of the Rothschilds who are members of the “Jockey-Club” and the Heines, who marry their daughter to a reigning prince.⁵⁰³ This group’s detachment from its race and heritage stands in the way of any sign of solidarity with their poor co-religionists. These rich Jews, Nordau continues, mistake official honors they receive due to their wealth with the real concept of honor, which the second group of assimilated Jews carry and through it, are elevated. The second group are the likes of Nordau, a group of privileged, assimilated Jews who have a “different concept of their duties,” meaning both gentile and regenerated Jews, fulfilling an honorable duty. This group does not deny its origins and forefathers but use them to guide the ancient degenerates outside of Europe:

Ils (les Juifs des pays arriérés) sont une masse chaotique. Nous les organisons. Ils balbutient leur plainte dans un jargon incompréhensible aux gens cultivés. Nous leur prêtons des langues civilisées. Ils se ruent impétueusement sans orientation. Nous leur montrons la route à suivre. Ils ont des aspirations vagues. Nous les formulons. Ils sont emportés par un enthousiasme presque délirant. Nous les modérons.⁵⁰⁴

Hence in between these two categories of degenerates, the Ghetto Jew and the assimilated and converted bourgeois Jew, comes the Zionist with a novel conception of honor.

⁵⁰² Max Nordau, “Le Sionisme et l’Antisémitisme,” *Le Siècle*, 54^e année, n.23, 123, 9 July 1899

⁵⁰³ Max Nordau, *Écrits sionistes*, Introduction by Baruch Hagani (Paris: Librairie Lipschutz, 1936).

⁵⁰⁴ “They (Jews from backward countries) are a chaotic mass. We organize them. They stammer their complaints in a slang that is incomprehensible to cultivated people. We provide them with civilized languages. They rush impetuously in all directions. We show them the road to follow. They have vague aspirations. We formulate them. Their enthusiasm is almost delirious. We moderate them.” (My translation)

In his play *A Question of Honor*, Dr. Kohn represents this new Jew. When Carl challenged Dr. Kohn to a duel, Christine and her father begged Leo not to participate, but Leo has no choice but to represent the Jewish nation:

So far as I am personally concerned, I would shrug my shoulders at the insult. My self-respect does not depend upon an angry exclamation from an excited young man. (...) People will not condemn me, the individual, Leo Kohn, but the Jew—all Jews. The disgrace to which I submit will rest upon my whole race. This dictates my duty.

Leo Kohn is strikingly transformed into a collective people, he becomes “all Jewish people” and the duel transcends him as an individual and becomes about Jewish peoplehood and the diasporic space. In doing so, he is accepting the burden of representation that anti-Semitism had imposed on him, wherein any action he takes or any attribute he possesses reflect on all Jews. Dr. Kohn feels obliged to confront Carl Moser von Quincke, who has challenged him personally, yet Leo Kohn fights him in defense of the national honor of all Jews.

Throughout the play, Jewish honor with a Christian Zionist undertone is an important recurring theme and is contrasted with two other kinds of honor. The first one is the outdated ancient concept of Jewish honor, which is personified by Amschel Kohn, Dr. Kohn’s own very “Yiddish” and traditional father, who imperatively rejects Rector Kienholt's assertion, which in no way appeases him, that his son's knightly behavior is a source of satisfaction or comfort, despite his death. Amschel Kohn centers his sense of honor on a particular tradition handed down by his Jewish ancestors; it is a tradition which abhors and rejects violence. “Leave the gunshots and the killings to others. Our weapon is the spirit,” Amschel Kohn tells us. For Zionists, this obsolete conception of life carries no pride or dignity and only reinforces the notion of Jewish cowardice. It has not protected Jews from persecutions and has not liberated them from the ghetto and hence, it cannot answer to the severe challenges faced by young Jews embarking on the path of modernity in the diaspora. The second kind of honor is that of the assimilated Jew who lacks any true sense of gentile honor as he is no

longer provoked by insults and injuries to his dignity. Moser's blurring of his Jewishness and muting of his Jewish honor is constantly put in contrast with Dr. Kohn's refusal to do so.

Zionism would morph both kinds of honor together to mold a Zionist honor, a novel concept of national Jewish honor based on Christian values.

The response of Nordau to the tensions of anti-Semitism and assimilation was twofold: on the one hand, his belief that the regeneration of the ghetto Jew can only take place outside of Europe, for the sole reason that, given the current socio-political circumstances the continent is going through, gentiles would not allow nor provide ghetto Jews with the necessary space and time to be regenerated. As Aschheim Kohn has demonstrated, cosmopolitan Jews such as Nordau especially sought to distance themselves from the reigning representation of Jewish particularity: the *Ostjude*, the Eastern Jew who incarnates all of Jewry's alleged primitive or degenerate Jewish traits.⁵⁰⁵ It is too late for the ghetto Jew to reach the needed level of revival and honor to enter modernity; hence Europe ought to be cleansed of their degenerate traits.

Nordau writes in a column to a French audience that this group of Jews will be deported to another geographical space, ideally Palestine, where they will be educated and regenerated into honorable gentiles:

Si les Juifs veulent retourner en Palestine, ce n'est pas pour se plonger dans la barbarie asiatique, c'est pour se délivrer de la barbarie du ghetto. Libres d'entraves, respirant dans une atmosphère de justice et de sympathie, ils se développeront intellectuellement, moralement et même physiquement avec une énergie, une rapidité qui étonneront le monde.⁵⁰⁶

As for the second group of Jews, "les Hébreux dénationalisés," who lack any sort of national Jewish sentiment but have however attained a high degree of acculturation and revival, they

⁵⁰⁵ Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: the East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

⁵⁰⁶ Max Nordau, "Le Sionisme et l'Antisémitisme," *Le Siècle*, 54^e année, n.23, 123, 9 July 1899.

ought to be firstly attacked for their dishonor and then be educated in the honorable ways of Jewish nationalism. In doing so, Nordau effectively not only internalized the Christian notion of honor, but actually used it to create a divide between Jews themselves.

Nordau attacks assimilated French Jews at the Zionist Congresses

Nordau had only contempt and disdain for the French self-identification of French Jews and their loyalty and level of integration in France. Those Jews, he stated at the First Zionist Congress, “who had now another home; they no longer needed the ghetto.”⁵⁰⁷ He saw in their conformism and embourgeoisement the “degeneration” of Western Jews. Nordau, who was a co-founder of the Zionist Organization (renamed in 1960 as The World Zionist Organization or WZO), devoted both his opening speeches at the First Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897 and at the Second one, in part, to reprimanding French Jewry. Nowhere has Nordau’s inferiority complex towards his Jewish identity been better expressed than in his inauguration speech at the First Zionist Congress. From its onset he divided European Jewry in two: the assimilated, eloquent, bourgeois, well-off western Jew and the Eastern ghetto Jew. Despite being an Eastern Jew himself, he spoke as a Western one. Speaking in German, he identified as the enlightened, bourgeois, educated and cultured Jew, and most importantly, as a secular German, marking how both the German and French traditions were responsible for his own political and intellectual formation.

The tone of the speeches was aggressive and cynical; he denounced the French Jew: Although assimilated and having “given up his specifically Jewish character”, *he* will always lack “the special characteristics” of his Christian countrymen, namely “the right notion of honour, feeling for duty, morality, patriotism, idealism.”⁵⁰⁸ Nordau explains that the legal

⁵⁰⁷ Max Nordau, *Max Nordau to his People: A Summons and A Challenge*, Introduction by B. Netanyahu (New York: Scopus Pub. Co., inc., 1941)

⁵⁰⁸ Nordau, *To His People*, 64

emancipation of French Jews “was solely the result of the geometrical mode of thought of French rationalism of the 18th century”. Though intellectually Nordau had always been a fervent admirer of the French Enlightenment and the Revolution and its declaration of human rights, we see here that he chose intentionally and for pragmatic reasons, to discredit those values he still cherished, in order to attack French Jews:

The philosophy of Rousseau and the encyclopedists had led to the declaration of human rights. Out of this declaration, the strict logic of the men of the Great Revolution deduced Jewish emancipation. They formulated a regular equation: Every man is born with certain rights; the Jews are human beings, consequently the Jews are born to own the rights of man. In this manner, the emancipation of Jews was pronounced, not through a fraternal feeling for the Jews, but because logic demanded it. Popular sentiment rebelled, but the philosophy of the Revolution decreed that principles must be placed higher than sentiment.⁵⁰⁹

This assertion in Nordau’s speech is of importance as he acknowledges the history of the emancipation of the Jews as a function of rationalism that morally elevated all European gentiles, an approach he has praised in many of his writings, but it is at this exact intersection that he decides to break away with these values: “Allow me then an expression which implies no ingratitude. The men of 1792 emancipated us only for the sake of principle.” This contradictory sentence is where the divide between Nordau and French Jews occurs.

Though Nordau acknowledges that reason won over hatred and contempt, he wants the “fraternal feeling” that was rejected by anti-Semites to be endorsed by the assimilated Jews. But French Jews, who lack “moral respect” as “a species of intoxication,” considered themselves “full citizens of their country” and thus “emancipation has totally changed the nature of the Jew, and made him another being.”⁵¹⁰ Nordau therefore concludes that French Jews had developed their own conventional lies to hide their real condition, which is their

⁵⁰⁹ Nordau, *To His People*, 61

⁵¹⁰ Nordau, *To His People*, 67

⁵¹⁰ Nordau, *To His People*, 67

“moral misery” that is “more bitter than the physical, because it befalls men who are differently situated, prouder and possess the finer feelings.”⁵¹¹ This description of the assimilated, cultured, proud, bourgeois fits Nordau’s self-perception, who perhaps, by criticizing assimilated French Jews, was projecting his own feelings of shame and guilt over his own personal assimilation and rejection of everything Jewish, even his birth name.

At the second Zionist Congress in Basel in 1898, Nordau spoke specifically of the “*décadence*” of French Jews who despite reigning anti-Semitism and the Dreyfus Affair, still believed in their integration and fusion with France. He accused French Jews of not understanding that it was not *one* Jew who was being under attack but *all* Jews. Nordau endorses the Christian and anti-Semitic notion that all Jews are a people, forming a nation of their own, and that they should have responded to the accusations as “a body” and thus as a Jewish entity: “Jewry being attacked in its corporate capacity (as officers of the army), it ought to have resisted as a body”. Nordau here rejects that French Jews have a nation, France, that they identify with, and like anti-Semites, wants French Jews to renounce their Frenchness to transform into a different “body”.

Although Nordau admitted in his diaries that at the beginning of the Dreyfus trial, when he doubted if Dreyfus was innocent, and as such believed that “the abominable crime of treason, inexcusable by any man, was doubly heinous in a Jew who must be aware that his whole people would be made responsible for his crime,”⁵¹² Nordau still stressed that French Jewry remained “dumb” at the accusations and allowed itself to be told “This is the outcome of allowing Jews to become officers.” To Nordau, the inability of French Jews to defend “one of the holiest, perhaps *the* holiest, of human possessions - justice” was clearly a sign of the

⁵¹¹ Nordau, *To His People*, 71

⁵¹¹ Nordau, *To His People*, 71

⁵¹² Nordau, *A Biography*, 328

erosion of human values and ideals in the assimilated French Jewish community.

Nordau resented French Jews: In their desperate fight for integration, they had not only betrayed their co-religionists but also showed their lack of self-respect. But luckily, Nordau continues, “Christians accomplished this duty of honour.” He could only feel shame and disdain for French Jews “who have not risked their lives” in the battle for justice. Again, we note here the language of sacrifice that is embedded in the narrative of honor; that self-sacrifice is necessary to attain honor, which reminds us of the violent dimension of the concept of honor. Nordau contrasted Jewish cowardice with the “Christian heroes who staked their fortune, their freedom, their civic honor, their life in the struggle for a right which was only in a very abstract, very elevated, very idealistic sense, their right.” To Nordau, the nobility of the Christian man makes him stand up for the rights of every *other*, a sense of honor French Jews should attempt to attain.

Though the Dreyfus Affair divided French public opinion and with it, intellectuals and politicians were split in two camps, Nordau groups those that spoke out as “Christian names, Aryan names” into one collectivity representing the totality of French society as an honorable one. On the other hand, though Nordau acknowledges that several Jewish authors and politicians spoke out just like their Christian counterparts, he names Bernard Lazare, Jacques Bahar and Joseph Reinach who have “saved to a certain degree the honor of Judaism.” Nordau perceives them as individuals and vilifies French Jewry for not “moving a finger in self-defense” of “their collective honor.” Hence the several French authors represent the honor of the entirety of French society, but the French Jews only represent themselves, whereas French Jewry as a race has failed to act rise and should “blush with shame.”

It is through these words that Nordau’s Zionism as Jewish nationalism will come to shape the new components of a collective Jewish narrative of honor contrasted to a Christian,

Aryan one. This collective honor that French Jews lack, is linked to a national Jewish honor that can only be achieved through Zionism as “Zionism has awakened Jewry to new life, morally through the National ideal, materially through physical rearing.”⁵¹³ Nordau observes that assimilated Jews have “outwardly abandoned Judaism” but “they were only Jews from habit and for convenience sake. Their Judaism caused them to be persecuted, but partly they no longer had sufficient sense of honor to endure persecution.”⁵¹⁴ Zionism will infuse that sense of honor into its adherents and “the Jewish opponents of Zionism, be their number great or small, are destined to disappear from among the Jews”.⁵¹⁵

“Le Relèvement Moral”: Regenerating Assimilated Jews

Nordau cynically observed that the opinion of the anti-Semites was far above what French Jews deserved. To correct that perception, Nordau would apply his theories of degeneration to assimilated French Jews to regenerate them through a doctrine that he developed and called “Relèvement Moral,” which is “une méthode qui seule doit être employée pour propager l’idée sioniste parmi les Juifs assimilés.”⁵¹⁶ This method will work towards creating a “Jewish sentiment” by “educating Jewish souls” in the “vita nuova” that Zionism will bring to the Jewish cause.⁵¹⁷ After setting out this strategy, Nordau tempered his attitude towards the French Jewish community after the Zionist movement's decision to support the “conquest of communities” in 1898.

It was a strategic and pragmatic move to educate assimilated Jews in the notions of national Jewish honor, which would give them a real sense of dignity and honor, rather than

⁵¹³ Nordau, *To his people*, 88

⁵¹⁴ Nordau, *To his people*, 89

⁵¹⁵ Nordau, *To his people*, 90

⁵¹⁶ “A method which alone should be used to propagate the Zionist idea among assimilated Jews” (My translation). Nordau, *Écrits Sionistes*, 129

⁵¹⁷ Nordau, *Écrits Sionistes*, 133

the material trophies they receive because of their wealth and professional accomplishments. Assimilated Jews ought to perceive that receiving material honors, which are actual symbols of gentile recognition, are “the worst of dishonors” as they represent “a personal achievement”,⁵¹⁸ rather than a collective honor. Nordau himself proposed this policy change after intense debates following the Second Congress. The Zionists would now try to reach out to Jewish communities, and rabbis in particular, to gain their support for the nationalist cause.

Stanislawski gets it wrong when he writes that the fictive Dr. Kohn in Nordau’s play *A Question of Honor* is a Zionist, “a proud and defiant Jew who rejects emancipation and assimilation as evil chimeras and insists upon the Jews returning to their own country, reclaiming their own language.”⁵¹⁹ Dr. Kohn was actually demanding his professorship based on his German identity and on the rights that the German constitution granted him. He wrote to the university demanding it to change its statutes, and “he petitioned the ruler of the country to change the statutes of the university because they are not in harmony with the constitution, which guaranteed equal rights to all religions.”⁵²⁰ The university could only appoint Evangelical Christians as professors, and Kohn had no intention of converting: not because he was a devout Jew, but because he wanted his appointment based on his own merit, on his individuality and on justice: “I believed in justice and law.”⁵²¹ Realizing that the curtain of ambiguity was lifted, and that in the depths of their hearts, Europeans carry tropes of anti-Jewish sentiment, in his discussion with Kielholt, Nordau’s Dr. Kohn engages the Christian Zionist perception that Diaspora Jews lack dignity and honor and tells him that is only because Christians refuse to grant it to them.⁵²²

⁵¹⁸ Nordau, *Écrits Sionistes*, 43

⁵¹⁹ Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin De Siècle*, 83

⁵²⁰ Nordau, *A Question of Honor*, 17

⁵²¹ Nordau, *A Question of Honor*, 41-42

⁵²² Nordau, *A Question of Honor*, 44

Despite lacking any other credentials than being a Jew, Dr. Kohn proposes to Christine. Dr. Kohn, who transformed from a liberal subject –“individual” into a pre-liberal one –a “Jew” --now becomes a separate *volk*:

Kohn: Councilor Moser, in the inmost depths of your being, you are no less a Jew than I.

Moser: How can you say that to me?

Kohn: (...) Let us look each other straight in the eyes. Judaism is indelible. We may regard it as an honor or as a stain, but we cannot rid ourselves of it.

When Dr. Kohn states that Jews *are* a people, and not *becoming* one, he is internalizing what people have told him. The converted, baptized and assimilated Julius Moser denies that there is such thing as a Jewish race because he refuses to share that space with “Jewish negroes” and “miserable Polish and Russian wearers of the caftan;”; as “The Jews, as a race, passed away long ago, if indeed there ever was one. All the blood of Western Asia and Europe mingles in the veins of the Hebrew. There can be no further talk of unity of race.”⁵²³ Ironically, Dr Kohn cannot contradict him and agrees with him. Yet, not uniting into a race is self-delusional according to Kohn because “Every Anti-Semite will tell you that the Jews are a race, and that to say, ‘I will emerge from Judaism,’ is precisely the same as if a negro should say ‘from this time I will cease to be a negro.’ Based on his theories of shared sociobiological characteristics, Nordau takes over the anti-Semitic definition of grouping Jews into a race, and consequently transcends his individuality by becoming part of “a people” defined by their enemy. Ironically Nordau’s understanding of a real Jew depends on one’s commitment to Zionism. Dishonor seems to be located in several elements of Jewish stereotyping, such as refusing, as a Jew, to be held accountable and represent a whole people. Christine accuses Leo of caring more for his “race” [*dein Stamm*] than for her. The word

⁵²³ Nordau, *A Question of Honor*, 79

Nordau uses here is “stamm,” which would be better translated as “tribe” or “origin” than race. Leo’s response is that he does not, but that he has no choice because history has turned every Jew into a representative of all Jews, and though he does not want to “burden his soul with the sin of shedding blood,” he accepts to duel.

Dueling to Assimilate

There is a lot to be said about the place of dueling in this play, as dueling is all about an *affair of honor*. Historically, Jews never belonged to the feudal code, and as such, were excluded from the pursuit of honor. If dueling was not part of the Jewish code of ethics, then why does Dr. Kohn, a man of reason and mathematics, hang on to this feudal code of aristocracy that he is not part of? What is Dr. Kohn willing to die for? Though Nordau wants the reader to explicitly believe that Kohn is dying for the honor of all Diaspora Jews and for his refusal to live as a Jew on his knees; it seems however that Dr Kohn is doing the exact opposite: he is wielding a sword as a German, a proud one, and not as a Jew.

By dueling, he is reasserting his German identity and patriotism in the eyes of those who doubted it. As George Eisen puts it: “Wielding a weapon satisfied a compensatory reflex, part of an attempt by the emerging Jewish community to identify itself with, and be accepted by, the ruling classes by engaging in a pursuit that was associated with virility, masculinity, and honor in many European societies.”⁵²⁴ In one blow, Dr Kohn could demonstrate his worth, as dueling was after all the highest possible form of upholding personal honor. Additionally, one only challenges an equal to a duel, and hence by accepting the duel Leo Kohn proves to Carl Moser that he has just turned into an honorable German Christian.

⁵²⁴ George Eisen, “Jewish History and the Ideology of Modern Sport: Approaches and Interpretations,” *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Fall 1998), 508

The play ends with Christine asking, “Oh, Papa, why do human beings hurt one another so?” Here again, Christine did not ask why Christians hurt Jews specifically, as this was the leitmotif of the play; or why Germans hurt one another, or why two men faced one another, but Christine chooses to place all aspects of the duel and the resulting violence and death within the scope of humanity. Melanie A. Murphy writes that *A Question of Honor* is actually “a questioning of the possibility of honor for a Diaspora Jew.”⁵²⁵ Dr. Kohn accepts the duel but instead of firing at Carl, he fires his shot into the air, following the French chivalric code and violating the German chivalric code. Carl, the German Christian duelist, fires at Leo and kills him. Ironically, the Jew dies a Frenchman, despite his attempts to Germanize.

Although the Jew is killed, and with him all Jews, he proves to gentiles that Jews are not just “cowards who can hear themselves defamed without taking up the sword in response.” Whether Leo Kohn is a protagonist, a hero or a martyr seems to be immaterial as all three are complementary. His death however was an affirmation of the new civilized, honorable, fearless Jew who cannot be humiliated. Not only is Dr. Kohn willing to die for *all* Jews, he also takes the moral high ground by refusing to kill a gentile. Nordau, who relied on the scientific laws of biology to express his interpretation of the socio-political universe, might have drawn his character’s “honorable death” from Francis Bacon, one of the founders of modern science, who wrote that “there is an honour, likewise, which may be ranked amongst the greatest, which happeneth rarely; that is, of such as sacrifice themselves, to death or dangers, for the good of their country.”⁵²⁶ Honor even aspires to death according to Bacon (On Death). There might be something else going on in this political obligation to die for the

⁵²⁵ Melanie A. Murphy, *Max Nordau's fin-de-siècle Romance of Race* (New York : Peter Lang, c2007), 94

⁵²⁶ Francis Bacon, *Works of Francis Bacon* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1844) Volume 1, 58

honor of one's people, or one's nation. Interestingly, Eynhardt too chooses self-sacrifice at the end of *The Malady of the Century*, underscoring that there is no place for degenerates in Wilhelmine Germany. Though the death of Nordau's characters has consistently been understood as an illustration of Nordau's pessimism and fatalism about *fin de siècle* society, I argue that murdering his characters, either in duels or self-sacrifice, emphasizes the hidden violence that underpinned Nordau's writings and aspirations.

Whereas traditional Jewish thought has not been centered on the kinds of political organizations that would ask their members to risk their lives on their behalf, Zionism has made this demand and required of its members this supreme sacrifice. In *Justifying the Obligation to Die: War, Ethics, and Political Obligation with Illustrations from Zionism* Baron Ilan Zvi writes that Nordau privileges the community over the individual and this community has a political obligation to risk its life for the state/community, and if necessary, to die for it. Ilan Zvi writes that, "Nordau presents political obligation as a necessary condition of political life because of the need to defend the value of the community. The community at issue here is not necessarily a state, but the point is that the value of the political community is worth dying for."⁵²⁷ These communal and national ties meant that the Jew no longer had to be honorable vis-à-vis a Gentile in his country but internalize all notions of gentile honor vis-à-vis his own Jewish community and project that national honor to finally be elevated into a gentile.

The reason why Nordau reached the conclusion that assimilation was not acceptable to him anymore, was not because he ceased to be Western European or German, but because he would always remain German, yet dishonored, even if assimilated. It is Nordau's injured

⁵²⁷ Baron Ilan Zvi, *Justifying the Obligation to Die: War, Ethics, and Political Obligation with Illustrations from Zionism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, c2009), 78

German patriotism contrasted with the attachment that French Jews have for their nation, that pushed him to seek a new body politic, or a new site, where he could reconstruct his *patrie* with the notion of an honorable Jew. Through Zionism, Nordau and his disciples were able to appropriate a new site where honor would be perceived as an equal political right, part of a new Jewish identity. A real Jew can only be a Zionist; everyone denying this truth would remain a disgraced Jew. Thinking in terms of European conventions, as to what one does to receive such political honor, Nordau's quest for it, is about Jewish recognition in the gentile public sphere. It is about being seen and being recognized; as such, the ambiguous meaning of Jewish honor transforms into a Zionist conception of political honor related to a changed society, a different one, where that new kind of honor, and that new Jew, could be shaped and molded.

Zionist Nationalism: A Story of Honor and Assimilation

As we have seen, Nordau would start to synthesize and modify his theories on a Jewish moral revival in the decade after his arrival to France in books and articles he published. In them, he developed a theory of the regeneration of the already assimilated Jews, who were, in his estimation, culturally mature and more elevated than their ghetto brethren, into a higher degree of honorability. The second part would involve displacing these Jews that are too degenerate as they would continue to contaminate European perceptions of Jews and remain an obstacle to the full absorption of the cultivated ones. Zionism was to Nordau the rational solution to the Jewish problem.

He would use sentiments and feelings to describe how Jewishness remained a major concern in Western Europe with the Christian opposition to Jewish emancipation on the one hand and the fear of modern antisemitism on the other hand. Nordau struggled to reconcile his East European heritage with his chosen West European identity. As scholar George

Mosse points out: “While [...] romanticism held no attraction for him [Nordau], in his description of the state of western as opposed to eastern Jewry he resorted to concepts like sentiment and emotion”⁵²⁸.

Nordau and Herzl cleverly, understood that all social and political aspects of gentile honor would benefit its project: (1) social stratification is a crucial factor embedded in all concepts of honor and masculinity, through which Jews could finally exit the ghetto and enter social classes formerly denied to them; (2) honor has an intimate association with nationalism as nations are particularly large groups; (3) Honor was not just about class, but also about group formation and loyalty among members. Hence, for Zionism, the concepts of honor were not just about reaffirming Jewish masculinity and strength in the eyes of gentiles, as most studies conclude, but it was about forcing an entry into the world of gentile honor by merging with noble and bourgeois honor, reminiscent of the medieval European aristocracy.

However, that same Christian European discourse excluded the Jew from the narrative of strength and pride. Western honor did not allow Jews within the Christian, and later, secular realm of honor, as it excluded ‘dishonorable’ individuals and groups, wherein the dynamic of gaining or losing honor only pertains to those perceived as within the discourse. Honor is not emotional capital that can be traded and exchanged, regardless of space and social status. It was only valued by, and within, social groups that shared the same notions and practices. If, for instance, an aristocrat was insulted by a worker, he would remain quite unconcerned, more so, if he was insulted by a Jew who was entirely outside the circle of honor. Western honor conditioned the honor of the Diaspora Jew to the fulfilling of divine prophecies and to their departure from Europe. Consequently, Zionist ideology, as it manifested in the Zionist Organization and by Zionist leaders, would endorse this narrative that implied losing the essential character of Jewish heritage and culture, within the thematic

⁵²⁸ George Mosse, “Max Nordau, Liberalism and the New Jew,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 27, (1992) 565–81.

of nationalism. Jewish Zionism insisted on the shame that the Jews should feel for lacking honor in the Diaspora, but also that Jews, who end their dispersion through Zionism, should feel the gentile anti-Semitic sentiments of contempt and disdain for the Diaspora Jew. Zionist nationalism, then, is rooted in the vision of a radical regeneration of national Jewish honor by internalizing the norms of European gentile culture and advocating the adoption of Western gentile values of honor, instead of refuting them.

Zionists would use this logic to outline conscious beliefs to maneuver between the desirable, what Zionists desire and wish for, and the real, their contrasting state of reality.⁵²⁹ Ultimately reaching the same conclusion as faithful and secular Christian Zionists, Jewish Zionism embraced the ‘return’ of Jews to Palestine, but not of all Jews. Zionism is a separatist ideology for the degenerate Jews and an assimilationist one for the privileged. Ironically, Zionist nationalism’s attachment to the notion of gentile honor was not so much a rejection of assimilation, but a final attempt to successfully assimilate into gentile society.

⁵²⁹ Sara Mills, *Discourse* (London: Routledge, 1997)

CHAPTER 6: Zionist Dishonor on Palestinian lands

Theodor Herzl's and Max Nordau's Zionism found no favorable ground in France, home to an integrated, assimilated Jewish population that considered patriotism its refuge against anti-Semitism. Nonetheless, France played not only a foundational role in shaping and formulating their Zionist ideology, but from the 1880s onward, Paris was the heart of most Palestinianophile activity in the West. Baron Edmond de Rothschild and the seat of the administration of the first *Hovevi Zion* colonies were located in France, and so was Charles Netter, the founder of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle's* school of agriculture, Mikve Israel. They both considered themselves philanthropists who saw it as their duty to aid less fortunate Jews by 'repatriating' them to the Holy Land and supporting them there.

It is noteworthy that the story of Zionism cannot be told outside of France's imperialist ideology, which sought to restore French authority by "building on the growth of exploration, missionary activity, and trade from the late eighteenth century, as well as rising international rivalries, they established new centers of French influence in the Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian Ocean, Oceania, south-east Asia, even Antarctica."⁵³⁰ The trajectory of French colonialism between the First Empire and the Third Republic worked its way through all of modern French cultural thought; its Jacobin component of universalistic nationalism provided a moral justification for France's imperialist doctrine. Most importantly, "French imperialist doctrine was organized around any one concern, it was the fear of national decline."⁵³¹ As such, the regeneration, revival and rebuilding of French

⁵³⁰ Jennifer E. Andrews and Naomi J. Andrews, "Introduction: The Politics of Empire in Post-revolutionary France," *French Politics, Culture and Society*, Volume 33, Issue 1, (3/22/2015)

⁵³¹ Raymond F. Betts, "The Sources of French Imperialist Ideology before World War I," *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society*, 1979, Vol. 4 (1979) :166

society from decades of revolution and warfare was conditioned to colonialism.

Unsurprisingly, this ideology was to be taken over and mirrored in the ideology of modern Zionism, propagated by Moses Hess, Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau, all of whom were heavily influenced by French ideals. It is within that imperial context that they campaigned for the colonization of Palestine which would bring an end to Jewish homelessness.

The figure of the doomed sinner, the Wandering Jew, is an antisemitic projection that encodes and enforces difference between Jews and non-Jews, using race, gender, religion and social constructs to deem the Jew as homeless. In his *La France Juive*, Édouard Drumont used specifically the Semites' incapability of conquest to distinguish between Semites and Aryans, who alone embody the chivalric tradition: "La race aryenne ou indo-Européenne possède seule la notion de la justice, le sentiment de la liberté, la conception du Beau."⁵³² The ideals of justice, of freedom and of beauty that Semites lacked, were necessary to complement yet another fundamental element of the Aryan race: their strong sense of adventure, of discovering the unknown, and their devotion to a cause and their heroism to conquer and sacrifice themselves for it: "L' Aryen (...) un être qui se dévoue, qui combatte pour une cause, qui se sacrifie, qui aille comme Parsifal à travers mille dangers à la conquête du Saint-Graal: la coupe remplie du sang d'un dieu."⁵³³

Zionist leaders, such as Nordau and Herzl, had internalized these anti-Semitic claims and were convinced that in order to attain honor in the eyes of gentiles, they would have to behave like Aryans and prove their capabilities of conquest. In the address entitled *The Balfour Declaration and its Consequences*,⁵³⁴ that he held at the Albert Hall in July 1920 in

⁵³² Édouard Drumont, *La France Juive; Essai d'Histoire contemporaine*, (Paris : C. Marpon & E. Flammarion, 1886), 6c

⁵³³ "The Aryan (...) a being who devotes himself, who fights for a cause, who sacrifices himself, who goes like Parsifal through a thousand dangers to conquer the Holy Grail: the cup filled with the blood of a god." (My translation) Drumont, *La France Juive*, 11

⁵³⁴ Max Nordau's Albert Hall address of July 1920 is included in the French version of his Zionist writings (Écrits sionistes), from which all the following quotes come from.

the presence of Lloyd George and Arthur Balfour, Nordau stated that when he drafted the Basle program, it was a strategic and pragmatic move to define their request for a homeland as a “foyer en Palestine pour le peuple juif, garanti par une loi international” instead of calling for “un État Juif,” to avoid any confrontation with Turkey, as only “une révolte, une guerre et une conquête auraient pu arracher à l’Empire une de ses provinces.”⁵³⁵ However, Nordau tells us, the Zionists at the Congress understood one other and knew what their ultimate goal was. Indeed, Herzl’s entire plan, according to Nordau, was to:

renouveler l’exploit bibliques d’Ezra et de Néhémie, de rassembler le peuple juif dispersé parmi les nations, de le reconduire au pays de ses ancêtres et de lui rendre, après plus de dix-huit siècles, son État indépendant que les légions romaines de Titus avaient désagrégé.⁵³⁶

The Balfour Declaration of 1917, an official British letter supporting the establishment of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine, created colonial possibilities for the Zionists who pledged full loyalty to Great Britain’s imperial ambitions in the near and far East:

Les Juifs ne demandent pas mieux que d’être sa garde au Canal de Suez. Ils sont prêts à lui servir de sentinelle sur la longue et dangereuse route à travers le proche et moyen Orient vers les frontières de l’Inde.⁵³⁷

Nordau insisted that for Jews to be able to properly serve Great Britain’s colonial endeavors, the British had to allow Jews to become as *strong* as possible (de devenir aussi forts que possible) in order to fulfil their own national ambitions and Britain’s politics. The only two concessions that Great Britain had to make were related to the creation of Jewish power, which was not limited to military power but also included the regeneration of the Jewish body:

D’abord de ne pas mettre obstacle à ce qu’ils deviennent un élément vigoureux parmi les habitants (...) et de ne pas s’opposer à leurs efforts honnêtes et loyaux de s’organiser afin de devenir capables de défendre leur propre position et d’être l’appui de l’autorité britannique.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁵ “Only a revolt, a war and conquest could have wrested from the Empire one of its provinces.” (My translation). Nordau, *Écrits sionistes*, 284

⁵³⁶ Nordau, *Écrits sionistes*, 283

⁵³⁷ “The Jews want nothing better than to be its guard at the Suez Canal. We are ready to be the guards of your long and dangerous route through the Near and Middle East to the borders of India.” (My translation) Nordau, *Écrits sionistes*, 272

⁵³⁸ “First, not to prevent them from becoming a vigorous element among the inhabitants (...) and not to oppose their honest and loyal efforts to organize themselves in order to become capable of defending their position and become the support of the British authorities.” (My translation) Nordau, *Écrits sionistes*, 272

The colonization of what Nordau called “la Palestine intégrale” and the establishment of an exclusive state for the Jews was how they would be regenerated as strong and vigorous. Nordau made colonialism a condition for Jewish regeneration; he was very clear in his address about the colonization of Palestine as “la Palestine doit être respectée avec ses frontières traditionnelles comme individualité géographique indivisible;” but the borders he envisioned expanded further than today’s historical Palestine:

le Hauran qui est maintenant une contrée vide et nue où vivent seulement quelques petites bandes de nomades qui n’ont jamais essayé d’entreprendre le moindre petit travail des peuples civilisés, doit être compris dans les limites de la Palestine juive.⁵³⁹

To emphasize the possibilities of Jews to conquer the holy Grail and fill it with blood, in referal to Drumont’s perception of Jews, Nordau reiterated: “Nous pouvons et nous voulons le (le Hauran) conquérir et le cultiver.”⁵⁴⁰

This chapter is looking at how the possibility for Jewish honor materialized once European settlers traveled to Palestine with the purpose of colonizing it. How does fighting the colonized non-European differ from fighting a European anti-Semite in duels, which conferred honor on Jews according to the Zionists? How is fighting on the side of European anti-Semites against colonized non-Europeans confer honor on Jews? This chapter will lay out how Zionist leaders and settlers understood that the duel in Europe had always been between two races. “Le duel entre deux races,” as Drumont puts it, has always been between whiteness and the *other* who contrasts it: “Dès le début de l’histoire nous voyons l’Aryen en lutte avec le Sémite.”⁵⁴¹ By operating as a colonial force, Zionists would be elevated into

⁵³⁹ “The Hauran, which is now an empty and bare land where only a few small groups of nomads live who have never tried to undertake any minor work of civilized peoples, must be included within the borders of a Jewish Palestine.” (My translation). Hauran is a region of southern Syria that stretches from Mount Hermon (or even the Golan Heights) to the north, and to Jordan to the south.

⁵⁴⁰ Nordau, *Écrits sionistes*, 280 (We can and we want to conquer and cultivate it)

⁵⁴¹ Drumont, *La France Juive*, 6

Europeans who would duel and use violence against another race, only then would Jews be able to enter the realm of gentile honor.

This chapter seeks to show, through a reading of the foundational texts of the *Hovevi Zion* movement and other Zionist movements that mushroomed in Europe, how from its onset, Jewish honor was tied to colonial violence which was at the core of Zionist settlement in Palestine. By declaring his full loyalty to Great Britain, Nordau asserted that if Britain gave them the liberty to use violence against Arabs, Jews would not refrain from using it as their ultimate goal was to “prendre possession de chaque parcelle du sol.”⁵⁴² This chapter argues that an examination of the process of colonizing Palestine reveal that there was always an established Zionist need to use violence as to prove to the British, and through them to all European gentiles, that Jews can become colonizing Aryans in a different geography and enter the realm of gentile honor.

Palestine in Perspective

The immobile time and painterly scenery fixed by Orientalist writers, painters and romantic travelers do not reflect the reality of Palestine after the Napoleonic expedition of 1799. As Edward Said has aptly shown, it is the Orientalists’ erasure of Arab Palestinian presence and existence in Palestine – by means of an imperial wish to conquer and reconstruct Palestine by a more deserving power – that informed “the Zionist slogan formulated by Israel Zangwill for Palestine toward the end of the century: a land without people, for a people without a land.”⁵⁴³

On the political level, historical Palestine in the nineteenth century can be divided into three periods: the division in favor of local potentates until 1831, then the period of conquest by Muhammad Ali of Egypt and his adopted son Ibrahim Pasha (1832-1840), and finally the

⁵⁴² “Take possession of every parcel of the ground,” (my translation) Nordau, *Écrits sionistes*, 285

⁵⁴³ Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 9

reestablishment of Ottoman authority. The “New Yishuv” was established under the sultanate of Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) when Palestine was part of the province of Syria. The administrative division changed several times but the district of Jerusalem, which included Jericho, Jaffa, Gaza, Beersheba, Hebron and Bethlehem, was directly under the rule of Constantinople rather than Damascus. This measure was established to circumvent European ambitions and Zionist immigration.

Ottoman rule had instituted a wide range of reforms – administrative, economic, legal, political and military. On the economic level, notable changes took place at the turn of the century for the approximately 425,000 inhabitants. With the emergence of a class of local businessmen, Arabs, Greeks, Armenians and Sephardic Jews, important transformations took place in citrus fruit production, food exports, port traffic, improved infrastructure and finally the construction of railways. Historian Rashid Khalidi provides in *Palestinian Identity* a thorough analysis of cultural life and identity in late Ottoman Palestine, with a special focus on Jerusalem as a significant center of education, the press and other aspects of intellectual and cultural life. Khalidi documents how Jerusalem was most affected by the change in the final half-century of Ottoman rule from Islamic systems of justice and education to Western-based forms, which reflected the political and ideological transitions occurring at that time.⁵⁴⁴

Beshara Doumani also showed that during most of the nineteenth century, “Nablus was Palestine’s principal trade and manufacturing center.”⁵⁴⁵ As trade with the West picked up, and more Western consulates and missionary hospitals, schools and other foundations opened in the country, the judicial, banking and fiscal system improved gradually. Towns developed rapidly and modernization was evident. The steamboats (1830), the post office (1837), the first pharmacy (1842), naphtha to generate lighting (1860s), the telegraph (1865),

⁵⁴⁴ Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

⁵⁴⁵ Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: The Merchants and Peasants of Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 1

the carriage road from Jaffa to Jerusalem (1868), the railway between these two cities (1894) mark the stages of a continuous and vibrant transformation prior to the first and second waves of Zionist settlement in Palestine. Hospitals and schools helped improve health and hygiene as the century witnessed a steady increase in literacy.

Focusing on the critical role Zionism played in shaping Palestinian national identity, Khalidi argues that Arab awareness of Zionism and its danger to the Palestinians began much earlier than the Mandate period and was “deeply rooted” in Palestine and the Arab regions of the Ottoman Empire. Khalidi writes that as early as 1701, the notables of Jerusalem, along community leaders and local military officials demanded from the Sultan to forbid the French consul in Sidon to pay a visit to Jerusalem, reminding him that “Palestine’s special importance is, at least in part, rooted in the heightened Islamic concern for Jerusalem and Palestine that followed the traumatic episode of the Crusades.”⁵⁴⁶ This assertion materialized some 200 years later with the incursions of the European powers and the Zionist movement.

The Jewish Zionist movement in the nineteenth century was part of the European colonizing world, sharing a common space and time. Its project of colonizing the land of another people was no different in its ideology than any other European settler projects. According to French historian Maxime Rodinson, Zionism’s founder Theodor Herzl’s manifesto and approach in defining Zionism were a product and continuation of “the great movement of European expansion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the great European imperialist groundswell,” which perceived colonization as “the spreading of progress, civilization and well-being.” Significantly, history is precisely what contextualizes Israel’s embodiment as a settler-colonial project, insofar as Israel was “established as the result of a colonial conquest, justified by an ethnocentric and racially exclusive ideology.”⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁶ Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 29-30

⁵⁴⁷ Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a colonial-settler state?* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 2004,1973), 13.

The multi-dimensional study of settler colonialism revolves around the structure, politics and governmentality of ongoing colonialism and the dispossession of indigenous lands and bodies. Colonial-settlers, regardless of the historical framework we engage with, were and are always seeking to appropriate land; it is only the means of this appropriation that have changed with time. In their story of subjugating the indigenous populations, colonial-settlers approached them with “a logic of elimination and not exploitation: they wished less to govern indigenous peoples or to enlist them in their economic ventures than to seize their land and push them beyond an ever-expanding frontier of settlement.”⁵⁴⁸

Settler colonialism has been characterized as a structure, a system, and a logic. While colonialism is characteristically defined as a form of “imperial expansion undertaken for military advantage or trade,”⁵⁴⁹ Patrick Wolfe differentiates between colonialism and settler-colonialism, explaining that in the former the elimination of the indigenous population is not necessary as they serve as a labor force in the exploitation process, while in the latter the removal of the natives is at the locus of land appropriation.⁵⁵⁰ The appropriation of indigenous lands relies on settler investments, hence settler colonialism is “a distinct method of colonizing” that involves “the creation and consumption of a whole array of spaces by settler collectives that claim and transform places through the exercise of their sovereign capacity.”⁵⁵¹

Modern Jewish colonization of Palestine, termed by Zionists as *Aliyah*, or the ascent to the holy land, commenced in 1882. The first *aliyah* (wave of immigration) of about 20,000–30,000 immigrants came between 1882 and 1903; the approximately 35,000–40,000

⁵⁴⁸ Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, “Introduction: Settler Colonialism: a Concept and its Uses,” in *Settler Colonialism in the twentieth century: projects, practices, legacies*, ed. by Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 2

⁵⁴⁹ Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, *Introduction: Settler Colonialism*, 2

⁵⁵⁰ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, 4 (2006): 387-409

⁵⁵¹ Adam J. Barker, “Locating Settler Colonialism,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 13, no. 3 (2012):1.

immigrants of the second *aliyah* reached Palestine between 1904 and 1914. With the second wave of colonization and the arrival of more Jewish colonial settlers, a debate took place among the different Zionist parties present on Palestinian land regarding the different forms of colonial settlement. The most dominant formalization of Zionist settler colonialism came in the form of the Kibbutz, which was the first racially separatist planned community for the exclusive use of Ashkenazi Jews,⁵⁵² and a regime of “Hebrew Labor” would prevail whereas Zionism could only realize its potential through the conquest of all occupations in Palestine by Jews.⁵⁵³ Jewish-centered settlements would rise on Palestinian land prohibiting Palestinian workers to be employed.

Under the British Mandate, after the fall of the Ottoman empire, the Zionist national aspect would crystallize in the aspirations of Jewish sovereignty whereby expulsions of the local population would be undertaken to make room for a new home for the Jews. In this chapter, I will trace how until the end of World War I, the different Zionist groups actively working on the colonization of Palestine were obsessed with the creation of a New Jew molded on notions of Western honor. I am interested in how the Zionist ideologies that were envisioned in Europe regarding the possibility of Jewish honorability on Palestinian soil developed and shaped the notion of a strong muscular Jew, and whether indeed, Zionist Jews have entered the realm of gentile honor.

Race and the Regeneration process in Palestine

The assertion of Jewish revival in a Jewish national context was thematized in literary works written by numerous Zionists in the early years of the movement’s history.⁵⁵⁴ Theodor Herzl summarized this revival through a ‘return to Zionism’ as an honorable endeavor:

⁵⁵² Joseph Massad, “Israel and the politics of boycott,” *AlJazeera English*, 19 March 2013 <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/03/201331884943284526.html>>

⁵⁵³ Shafir, “Settler Citizenship in the Jewish Colonization of Palestine,” 45

⁵⁵⁴ This has been discussed in length in previous chapters. Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau are good examples because they incorporated this theme into the structure of their dramatic works in the 1890s, which are also discussed in previous chapters.

Wir sind sozusagen nach Hause gegangen. Der Zionismus ist die Heimkehr zum Judentum noch vor der Rückkehr ins Judenland. Wir heimgekehrten Söhne finden im väterlichen Hause manches, was der Besserung dringend bedarf; wir haben namentlich Brüder auf tiefen Stufen des Elends. Man heißt uns aber in der alten Hause willkommen, weil es wohl bekannt ist, daß wir nicht den vermessenen Gedanken hegen, an Ehrwürdigem zu rütteln.⁵⁵⁵

In order to achieve this honorable goal, Zionists believed that Jews needed to be reborn, renewed and revitalized first; only then would they join the sphere of Western social and political progress. This process could only be put in motion once Jews conquer a land of their own; and that process of dispossessing native land was materialized on the basis of re-establishing Jewish honor in Palestine. Though Hannah Arendt recognizes Herzl's ability to define anti-Semitism as a political problem requiring a political solution, she slams him for replicating German nationalist presumptions about peoples "as biological organisms mysteriously endowed with eternal life," for displaying "an unchanging hostility toward the Jews that was ready to take the form of pogroms or persecution at any moment," and for conspiring with imperialist powers to achieve his aims.⁵⁵⁶

I argue that Zionist settler-colonialism required the discursive production and circulation of settler-narratives that emphasize honor within race, nationalism, masculinity and militarism to trigger a process of settler-colonial regeneration of the new Jew on the new land that could finally, so the Zionists believed, allow them into the realm of gentile honor at the expense of native lands, lives, and livelihoods. I will focus on the formative years of the Zionist settler-movement in Palestine and thus on the ideologies that influenced and forged the first two colonial waves. The guidelines and many of the ideas upon which Herzl based

⁵⁵⁵ "We returned home, as it were. For Zionism is a homecoming to Jewishness even before the effective homecoming to the Jewish land. We, the children who have returned, found our ancestral home in need of urgent redress, for some of our brethren have sunk deep into misery. But we were welcomed in the ancestral home, as it is known to all, that we do not walk away from honorable endeavors." Theodor Herzl, Speech at the First Zionist Congress, Basle, 1897 (My Translation)

⁵⁵⁶ Hannah Arendt, "The Jewish State: Fifty Years After: Where Have Herzl's Politics Led? (May 1946), in *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age*, ed. Ron H. Feldman (New York: Grove Press, 1978), 171, 166.

his “political Zionism” and his settler-colonial project were to be found in the writings of forerunners such as Kalischer, Alkalai and Hess.⁵⁵⁷

Moses Hess (1812–1875), a German Jew born in the city of Bonn under French rule, was one of the first Jewish philosophers to conceptualize a modern Jewish national regeneration that should lead to the establishment of a state for Jews in Palestine. His call for Jewish national regeneration was published in a book that was to have been titled *The revival of Israel* but is known nowadays as *Rome and Jerusalem, the Last Nationality Question* (1862). Hess’s manifesto consists of a preface, twelve letters wherein he expressed his political *pensées*, an epilogue and ten supplementary notes.

For Hess, nations represent the natural differentiation of mankind into separate races, as they come forth out of a natural historical growth just like families; however, behind Hess’s eulogy of Jewish love lies not in religion, but in “the medieval feeling of chivalry.”⁵⁵⁸ Through the chivalry code, Hess writes, the German race endowed Christianity with spiritualism and materialism: “Had it not been for those brave adventurers, the Teutonic knights of the Middle Ages, whose personal life oscillated between the two opposite poles of gross sensualism and the most abstract mysticism, Christian dualism would never have succeeded in impressing modern life so thoroughly and deeply.”⁵⁵⁹

Historian John Cobb Hearnshaw, specialized in medieval history, traces the roots of the *military* elements in chivalry to the Teutonic *comitatus* described by Tacitus in his treatise ‘*Germania*’.⁵⁶⁰ Driven by conquest and internal conflicts, the Teuton people’s *Comitatus*

⁵⁵⁷ Several prominent Zionist leaders such as David Ben Gurion, Menachem Begin and Chaim Weizmann have noted in their memoirs the importance of Moses Hess’ ideology on the establishment of Zionist colonies in Palestine. See also: Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (Vintage Books, 2001), 23

⁵⁵⁸ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem: a study in Jewish nationalism*, tr. from the German by Meyer Waxman (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1918), 84

⁵⁵⁹ Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 85

⁵⁶⁰ The *Germania*, written by Rome’s greatest historian Publius Cornelius Tacitus around 98 AD and originally titled *On the Origin and Situation of the Germans*, is the first, and most comprehensive, ethnographic study of the German tribes to the north of Rome. Tacitus wrote regarding Germanic military values: “They choose their kings for their noble birth, their commanders for their valour. The power even of the kings is not absolute or arbitrary. The commanders rely on example rather than on the authority of their rank - on the admiration they win by showing conspicuous energy and courage and by pressing forward in front of their own troops.”

describes the bond of loyalty existing between a Germanic warrior or retinue (*Gefolgschaft*) and his lord, ensuring that the former never leaves the field of battle before the latter:

“Moreover, to survive the leader and retreat from the battlefield is a lifelong disgrace and infamy.”⁵⁶¹ Reading Tacitus’ original text in Latin, Sister Mary Paul Goetz, historian in Christian Studies with a focus on German medieval culture and thought, explains that:

The most characteristic trait of Germanic nobility was, however, the retinue, the *Gefolgschaft*, with which the nobles surrounded themselves. According to Tacitus, "young men of the best blood attached themselves to a leader to serve in his train." These retainers struggled for the nearest place to the chief and he in turn strove to keep the largest and most effective retinue. It meant to him rank and strength to be surrounded by such a band. His name and influence were thus carried beyond his own country and brought him renown and gifts. His reputation alone was sometimes enough to put down a war. The retinue consisted of noble youths ("nobilium adolescentium"), who voluntarily attached themselves to famous leaders in order to attain distinction. But there were, as Tacitus tells us, degrees in this retinue ("gradus quin etiam ipse comitatus habet"), and these degrees depended upon the judgment of the leader. Evidently, superior courage entitled to higher rank, and thus we have a proof that the Germanic people rated virtue higher than other natural gifts.⁵⁶²

The ceremonies for initiating the youths into that select band of the better born who might have the honour of guarding their lord and bearing arms, and the oaths taken on that occasion, are the precursors of the status of the mediaeval knighthood, and the initiation ceremonies of vigil, dedication, and girding with sword, shield and helmet. In this sense, honor was intimately connected with the sword, and courage was the most manly and ennobling virtue among Germans.

This early link between the conception of honour, and the right to bear arms and to undergo dedication to the warrior calling, was at the core of Judaism, according to Hess, who believed that “Judaism is rooted in the love of the family; patriotism and nationalism are the

⁵⁶¹ F.J.C. Hearnshaw, "Chivalry and its place in history," in *Chivalry*, ed. by E. Prestage (New York, 1928), 20 f.; F.J.C. Hearnshaw, *Mediaeval contributions to modern civilization* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1949). See also: Henry Osborn Taylor, *The medieval mind: a history of the development of thought and emotion in the middle ages* (Auckland, New Zealand: The Floating Press, 1911), 150-152.

⁵⁶² Sister Mary Paul Goetz, *The Concept of Nobility in German Didactic Literature of the Thirteenth Century* (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America Washington D.C., 1935), 29

flowers of its spirits, and the coming regenerated state of human Society will be its ripe fruit.⁵⁶³ This entire concept, which ties nationalism and patriotism to the creation of a future state through militarism, present in Hess' political philosophy, was to him the highest of modern knightly values. Hess attacked Germans and German Jews who stood in the way of the 'Jewish national movement' based on their 'humanitarian tendencies,' rather than their "Germanic or Teutonic" ones.⁵⁶⁴ What these Germans refused to understand is that once entrenched in a story of nationalism, Jews could finally reach the honor of a homeland of their own, which would carry the 'rebirth' of the children of Israel.⁵⁶⁵

Hess paved the way with his ideas to a possible honorability for Jews in a separate homeland. The power of ideas is meant to guide groups through the practical and real-life obstacles of settler-colonialism. Ze'ev Jabotinsky, born Vladimir Yevgenyevich Jabotinsky (1880-1940) in Odessa to a liberal Russian Jewish family, was an author and founder of the Jewish Legion of the British army in World War I. He would establish several Jewish armed groups in Palestine, including Betar and the Irgun. Jabotinsky was aware that constructed settler-colonial truth is structured by the ideology that shaped the settler-colonial movement from its onset, as the ideological spheres were regarded by Jabotinsky as the fundament of any political activity:

I am even more certain that the ideological-constructive factor is more important and longer-lasting than the material-constructive one. I am also certain that the booklet *Auto-Emancipation* and *Der Judenstaat* were far more important than the settlements of the Bilu'im, the founding of the Jewish National Fund, and the founding of the Jewish Colonial Trust. (...) For the past ten years, the ideological debate within Jewry and the Zionist movement has been based upon our ideas, because they happen to be the only ideas – and they are the truth. (...) I believe that pure ideological activity is likely to be as constructive as work which creates 'real' things such as houses and colonies.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶³ Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 48

⁵⁶⁴ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 57-58

⁵⁶⁵ He writes that "Jeder Jude, selbst der getaufte, haftet solidarisch für die Wiedergeburt Israels". See: Hess, Moses. *Ausgewählte Schriften*, ed. Horst Lademacher (Cologne: Joseph Melzer Verlag, 1962), 287 ("Every Jew, even if baptized, should show/adhere solidarity with the rebirth of Israel" (my translation))

⁵⁶⁶ Ze'ev Jabotinsky, "Etliche Brief Copien" *Der Moment*, 8 April 1934; excerpted in *The Political and Social Philosophy of Ze'ev Jabotinsky: selected writings*, edited by Mordechai Sarig and translated by Shimshon Feder (Portland, Ore: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998), 14

The settler colonies that Jabotinsky refers to are modalities of violence meant to transform the pre-existing world in Palestine into a new reality, by creating a racial division between groups. Hess, who believed Israel to be a nation “fortified by its racial instinct,”⁵⁶⁷ advocated a view of a biologically or racially determined Jewish identity as he agreed that Jewish existence, presence and bodies, not only were indeed a race apart, but needed to be regenerated and perfected: They are “a race, a brotherhood, a nation, whose own existence is unfortunately denied by its own children, and one which every street urchin considers it his duty to despise, so long as it is homeless.”⁵⁶⁸

Race was fundamental primarily in the German branch of Zionism, and Hess understood all the dynamics of German race theories, as he was aware that “The German hates the Jewish religion less than the race.”⁵⁶⁹ Those assimilated Jews who were striving to reach “a more Teutonic appearance,” but whose “Jewish noses cannot be reformed,” will have to accept that the “Jewish type” is “undeniable.”⁵⁷⁰ Perhaps foreseeing a race struggle in Palestine, as the colonial exploitation of one race by another is embedded in his project, Hess emphasized, in line with anti-Semites, that European Jews were indeed parasites in the Diaspora, however having a national ‘soil’ of their own would regenerate them into full strong humans; for without “a wide, free soil, a man sinks to the status of a parasite, feeding on others.”⁵⁷¹ Hess claimed that Diaspora Jews fed on European Christians.

Theodor Herzl, who could be classified as a political Zionist who resorted to diplomacy rather than violence, declared in *The State of the Jews* that a “state is created by a nation’s struggle for existence. In any such struggle it is impossible to obtain proper authority

⁵⁶⁷ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 36

⁵⁶⁸ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 71

⁵⁶⁹ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 58

⁵⁷⁰ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 61

⁵⁷¹ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 165

... beforehand.” Various agricultural, political, and ideological agendas converged in a multiplicity of ways during the founding decades of the territorial Zionists’ project in Palestine, but the concept of race was essential in shaping the Zionist settler-colonial endeavor. Race would determine the hierarchies of foundational violence as it would set up a new dialectic of mastery and servitude, demarcating a line between Jews and non-Jews by building an exclusive separatist Jewish enclave.

Indeed, by 1891, the spiritual Zionist leader Ahad Ha-Am (1856-1927) protested that the settlers were exhibiting towards Arab peasants “a tendency to despotism as happens always when a slave turns into a master.”⁵⁷² The master/slave metaphor or dynamic has been evoked quite often in studies that attempt to analyze the urge of Zionists for a sovereign state of their own. The slave’s urge for sovereign power as the solution to oppression, persecution, and humiliation, is founded on a desire to turn the tables on his master, in order to enjoy all the pleasures of domination that were previously denied to him.⁵⁷³ This framework is used to justify settler-colonialism as part of the injustices inflicted on Jews in Europe. However, the slave/master relationship of Jews and gentiles took place in Europe, as Jews were ‘enslaved’ by Europeans. Once the Zionists changed geography, they kept searching for ways to enter the realm of European gentile honor. Instead of turning the tables on the European master, they saw the natives as potential “slaves” and turned themselves into ‘Settler’-Jews, in a continuum of the categories of ‘Court’-Jew and ‘State’-Jew.

Dr. Arthur Ruppin (1876-1943), a German-born lawyer and the chief architect of Jewish settlement in Palestine from 1908 until the mid-1920s, accepted race as a valid category in the engineering and the establishment of colonies in Palestine. Underscoring that racial differences are of significant importance for the conceptual development of the

⁵⁷² Quoted in Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 47–8.

⁵⁷³ For a discussion on legitimacy of sovereign violence in relation to the Jewish search for sovereign freedom, see Joan Cocks, *On Sovereignty and Other Political Delusions* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014)

settlements and for the future success of colonization, Ruppin called for a selective policy for Jewish immigration to Eretz Israel. His article titled "The Selection of the Fittest," which appeared in 1919, opens with a discussion on the importance of the selection of human material:

Another question that may be broached is whether the preservation of Jewish racial purity is at all possible. Since we desire to develop our Jewish side in Palestine, it would naturally be desirable to have only "racially pure" Jews entering Palestine. But a direct influence on the process by selecting those immigrants who most closely approach this racial type is not a practical possibility. On the whole, however, the general type in Palestine will probably be more strongly Jewish of the general type in Europe, for it is to be expected that the more strongly Jewish types will be the ones that are most generally discriminated against in Europe, and it is they who feel themselves drawn toward a Jewish community in Palestine.⁵⁷⁴

Ruppin would fuse settler-colonialism and race as part of his settlement operation which would conceptualize the Jews' right to exist as a separate national unit, where the *New Jew* would return to the ways of the ancient Hebrews: agriculture, as a cure to the 'degenerated' and 'sick' Diaspora Jews.⁵⁷⁵ The concept of race has always been linked to the question of Jewish national regeneration, a central element in representations and identifications of Jewish existence in Europe.

It is through a reassessment of gentile medieval concepts of honor tied to nationalism that Hess' Zionism drew its deepest racial psychological impetus: "The Teutomaniacs of the Arndt and Jahn type will always be honest, reactionary conservatives. The Teutomaniac, in his love of the Fatherland, loves not the State but race dominance."⁵⁷⁶ Hess used the discourse of Jewish racial dominance on a territory of their own to convey the narrative of the social fragmentation of Jewish culture and the ways to revive it. For Hess, there were only two kinds of Jews, either patriots or traitors: "the pious Jew, who uses Hebrew as an

⁵⁷⁴ Arthur Ruppin, "The Selection of the Fittest," in *Three Decades of Palestine: Speeches and Papers on the Upbuilding of the Jewish National Home*. Trans. n/a (Tel- Aviv, 1936), 66-80.

⁵⁷⁵ Shmuel Almog, "Redemption in Zionist Rhetoric" (in Hebrew), *Redemption of the land in Palestine: Idea and Practice* (in Hebrew), ed. Ruth Kark (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1990), 13

⁵⁷⁶ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 78

expression of the collective Jewish spirit (...) to plead for the entire Jewish race, is above all a Jewish patriot. The ‘new’ Jew, who denies the existence of a Jewish nationality, is not only a deserter in the religious sense, but is also a traitor to his people, to his race, and even to his family.”⁵⁷⁷ In Hess’ national regeneration, the gentile construction of the lack of Jewish dignity was projected onto Jews themselves, to create a binary of honor and dishonor; he thus participated in the dimorphism of Jewish identity rather than resisted it.

In order to attract the masses and forge a separate national identity, Hess claimed that the “Jewish religion is above all Jewish patriotism,”⁵⁷⁸ and that “Jewish patriotism is not only a cloudy German abstraction (...) but a true, natural feeling,”⁵⁷⁹ which should awaken “the national rebirth.”⁵⁸⁰ Hess therefore called upon “our Jewish Teutomaniacs, who bartered away their Judaism for State positions,” to join the ranks of the Jewish national movement.⁵⁸¹ In Palestine, the Jews would no longer be perceived as racially inferior to Europeans, as they would have the opportunity to regenerate their bodies on a new soil while ascribing inferiority to the natives they would have to civilize.

Finally, Europeans in Palestine

Deeply affected by the nationalism and romanticism which then were sweeping over the German intelligentsia, Hess’ manifesto is a profession of faith that ties Jewish family love to patriotism as a continuum: “Judaism has never drawn any line of separation between the individual and the family, the family and the nation, the nation and humanity.”⁵⁸² Its central thesis is the condition of Western assimilated Jews, a diagnosis and a cure of their ills, all wrapped in regenerative settler-colonialism.

⁵⁷⁷ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 62

⁵⁷⁸ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 64

⁵⁷⁹ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 63

⁵⁸⁰ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 77

⁵⁸¹ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 90

⁵⁸² Waxmann, Second Letter, 48

Settler colonialism has a regenerative power as it provides settlers with the ability to imagine possibilities before carrying them out. By colonizing a new soil, European Jews could be regenerated as honorable, illustrating the notion of *tabula rasa on a terra nova* which is inevitably premised on a settler inclination to utilize honor in order to disavow any indigenous presence. Hess' elaboration on possibilities of settler-colonialism for the revival of Jewish honor was based on the prospects provided by a French politician and Napoleon's secretary, Ernest Laharanne, who laid out a plan to colonize the entire Arab region. Ironically Laharanne, a devoted imperialist, published his pamphlet *La Nouvelle Question D'Orient. Empires D'Égypte Et D'Arabie. Reconstitution de la Nationalité Juive* (1860) two years before Hess' manifesto. Certainly, his colonial endeavors had a biblical echo. Laharanne called for the regeneration of the Orient and summoned France to aid the Israelites in fulfilling their divine mission and regenerate Judea: "The time has arrived when you [Jews] should think less of others and more of yourselves, and commence to work for your own regeneration."⁵⁸³

It is through the imperial ambitions of France that Hess finds an outlet for his reformulated Jewish patriotism.⁵⁸⁴ This alliance that Hess praises has a divine mission: "France will extend its work of redemption also to the Jewish nation."⁵⁸⁵ Now comes the time for the "Sons of Israel" to depart. Despite being "good citizens and devoted brothers," Jews are destined for "the holiest of missions" and France will be to them "a lighthouse of salvation." Laharanne tells Jews that "providence" has only preserved them to "write the historical books of the royal prophets and to resettle the banks of the Jordan."⁵⁸⁶ Hess' messianism holds an integral part of Protestant depictions of Jewish salvation. He articulated

⁵⁸³ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 55

⁵⁸⁴ Hess writes, "Until the French Revolution, the Jewish people was the only people in the world which had, simultaneously, a national as well as a humanitarian religion. [...] Since the French Revolution, the French, ..., have become our noble rivals and faithful allies." Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 120.

⁵⁸⁵ Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 167

⁵⁸⁶ Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 157

his new national ideology in familiar terms and made it clear that he loathed Jewish passivity as much as Gentiles did. His vision was one of shaming Jews for lacking any Jewish patriotism. Hess' prophecy is an uncanny mixture of human intervention and political power with a redemptive element that would allow Jews to regain their honor. For Hess, his yearning for a "Jewish national regeneration"⁵⁸⁷ stems from the same internalized sentiments of contempt and disdain that shaped any Jewish presence in exile as degenerate, hysteric, abnormal, and as lacking honor; Hess tells us that Jewish assimilation in exile should be scarified for the sake of Jewish nationality.⁵⁸⁸

Although modern Jewish nationalists claim to be the originators of the idea, i.e. a messianic 'return' to Palestine, they were already preceded by Christians and secular Christian Zionists for centuries; but also by several Jewish religious groups that had travelled to Palestine since the late eighteenth century with the intent of living there, based on Jewish teachings; however not with the idea of creating Jewish statehood. According to Laharanne, the Jews that have faced "hatred, contempt, disdain and disgust,"⁵⁸⁹ will only become "noble, honorable and brave"⁵⁹⁰ once they fulfill their divine mission and march back to Jerusalem. Hess praises this alliance as a divine mission: "France will extend its work of redemption also to the Jewish nation,"⁵⁹¹ as he sees in France's grandeur "a beloved friend" and a "savior" that will glorify his epiphany and "restore our people to its place in universal history."⁵⁹² Therefore, regenerating the Jew by cultivating the land meant possessing it first, and possessing it can be summed up here as the power to command and control everything inside that specific geography, a process inherent to militarism.

⁵⁸⁷ Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 18

⁵⁸⁸ Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, ^@

⁵⁸⁹ Ernest Laharanne, *La Nouvelle Question D'Orient. Empires D'Égypte Et D'Arabie. Reconstitution de la Nationalité Juive* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1860) 39

⁵⁹⁰ Laharanne, *La Nouvelle Question D'Orient*, 41

⁵⁹¹ Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 167

⁵⁹² Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 147

Interestingly, Hess saw in this alliance with the French a possibility to regenerate Diaspora Jews into Europeans. Lahranne attributed the role of state agents in Palestine to French Jews, and called on them “to be a living channel of communication between three continents,” as Jews in Palestine will finally become “the bearers of civilization to the primitive people of Asia, and the teachers of European sciences.”⁵⁹³ A role that did not bother Hess, as Laharanne insists that “France finally freed” the Jews and has found them (Jews) in their ghetto and shattered its door forever.⁵⁹⁴ By breaking the walls of the ghetto and pushing Diaspora Jews to regenerate themselves into Europeans in Palestine, Zionists could finally become Europeans. For Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952), a prominent Russian Zionist leader who served as president of the Zionist Organization and later as the first president of the state of Israel, “If Russian Jewry was the cradle of my Zionism, the Western universities were my finishing schools.”⁵⁹⁵ When Weizmann met Herzl for the first time, he described him as being “full of Western dignity which did not sit well with our Russian-Jewish realism;”⁵⁹⁶ and yet, for people with such kind of Western dignity, of the likes of Arthur Ruppin, Weizmann noted that ‘for such people, going to Palestine was in effect going into a social wilderness – which is something to be remembered by those who, turning to Palestine today, find in it intellectual, cultural and social resources not inferior to those of the Western world.’⁵⁹⁷

Finding themselves in a non-European geography yet carrying a European identity as their only point of reference, the Zionist settlers could finally claim what they believed to be an inaccessible identity to them in Europe. There is a reason for the countless times that settlers refer in their earliest writings and manifestos to their European culture, European agriculture, European education, European law and order, European technology, or European

⁵⁹³ Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 157

⁵⁹⁴ Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 156

⁵⁹⁵ Weizmann, *Trial and Errors*, 49

⁵⁹⁶ Weizmann, *Trial and Errors*, 45

⁵⁹⁷ Weizmann, *Trial and Errors*, 131

ethics - and finally in reference to themselves. This was more than just portraying themselves as Europeans, they insisted that colonization awakened their internal dormant muscular Jew: they thus became Europeans with Jewish muscles in Palestine and were no longer *simple* Jews. When establishing the settlement of Kineret, Arthur Ruppin appointed as manager the agronomist M. Bermann, who “once had been an agricultural inspector in Russia.” Ruppin chose Bermann for this important task despite having only conversed with him “once or twice” because Ruppin could only speak German. Bermann proved however to be the right man for the job as his “great advantage,” according to Ruppin, was that “he was a practical farmer, a magnificent horseman (...) With his tall, muscular figure, black beard and sparkling eyes, he was the ideal embodiment of the *MuskelJude*.”⁵⁹⁸

It seems that once in Palestine, Zionist settlers were transforming into a different race than what they used to be in Europe. On his first visit to Palestine, Weizmann was mostly impressed by his local guide, Abraham Shapiro of Petah Tikvah, who “was in himself a symbol of a whole process of Jewish regeneration. (...) Here was a man who in his own lifetime had bridged a gap of thousands of years; who, once in Palestine, had shed his Galuth environment like an old coat.”⁵⁹⁹ One of the local stories of Petah Tikvah relates how once a Jewish Bedouin named Abu Yossef was told by the sheikh of the Arab village Faja that Jews were settling in a nearby colony. Out of curiosity to meet his co-religionists, Abu Yossef went to Petah Tikvah but “upon his arrival there, to his surprise, he met passers-by who were dressed in European clothing. When he saw the people and their clothing he had been certain that the people he had met could not be Jews, since they dressed like foreigners from far-off lands.”⁶⁰⁰ Abu Yossef, described as a grandson of a Jewish-Bedouin tribe, of “those that had survived the deserts of Arabia and had not converted to Islam,” realized that these Europeans

⁵⁹⁸ Ruppin, *Memoirs, Diaries, Letters*, 101

⁵⁹⁹ Weizmann, *Trial and Errors*, 253

⁶⁰⁰ Shaul and Ruth Dagan, *On the First Road to Zion*, 33-34

were foreigners and thus decided to leave. This is clearly an apocryphal story as there were no Jewish Bedouin in Palestine or elsewhere in the world, yet it has become a widely circulated memory of the first Aliyah that shows how incoming European Jews wanted to differentiate themselves even from the local Jewish population.

Not only were they indeed Europeans coming to colonize Arab lands, but the advancement of the entire Zionist enterprise and ideology occurred in tandem with the political, social and intellectual developments that took place in Europe. Whatever political and social turmoil and ideologies were shaping and agitating the European continent, its after waves would resonate through the Zionist colonial project in Palestine. As the most racialized group in Europe at that time, race would nurse a central function for Zionists that came to Palestine with an urge for a European identity, not only in order to mark a cultural and racial distinction with the natives as a mode of the superiority of European civilization, but also to finally be able to enter the realm of honor and gain European recognition.

The selection of human material becomes a guiding line in settler-colonial frameworks that seek to replace one race by another. Ronit Lentin, in her study of the centrality of race in Palestine-Israel, argues that once race is center-staged, a different picture emerges, one that allows us to better understand the modes of governance and forms of domination that have been deployed in the promised land. Racialization, she explains, is a technology of the state. It operates by producing a series of distinctions relating to origin, kinship, and lineage as well as by linking physical characteristics to cognitive abilities, cultural norms, and modes of behavior. Its objective is to propel processes of differentiation and hierarchization in order to facilitate modes of governance and control.⁶⁰¹

This endorsement of a European identity went further than a simple identification with the elements of culture, history, language and all other elements of nationalism. A

⁶⁰¹ Ronit Lentin, *Traces of Racial Exception: Racializing Israeli Settler Colonialism* (Bloomsbury Academic: London, 2018)

necessary racial demarcation is at the locus of any settler-colonial presence, as race becomes the guideline through which the entire business of colonizing is set. Edward Said has provided us with an entire scholarship that shows how practically the only ethnic group about whom in the West racial slurs are tolerated by the mainstream culture, even encouraged, are the Arabs.⁶⁰² It is on this collective representation of the Arabs and Islam, Said tells us, that Zionism, like its Western ideological parent, drew.⁶⁰³ Weizmann would depict Palestinians in his correspondence with British officials as “corrupt, inefficient,” “backward,” “dishonest, uneducated” and “unpatriotic.”⁶⁰⁴ As Wolfe puts it: “race is colonialism speaking in idioms whose diversity reflects the variety of unequal relationships into which Europeans have co-opted conquered populations.”⁶⁰⁵

Settler-Colonial Honor

Jewish immigration to Palestine began to swell in the 1880s as a consequence of the social and political turmoil and economic disturbance caused by the belated arrival of modernization and industrialization in Eastern Europe. Jewish minorities of the Russian Pale of Settlement and central Europe suffered the consequences of these unstable times that led to waves of pogroms in southern Russia in 1881 following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. The increasing poverty of Russia and of Russian Jewry, combined with traditional Catholic Judenhaas (prevalent among Polish Catholics who lived alongside Jews in the Pale) and with imported western European anti-Semitism and modern nationalist and/or racist ideologies lay behind these waves of anti-Jewish attacks, pushing eastern European Jews to seek a variety of alternatives: emancipation, assimilation, socialism, Jewish socialism

⁶⁰² Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

⁶⁰³ Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 26

⁶⁰⁴ Cited in Doreen Ingrams, *Palestine papers, 1917-1922; seeds of conflict* (New York: G. Braziller, 1972) 31-32

⁶⁰⁵ Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (London: Verso Books, 2016)

or Bundism, cultural nationalism, autonomism, territorial nationalism, retreat behind the walls of a fundamentalist orthodoxy, but most importantly emigration.

Masses of Jews (and Christians) chose to emigrate from eastern Europe to western Europe, and from there to the New World. Nonetheless, some Jewish communities within the Pale of Settlement in Russia and Romania, who were shocked by the successive waves of pogroms in 1881-1884 and by the assimilatory practices of Western Jewry, endorsed a militant nationalist platform and established regional Jewish nationalist associations that would call for the revival of a Jewish national consciousness in Palestine, or as they called it, the Land of Israel (Eretz Israel).⁶⁰⁶

Swayed by Jewish revival and salvation that were to be found in the Western notions of honor embedded in nationalism which were gaining currency in Eastern Europe in the early 1850s, Leo Pinkser (1821-1891), a Russian-Jewish doctor, would express in his classic *Auto-Emancipation: A warning to His Kinsfolk by a Russian Jew* (1882) that Jewish honor was to be found in a collective Jewish concentration in a homeland: “We must seek our honour and our salvation not in self-deceptions, but in the restoration of our national ties.”⁶⁰⁷ Pinkser linked in this sense Jewish honor with a mass exodus of the Jews to a ‘Promised Land’ where their national resurrection was awaiting. In his description of Jewish passivity and weakness in the Diaspora, Pinkser used the Christian metaphor of turning the other cheek, which evoked in him shame and dishonor:

When we are ill-used, robbed, plundered and dishonored, we dare not defend ourselves, and, worse still, we take it almost as a matter of course. When our face is slapped, we soothe our burning cheek. With cold water; and when a bloody wound has been inflicted, we apply a bandage. When we are turned out of the house which we ourselves built, we beg humbly for mercy, and when we fail to reach the heart of our oppressor we move on in search of another exile.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁶ Yosef Salmon, “The Emergence of a Jewish Nationalist Consciousness in Europe during the 1860s and 1870s,” *AJS Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1/2 (Spring - Autumn, 1991): 107-132

⁶⁰⁷ Leon Pinkser, *Auto-Emancipation*, reprinted in Pinkser’s *Road to Freedom* (New York: Scopus Publishing, 1975),

⁶⁰⁸ Pinkser, *Auto-Emancipation*

Armed with his own ideological charter, Pinkser would become one of the main leaders of the movement that came to be known as *Hovevei Zion* or “Lovers of Zion,” an informal network of Jewish nationalist societies in Eastern Europe that would organize themselves with the intention of establishing European financed colonies that would grant them, on the long-term, ownership of the land in Eretz Israel.⁶⁰⁹ Eastern Jews explicitly adopted his idea that the regeneration of the Jewish people in the modern world could occur only through mass evacuation of Europe and resettlement in a territorial Jewish homeland.

With the birth of this movement, whose declared goal was national rebirth and the return of Jews to Eretz Israel, modern Jewish Zionism began. From that point forward, despite the many different directions and distinct visions of how to establish a Jewish state, all future Zionist groups would have the same main objective: to acquire more land in Palestine, either granted, purchased or appropriated. On these lands, thousands of Jews would arrive to constitute a class of agricultural workers that would cultivate and guard the land with a different purpose than what previous generations of Jews in Palestine had done.

Since the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492 until the end of the nineteenth century, waves of Jewish immigration of various origins came to settle in the four ‘holy’ communities of Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias and Hebron in Palestine under Ottoman rule. Though the expulsion from Spain produced an ebb and flow of messianic emotion among Jews, these traditional and religious communities lived on the Judaic principle of *le’ovdah u’leshomrah* (Bereishit 2:15-17). They came to number 4000 people by the 1840s, living amongst the 340,000 Palestinian Arab Christians and Muslims.

Based on religious texts of the Torah and the story of the creation of man, God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden to “to serve it” - *le’ovdah* –, thus to cultivate the garden and “to

⁶⁰⁹ As a result of the protection extended to immigrants by the European consulates set up in Jerusalem and Jaffa and shifting policies in the Ottoman Empire, Jewish immigration to Palestine would continue until World War I, marking what came to be known as the First and Second Aliyahs (Zionist Jewish religious and economic migration) in Zionist historiography.

guard it”—*leshomrah*, describing the responsibilities of a pious guardian of nature. With the exception of a few episodes, the nostalgic theme of a Jewish “return to Zion” carried only a cultural significance; however, Zionist literature has purposely ignored and treated what it named the *Old Yishuv* as a foreign body to modern political Zionism, seeking a clean break with the past, in order to emphasize its call for a return to a Zionist state.⁶¹⁰

In the words of Chaim Weizmann, the old Jewry whose “sole activity was the study of sacred books” was insignificant as a group as “historically speaking, they had been the expression of the undying Jewish attachment to Palestine; but in an age which was to witness the reconstruction of the Jewish homeland, they were a useless and even retarding element.”⁶¹¹ Illustrating the Jewish population of Palestine as “old”, which carries an eroding connotation, was meant to contrast backwardness with modernism, passivity with strength, religious conservatism with enlightened Zionism.

Isaac Rülff (1831-1902), Pinkser’s colleague in the *Hovevei Zion* movement and a writer and rabbi of Memel in East Prussia, spent most of his life providing humanitarian assistance to impoverished Russians by organizing relief campaigns. He was also politically active in finding a permanent solution for Russian Jewry; however, after the Russian pogroms, he came to the conclusion that a Jew would never be truly incorporated in the country he lives in and should therefore above all regard himself as a member of a separate Jewish nation.

Rülff went a step further than Pinkser and specified that the Jewish homeland ought to be in Palestine with Hebrew as the main language of the Jewish people who should immediately start their immigration to Palestine. Rülff authored the *Hovevei Zion*’s

⁶¹⁰ On the construction of the Old Yishuv in Zionist historiography, see: Amos Elon, *The Israelis: Founders and Sons* (Jerusalem: Adam Publishers, 1971), 22; Mordechai Eliav, *Eretz Israel veyishuvah bameah ha-9, 1777-1917* (Jerusalem: Keter Pu House, 1978), 278. On the *Old* and *New Yishuv*, see: Israel Bartal, "Old Yishuv' and New Yishuv: Image and Reality," *The Jerusalem Cathedra*, 1 (1981) : 215-231 and Yehoshua Kaniel, "The Terms Old Yishuv' and 'New Yishuv': Problems of Definition," *The Jerusalem Cathedra*, 1 (1981) : 232

⁶¹¹ Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 125

tract *Aruchas bas-ami* (1883) in which he shamed Diaspora Jews for lacking “national honor”:

Was haben wir erreicht mit unserer Schmiegsamkeit, mit unserer Accommodationsucht, mit unserer übereifrigen Entnationalisierung? Betrachtet man uns als autochthone Bewohner, schätzt man uns als gleichberechtigte Bürger, hält man uns für ebenbürtig und freut sich unserer Kameradschaft? Mitnichten! (...) Wir müssen doch leben von ihnen und mit ihnen, – aber was ist das für ein Leben ohne personale und nationale Ehre?⁶¹²

Rülf attached personal honor to national honor and emphasized that a Jew can only feel honorable as part of a collectivity on a national soil of his own:

Die majestas populi allein ist es, welche dem Einzelnen Ehre und Würde verleiht. Wieder ein Volk, ein Reich geworden, werden wir uns selbst mit ganz anderen Augen ansehen und mit ganz andern Augen angesehen werden. Des Einzelnen Ehre wurzelt in seiner Volksehre. So lange wir unser Volk nicht in allen seinen Ehren und Würden wiederhergestellt sehen, dürfen wir niemals hoffen, gleich andern Menschen aller Personalehren theilhaft zu werden.⁶¹³

Rülf associated honor with nationalism, linking the process of Jewish consciousness-building to Western notions of honor that were to be materialized in an institutionalized settler-colonial movement. Given that his call was to establish a state on a land yet to be colonized, Rülf did not shun the use of “Schärfe des Schwertes” (the edge of the sword), if all other means fail:

Wir wollen gern zugestehen, daß dieses Befreiungswerk, die Erwerbung unseres Heimathlandes vielen äußeren und inneren, theilweise unüberwindlich scheinenden Schwierigkeiten begegnen mag. Allein dieses Befreiungswerk ist auch ein Errettungs- und Erlösungswerk; früher oder später muß es sich vollziehen. (...) Das Land steht unter fremder Oberhoheit; wenn die „hohe Pforte“ nicht will – und sie Will nicht, wie sie deutlich genug zu erkennen gegeben hat – können wir sie zwingen? Nun, diese Pforte, mag sie noch so hoch sein – ein unübersteigliches

⁶¹² “What have we achieved with our leniency, with our urge to accommodate, with our overzealous denationalization? Do you see us as natives, do you value us as citizens with equal rights, do you see us as equals and are you content with our comradeship? Not at all! (...) We have to live off them and with them - but what kind of life is that without personal and national honor?” (My translation). Isaak J. Rülf, *Aruchas Bas-ammi: Israels heilung / Ein ernstes Wort an Glaubens- und Nichtglaubensgenossen*, (Frankfurt: J. Kauffmann, 1883), 57

⁶¹³ “It is the *majestas populi* alone that bestows honor and dignity on the individual. When a people become a kingdom, that’s when we will look at ourselves and be looked at with completely different eyes. One’s individual honor is rooted in his people’s honor. As long as our people’s honor and dignity is not restored, we must never hope to embody personal honor as other people.” (My translation).

Hinderniß bietet sie nicht. (...) Will sie trotzdem nicht, nun, so muß sie wollen und wenn sie darob zu Grunde gehen und wie die Mauern von Jericho zur Zeit, da unser Volk dereinst sein Land in Besitz zu nehmen kam, einstürzen und versinken sollte. Die äußeren Schwierigkeiten werden weit leichter zu überwinden sein, als die innern. (...)

Jacobs Stern wird wieder aufgehen und ein Grundstock Von Israel wieder auferstehen und alle Hindernisse über Winden, Edom und Seir in Besitz nehmen und siegreich sein gegen alle seine Feinde.⁶¹⁴

Rülf's call to conquer the entire territory stretching between east of the Dead Sea in what is now west-central Jordan, and the Gulf of Aqaba was a settler-colonial project that would allow Jews to enter the realm of personal and national honor. From the onset in the 1880's, the first wave of new settlers, who transformed themselves into colonial farmers, bought land in Palestine to cultivate and inhabit with the same motivation previously accorded to colonialism.⁶¹⁵ This form of land appropriation entailed expelling the native population off the land through various means; a process that would continue until the advent of the British Mandate of Palestine.

More and more land was either bought or appropriated to lay the foundations for the Zionist community, given that Zionists were more concerned about the land than about the people inhabiting it as for the more ideological Zionists, "Palestinians were defined as the *shela neelama*, the "hidden question", both invisible and a puzzle."⁶¹⁶ The traditional Jewish ethos of *le' ovdah u'leshomrah* would be transformed by Pinkser and Rülf into a slogan of "to conquer and to guard", which would find its deployment in the concept of honor.

⁶¹⁴ "We would like to acknowledge that this work of liberation, the acquisition of our homeland, may encounter many external and internal difficulties, some of which may seem insurmountable. But this work of liberation is also a work of salvation and redemption; sooner or later it has to happen. (...) The country is under foreign sovereignty; if the "High Porte" does not want to collaborate - and it does not want, as it has made clear enough - can we force it? Well, this Porte, however high it is, will not offer an insurmountable obstacle. (...) If it still does not want to let us in, well, it will have to; even if it perishes as a result, like the walls of Jericho which collapsed when our people came to take possession of their land. The external difficulties will become be far easier to overcome than the internal ones. (...) Jacob's star will rise again, and a foundation of Israel will rise again and take possession of all obstacles in Winden, Edom and Seir and be victorious against all his enemies." (My translation) Isaak J. Rülf, *Aruchas Bas-ammi*, 87

⁶¹⁵ Pappé, *A history of modern Palestine*, 5

⁶¹⁶ Pappé, *A history of modern Palestine*, 42

The Creation of a Pioneering Narrative

Settler colonial analysis of the Zionist settlement in Palestine are not new, Fayeze Sayegh places Zionist settler colonialism in the context of European colonialism, and yet he distinguishes the Zionist project from other settler colonial movements. Sayegh does so by highlighting Zionism's aspiration to racial self-segregation, its rejection of any form of coexistence or assimilation, its unbending drive towards territorial expansion, and the necessary violence, structural and physical, it has to employ to achieve its goals. These phenomena are not passing features of Zionism, but, as Sayegh remarks, are congenital, essential and permanent.⁶¹⁷ As mentioned earlier, the settler colonial paradigm is the point of departure for enquiry into the drive for territory and elimination of the indigenous population.

In his foundational article "*The 'post-colonial' colony: Time, space, and bodies in Palestine/Israel*," Joseph Massad foregrounds the discussion on Zionism's relation to settler-colonialism. Massad elaborates on the peculiarity of the Israel/Palestine paradigm, as "the very naming of this space is, in fact, a process of historicizing it. To call it Palestine is to refer to it as a colonized space in both the pre- 1948 and the post-1948 periods and to signal its continued appellation as such a for a post-colonial period still to come."⁶¹⁸ In order to advance their project as the restoration of Jews to their ancestral homeland, i.e. an anti-colonial project, rather than a settler-colonial project embedded in European imperialism, Massad shows how Zionist leaders in the 1930s started to reinvent their "phraseology" which had framed the colonial conquest of the land of the Palestinians as "colonial" all along to an "anti-colonial" war of "independence" launched by the settlers against Britain and the Palestinians. Scholars on Palestine studies have elaborated on the ethno-exclusive fantasies of empty land and spatial mechanisms of containment, ruination, control and erasure directed

⁶¹⁷ Fayeze Sayegh, "Zionist colonialism in Palestine," *Settler Colonial Studies*, 2(1), (2012): 206–225.

⁶¹⁸ Joseph Massad, "The "post-colonial" colony: Time, space, and bodies in Palestine/Israel," in *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians* (London: Routledge, 2006), 14

towards Palestinian spaces and bodies in the different territories of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and Israel by exploring how biblical legitimation of the Zionist project and spatial and legal configurations variously construct Israeli sovereignty over space while constraining Palestinian claims and presence.⁶¹⁹

Still, further scholarship on the specific affective structures and practices of Zionist settler colonialism is needed to understand the settler colonial paradigm as it relates to Palestine. By looking at the cumbersome affective undertones of the ideological baggage carried by the founders of Palestine's first Jewish colonies, we reach a better understanding not only from the time when these ideologies were first formed, but also from the time that they became the basis for colonialization. Many studies have been conducted on the particular characteristics of the First and Second *Aliyot* to Palestine in an attempt to illustrate the lives, opportunities and difficulties these newly established Jewish colonies in Palestine faced.⁶²⁰ I am interested, not in how successful or not the first Zionist attempts of settlement were, but my focus is on how an ideology of honor motivated those first settlers in their colonial conquest of a foreign land.

The inherited prestige of a pioneer background enables settlers to locate themselves within the larger narrative of the newly colonized land and its history. In these ways, the land, infused with meaning, began to represent home to the European Settlers.⁶²¹ The history of Zionist pioneers has a tradition that envisions the land as feminine and the pioneer as its

⁶¹⁹ Nadia Abu El-Haj, "Reflections on archaeology and Israeli settler-nationhood," *Radical History Review*, 86, (2003) :149–163; Eyal Weizman, *Hollow land: Israel's architecture of occupation* (London: Verso, 2007) and Allegra, M., Handel, A., & Maggor, E., "Introduction: The politics of everyday life in the West Bank settlements," in *Normalizing occupation: The politics of everyday life in the West Bank settlements*, ed. M. Allegra, A. Handel, & E. Maggor, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 1-7

⁶²⁰ Liora R. Halperin, "Forging beginnings: Commemorative cultures and the politics of the 'First Aliyah'," *The journal of Israeli history*, Volume 38, Issue 1, (1/2/2020): 53-76; Oz Almog, *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Yuval Ben-Bassat, "Proto-Zionist–Arab Encounters in Late Nineteenth-Century Palestine: Socioregional Dimensions," *Journal of Palestine studies* 38, no. 2 (2009): 42–63; R. Aharonsohn, "Through the Eyes of a Settler's Wife: Letters from the Moshava." In *Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel*, ed. D. S. Bernstein, 29-47 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

⁶²¹ Ronald Weitzer, *Transforming Settler States: Communal Conflict and Internal Security in Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 26

masculine redeemer.⁶²² Israeli historian Boaz Neumann, in his study of the first Zionist pioneers of the first Aliyah, provides an extensive account of the almost erotic aspects of the Zionist Pioneer movement, an erotic desire as “The pioneers expressed this desire in descriptions of their experience of being-in-the-Land as an ecstatic, almost mystical sense of actually merging their flesh with its soil, flora, and fauna, of achieving a symbiosis with it, as though the boundaries between themselves and the Land had dissolved.”⁶²³

David Zalan Levontin (1856–1940), a pioneer of Jewish settlement and banking, was born in Orsha, Belorussia. He was among the first members of *Hovevei Zion* and established a settlers' association in his town and in Kharkov. As a representative of the movement, he established the association *Va'ad Halutzei Yesud ha-Ma'alah* which colonized land to build the first colony by the name of Rishon le-Zion in Palestine. Levontin was obsessed by the idea of a Jewish national revival in the holy land. In his diaries, he expressed his obsession of convincing fifty families “whose heart's desire was to depart to the land of our fathers and to establish a moshav (an agricultural colony) and lay the first cornerstone of the national idea.”⁶²⁴

The notion of setting the first cornerstone on conquered land is embedded in violence. To conquer territory on a foreign land with the aim of inhabiting it yourself, means to deterritorialize the indigenous population, and that process relies on what settler-colonial studies have defined as “founding violence.” This concept was deployed “with regard to the foundation of settler political orders, where the founding collective is primarily characterized

⁶²² For more on this topic see Oz Almog, *The Sabra: The Creation of The New Jew* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Michael Gluzman, *Ha-guf ha-zioni: leumiyut, migdar veminyut* (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-meukhad, 2007).

⁶²³ Boaz Neumann, *Land and desire in early Zionism* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, c2011), 2

⁶²⁴ Zalman David Levontin, *Le-'erets avotenu : divre yeme ha-masa' yeha-'avodah ba-'arets ha-kedoshah bi-shenot 642-643* (Warsaw: Druk fun Aleksander Ginz, 645, 1885.), Vol.1, 11

ואחרי כן הצעתי במכ"ע שהוא ליסד חברה מחמשים משפחות, אשר החפץ בלבם ואונם בידם לצאת לארץ אבותינו וליסד שם מושב לעבודת האדמה ולהניח בזה אבן הפנה להרעיון הלאומי.

בון לבבי, כקול קורא במדבר, אבל הרעיון הזה החל להכות שורש עמוק עמוק בלבבי, עד כי גמרתי אומר ללכת אל ארץ הקדושה הצעתי זאת היתה, לדא ולנסות כחי להוציא את רעיון התיסדות מושב לעבודת האדמה אל הפועל, ותהי ראשית מלאכתי ליסד בעיר מושבי חברה אחת, אשר לבבה שלם עם "הרעיון הזה." (My translation)

by military and reproductive capability, and where the initial nucleus of a settler society is an expression of a sovereignty that is above all marked by a violent self-defensive capacity.”⁶²⁵

Berl Katznelson (1887-1944), a central figure of the Second Aliyah and a leader of the Zionist Labor movement which emphasized the colonization of Palestinian lands through rural kibbutzim and moshavim and an urban Jewish proletariat, claimed in his memoirs that exile did not allow a Jew to die honorably. On the day he was set to leave his hometown in Russia for Palestine, he wrote that he embraced the Zionist national idea of the return to the land of Israel based solely on a sense of honor:

כדי לא למות מות נבלים בגולה – ואני הולך רק מתוך רגש של כבוד

Dying in the land of Israel meant dying in honor as remaining in exile meant a shameful life and a “scoundrel’s death.”⁶²⁶ Labor Zionists did not believe that a Jewish state would be created simply by appealing to the international community or to a powerful nation as political Zionists believed. Rather, Labor Zionists believed that uprooting the Palestinian natives was necessary to reestablish the balance on the ground and allow the Jewish working class to create a state.

From the beginning of the Second Aliya in 1903–1904 until 1923, a new flow of Zionist settlers arrived in Palestine which retrospectively Zionist historiography dubbed as *halutzim*—pioneers. Pioneering in Hebrew carries militaristic undertones linked to the arrival of a limited force that paves the territory and lays the foundations for larger forces to join and accomplish the mission. This flow of settlers, which would come to form the core of Labor Zionism, had the conquest of the land (*kibush ha-karka*) and the conquest of labor (*kibush ha-*

⁶²⁵ Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler colonialism: a theoretical overview* (Houndmills, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 78

⁶²⁶ Berl Katznelson, *Darki la-Arets*, (Tel Aviv: Hotsa’at ha-Mishmeret ha-tse’irah le-Miflegat po’ale Erets Yiśra’el, 1945), 37 (My translation)

'avoda) as their guiding ideals. David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973), born Grün, a major Zionist leader and executive head of the Zionist Organization and the first Prime Minister of the state of Israel, to whom “dreams of Eretz Israel seemed most impractical” because he was very “frail,”⁶²⁷ arrived in Palestine in 1906 and settled in Petah Tikva. Ben Gurion was most proud to settle in that colony specifically because he would work with the “sons of pioneers” whose fathers inspired his generation. Ben Gurion relates how the letter of founding pioneer Ze’ev Dubnow, wherein he explains that building the land of Israel would happen through “gradual expansion” and only by training “the young people and the young generations of the future in the use of firearms,”⁶²⁸ left an impact on him. It is the legacy of Dubnow, who believed that “The Jews, with weapons in their hands if necessary, will announce with a loud voice that they are masters in their ancient land,”⁶²⁹ that Ben-Gurion sought to follow.

At the time, Petah Tikva consisted of 80 households with a population of nearly 1500 settlers. Ben Gurion was shocked at the sight of Palestinian workers and farmers working in Jewish colonies. At the launch of the *Jewish Social Democratic Workers' Party in the Land of Israel* in Jaffa a few months later, he insisted that its first manifesto, *The Ramleh Program* could only reach the political independence of the Jewish People in this country if a total segregation of the Jewish and the Arab economies and an exclusive Jewish trade union was to be established. Ben Gurion explained this “conquest of labour” in military sense as “The idea that, we, who prepared the ground, would be permanent pioneers, moving from place to place on reclamation tasks, making the land fit for Jewish farm settlers.”⁶³⁰ Pioneering was essential for the success of Zionist aspirations as he described the pioneers as “the army of Zionist fulfillment.” All activities were to be conducted in Hebrew; there should be

⁶²⁷ David Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs*, Compiled by Thomas R. Bransten (New York: World Pub. Co., 1970), 38

⁶²⁸ Cited in Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs*, 49

⁶²⁹ Cited in Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs*, 49-50

⁶³⁰ Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs*, 54

segregation of the Jewish and the Arab economies; and a Jewish trade union was to be established.

The entire enterprise of instituting settler political, legal, social, cultural, and economic hegemony has also a psychoanalytic dimension. Colonial phenomena have an established interpretative tradition relating to the psychoanalytic imagination of the settler community. The very notion of dispossessing natives generates anxiety in settlers. There is an important academic archive on the phenomenon of settler anxiety about existential threats and a paranoid fear of ultimate decolonisation can be seen as a constituent feature of the settler colonial situation.⁶³¹ As Lorenzo Veracini puts it, besides a fear of indigenous revenge, settlers produced a number of inherent settler fears and their neurotic transformation such as “other neurosis - generating settler anxieties include paranoid fears about degenerative manifestations in the settler social body, apprehensions about the debilitating results of climate, remoteness, geopolitical position, racial contamination, inappropriate demographic balances, and concerns about the possibility that the land will ultimately turn against the settler project.”⁶³²

Given the fragility of colonial anxiety, “to settle” involved both governance and subject formation. In order for settlers to entrench themselves on the conquered space and produce power relations between and among settlers and Indigenous peoples for settler colonialism to extend temporally and spatially, anxiety and fear of the natives had to be contrasted with the honor of pioneering. The invading settlers were transformed into ‘pioneers’, a description that carries intense erasure of native existence and presence. Ronald Howman, in his study of white settler communities in Rhodesia, defined pioneering as a mode of colonial governance that engendered strong emotional bonds, the ‘unfolding’ of

⁶³¹ Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Lisa Slater, *Anxieties of belonging in settler colonialism: Australia, race and place* (New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2019).

⁶³² Veracini, *Settler colonialism*, 81

feelings of ‘love and loyalty’ and ‘identity’, between the settlers and the country, as settlers faced territorial battles and environmental hardships, as well as the beauty and challenge of a ‘new land’ and its peoples.⁶³³

While anxiety was based on an affective structure of fear, pioneering was formulated as one based on conquest wrapped in an adventurous nature, masculinism, nationalism and militarism. I argue that the violence that pioneering entailed was transformed into *pioneering honor* in order to justify dispossession and appropriation. Contrasted to settler anxiety is the under-researched affective structure of honor in settler colonies: the honor of conquering new soil, the pioneers’ pride of owning land and cultivating it, the honor found in celebratory myths of settler survival but most importantly, the founding violence masked in narratives of *founding honor*. For Ben-Gurion, it was “significant” to acknowledge that it was not anti-Semitism that made him leave his native country, as he “personally never suffered from anti-Semitic persecution,” but the motivation behind his “dedication” and that of the Jews of Plonsk, “who felt protected in the cocoon of their community life [in Plonsk] ... yet sent the highest proportion of Jews to Eretz Israel of any town in Poland,” was the feeling that is triggered by colonial settlement: “the positive purpose of rebuilding a homeland.”⁶³⁴

Fashioning Founding Strength

There was something very peculiar about the Zionists’ quest for honor in Palestine. It seems that, from the onset and even more so after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the colonial conquest of Palestine by Great Britain, the concept of honor, intertwined with the founding violence of pioneering, provided the Zionists with a possibility of entering the realm of Western Christian honor.

⁶³³ Roger Howman, ‘Patriotism and pioneering problems’, *Heritage of Zimbabwe*, no. 9 (1990): 100

⁶³⁴ Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs*, 36

Menachem Begin (1913-1992) was born in Brest-Litovsk in the Russian Empire as the youngest child in a Zionist family. He was the commander of the Zionist militant group Irgun, an underground militia affiliated with the Revisionist movement that broke away from the Haganah ("Defense"), the official "self-defense" force of the Yishuv. Begin was dedicated to "ruthlessly" helping Jews "regain their national honor and restore their self-respect,"⁶³⁵ however it seems that the Jewish honor that Begin was seeking could only be accomplished through the gentile recognition and acknowledgment.

Begin, who was always motivated by the value of Jewish honor, opens his autobiography by insisting that Gentiles should be aware that the Jew that was regenerated on Palestinian soil was now one that carried the violence of gentiles:

I have written this book also for Gentiles, lest they be unwilling to realize, or all too ready to overlook, the fact that out of blood and fire and tears and ashes a new specimen of human being was born, a specimen completely unknown to the world for over eighteen hundred years, "the Fighting Jew"⁶³⁶

This *Fighting Jew* who was regenerated by working and colonizing the land in Palestine, received plenty of attention in Zionist historiography and was analyzed within studies of race, colonialism and Jewish history.⁶³⁷ The formation and perpetuation of the Zionist national project and the emergence of Zionist militarism at a very early stage would shape the ethos of this new, strong, masculine, fighting Jew and would be one of the fundamental bonds that tied Zionist settler-colonialism to nineteenth-century European nationalism and imperialism. The workings of gender and nationalism help frame the efforts of Zionist militarism, particularly over time, to pride itself on strong, masculine self-defense, in this case in opposition to supposed diasporic (male) weakness. The voluminous study *Land and Power*,

⁶³⁵ Menachem Begin, *The Revolt: Memoirs of the Commander of the National Military Organization in the Land of Israel* (New York: Dell Publishing Co, Inc, 1978), 26

⁶³⁶ Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*, 25

⁶³⁷ Michael Berkowitz, *Nationalism, Zionism and ethnic mobilization of the Jews in 1900 and beyond* (Leiden; Boston : Brill, 2004); Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic conduct: the rise of heterosexuality and the invention of the Jewish man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) and Ehud Luz, *Wrestling with an angel: power, morality, and jewish identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, c2003)

The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948 by Anita Shapira describes the ideological evolution of the Zionist movement from the First *Aliyah* (1881-1904) until the foundation of the State of Israel. Shapira's work, which does not question the European Jewish claim to the land of Palestine and falsely claims that no Zionist leader used the actual term 'colonization' in its modern use in reference to Zionist activity in Palestine, serves as a classic example of how Zionist historiography created in retrospect narratives of Jewish bodies and presence based on a racialized ideology that elevated the European element in Zionist imagination.

Shapira claims that it was the growth of Palestinian Arab nationalism after World War I (i.e. Palestinian anti-colonial resistance) that forced the Zionists, who were engaged in a peaceful and socially just developmental enterprise, to shift from a "defensive ethos" to an "offensive ethos," as the Arab rebellion "led to a slow shift in the meaning of the concept of power from the sense of a 'critical mass' to physical-military power."⁶³⁸ By using sources like memoirs, manifestos, official documents, poems and essays, scholars of the First Aliyah colonies sought to construct heroic national narratives under the influence of emerging normative Zionist models of masculine Jewish self-transformation which, they claim, were triggered by native presence and resistance. The settler-farmer transcended himself once in contact with natives and turned into the fighting soldier. This "new Jew" had to liberate himself from characteristics attributed to Jews in the Diaspora, like weakness and physical inferiority and become Max Nordau's *Muskeljud* in order to face native threat.

However, from the onset of settlement, the hundreds of European Jews from Eastern and Central Europe that had set off to Palestine would translate their 'love of Zion' into the first form of militarism on colonized land, which entailed the guarding of the colonies by forming paramilitary units. Members of Labor Zionism, a local political movement among the Jewish colonists, called for the establishment as early as 1907 of *HaShomer*, the Guard,

⁶³⁸ Anita Shapira, *Land and power: the Zionist resort to force, 1881-1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 219

which would become the forerunner of the Israel Defense Forces. The motto of this armed organization whose purpose was guarding the Jewish colonies was: “*Ba-dam va-esh Yehudah nafla; ba-dam va-esh Yehuda takum*” (In blood and fire Judea fell; in blood and fire shall Judea rise), from a poem praising the rebels against Rome.⁶³⁹ Ben-Gurion, whose arms rapidly grew in girth once he became a pioneer,⁶⁴⁰ praised the creation of HaShomer as a clear break with ancient Jewish tradition that abhorred the use of violence:

We wanted to create a new life consonant with our oldest traditions as a people. This was our struggle. And to achieve that goal, we had to re-create everything from the beginning, to re-invent society. So we were prepared for blood on our hands in the name of autonomy, self-determination, and self-defense.⁶⁴¹

Ben Gurion was not alone endorsing this approach. When Ruppin set out to plant the Herzl Forest in Huldah using a “Jewish labour force,” the first thing he thought of was that “it would afterwards be necessary to have it guarded by Jews.”⁶⁴² This contradicts Shapira’s claim as commemorative texts, memoirs, and diaries produced during the Mandate period—the second stage of the process—began to build a narrative of self-sufficiency and self-defense rooted specifically in the First Aliyah colonies (not in the Labor Zionist communities that followed).⁶⁴³ The Zionist ideal was pioneering settlement on the rural frontier, following the conviction that cultivating the land would launch the regeneration of the Jewish body.

While Shapira justifies the violent clashes between settlers and the local Arab Palestinian population as a lack of knowledge of local customs and thus ignores the underlying issues of the dispossession of the indigenous peasants and land ownership, Israeli historian Gershon Shafir explains that the reason behind the series of confrontations from 1901 to 1904 between Muslim and Christian villages and Zionist settlers which took place at

⁶³⁹ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage books, 2001), 53

⁶⁴⁰ Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs*, 50

⁶⁴¹ Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs*, 57

⁶⁴² Arthur Ruppin, *Arthur Ruppin: Memoirs, Diaries, Letters*, ed. Alex Bein, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 99

⁶⁴³ Liora R. Halperin, “Petah Tikva, 1886: Gender, Anonymity, and the Making of Zionist Memory,” *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Fall 2017), 1-28

the Sejera training farm (named after the Arab village of al-Shajara) was the intentional use of diffuse methods to appropriate more land. Sejera was historicized in the memory of Labor Zionism as the site of the first agricultural collective, the forerunner of the kibbutz, where the first armed Jewish guard unit, Bar Giora, was established. The Jewish Colonization Association started to actively expel peasant tenants from 18,000 dunams it had bought near Tiberias:

[D]efense of traditional rights and roundabout methods of harassment to which the Palestinian Arab peasants resorted were seen by them as more legitimate and potentially more successful methods of struggle than the addressing of legal questions of outright ownership. The former pitted them against the weaker Jewish settlers; the latter would have set them against the powerful landowners and the government.

The conflicts over customary rights were only the upper layer of a decisive historical encounter between two theories and legal bases of ownership: the absolute right of private ownership . . . and the more diffuse, but not less extensive, rights of usage in practice in many pre-capitalist societies.⁶⁴⁴

This reshaping of the narrative centered on the elevation of particular iconic ‘First defenders’, while settlements such as Rishon Le-Zion, Petah Tikva and Rehovot, built mainly along the Mediterranean coastal plain between 1878 and 1890, acquired pride of place as founders and foundation builders in Zionist historiography whose purpose was to proselytize.⁶⁴⁵ As Jean O’Brien notes regarding similar texts about the early American colonies, such commemorative events produce “consolidated versions of the past” that are perpetuated in print and in periodic public celebrations that have a generative power as “locations of ideological production and dissemination.”⁶⁴⁶

Like other national discourses, zionism produces what Foucault calls a "regime of truth," a set of codes, practices, apparatuses, and discursive processes that have the effect of rendering the knowledge that it produces as truth. Through its regime of truth, Zionist

⁶⁴⁴ Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israel 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 202-202

⁶⁴⁵ Derek Jonathan Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine, 1870-1918* (Indiana University Press, 1991)

⁶⁴⁶ Jean M. O’Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xvii.

histography was very keen on creating the national history of Israel as one based on power and strength. As Massad has argued regarding nationalism's "inner domain," Zionism's creation of the "spiritual" heritage of Jews was an appropriation of European Christian culture, that produced and disseminated ways in which Jewish history, the relationship of the Jewish homeland and exile, Jewish culture, and Jewish identity are centered around the Christian notion of honor and pride. However, regarding honor, unlike other discourses that build their narrative on existent national elements, Zionism did not rely on the religious-theological tradition within Judaism in regard to honor; on the contrary, it rejected it as backward, and, in line with Massad's understanding, used instead the pre-existing Christian depictions of Jewish history, culture, religion and identity as the way to formulate Zionist power relations in Palestine.

In her study of Zionist honor and pride that blossomed with the emergence of the New Jew in Palestine, Israeli historian Orit Kamir explores the particularism of Zionist honor. Kamir outlines how originally, when first constructed in central and eastern Europe at the turn of the twentieth century, Zionist honor was modeled on central European (mostly German) honor codes of the day and was utilized to criticize Diaspora European Jews for lacking honor. As a consequence, Zionists called for the creation of the epitome of the Zionist body and mind, the New Jew, as the embodiment of a man of honor.⁶⁴⁷

In her analysis, Kamir states that all Zionists - the political, the cultural and the practical ones – understood that in order to construct a Zionist code of honor, ancient, pre-exile Jewish stories of heroism and victory had to be revived and biblical heroes had to resurge. Kamir explains that Herzl and Nordau both proudly referred to the Jews' honorable, independent existence in ancient times. Heroic stories from biblical times and the period of the second temple (the Makkabim) were sources of inspiration:

⁶⁴⁷ Orit Kamir, *Israeli Honor and Dignity: Social Norms, Gender Politics, and the Law* (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2004), 43-105 [Hebrew]

Jabotinsky went further and situated his novel in antiquity. Interestingly, Ahad Ha-Am cherished the heritage of Yohanan Ben-Zakai, who hid in a coffin to escape the Romans and preserve Jewish culture. Modern Zionism then grounded this narrative of the invincible New Jew on a revival of Jewish honor possible on the soil of their ancestors.

For Kamir, this outline is how Zionist honor was fabricated; however, Kamir is not the only scholar who has conflated the emphasis on physical strength and courage within Zionist historiography linked to the renaissance of the New Jew, located in biblical stories of defiance and pride, with the dynamics of the honor code.

Biblical narratives and conquest stories of the First Aliyah were woven together to create an appreciation for strength and for martyrdom from which the New Jew can derive pride and offer self-sacrifice for the collective. According to the Zionist narrative, this was the kind of heroism Jews exhibited when they were living on their soil and was projected into the ancient Hebrew past. In the Diaspora, after their dispersion, Jews turned into timid, weak and passive bodies, which were ashamed of their Jewishness and Judaism. By creating those myths and relying on biblical stories, Zionists wanted to demonstrate to Gentiles that Jews, once back on their ancestral lands, could attain the physical strength they were deprived of in the Diaspora. Now that they had reached the well of strength, they had to prove to Gentiles that they were worthy of honor.

Despite a number of differences among various Zionist colonial-settler currents on how to deal with the natives, or how to solve the 'Arab Question', Zionist historiography agrees that the use of violence by settlers against Palestinians, whether portrayed as defensive or offensive, was always present and was endorsed, even by the more pacifist groups.⁶⁴⁸ It is by perpetrating violence against the natives, that Zionists saw a possibility of entering the realm of Western honor.

⁶⁴⁸ See Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976), Shafir, *Land, Labor*; and Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*.

Jabotinsky and the Hierarchies of Honor

As an officer in the Jewish Legion in 1918, Ze'ev Jabotinsky wrote in Russian his novel *Samson the Nazarene*, a piece of fiction based on the Old Testament's figure of Samson (Judges 16), the Israelite warrior who brought down the oppressors of his people. Jabotinsky, who had not learned his Zionism "from the works of Achad Haam, not even from Herzl and Nordau," but he learned "how to be a Zionist from the Gentiles,"⁶⁴⁹ does not deviate much from the biblical storyline as his intention was to revive the New Jew through the biblical-mythic story and outline the divineness of strength and self-sacrifice illustrated by the Israelite warrior who died as a martyr to save his people.

The fundamental leitmotif of Jabotinsky's novel is unsurprisingly Samson's extraordinary physical strength. He is a brute, a warrior who chooses to always remain loyal to his people and their freedom, and the only way to overcome his enemies is through blood and iron. As Samson tells his people: "Tell them... in my name – two words. The first word is Iron. They must get Iron. They must give everything they have for Iron- their silver and wheat, oil and wine and flocks, even their wives and daughters. All for Iron! There is nothing more valuable in the world than iron."⁶⁵⁰ Jabotinsky connects the force of iron with the national question in the novel by centralizing the crucial role of loyalty that is at the core of nationalism. To whom will Samson, the half-Jew, half-Philistine warrior extend his loyalty: to his small, weak, impoverished tribe or to the strong and cultivated Philistines and their nation (which is strikingly described as modern Germany)?⁶⁵¹

Out of the embodiment of militarism, described through Samson's physical possibilities, and his nationalism, illustrated in his choice to die for his people, Jabotinsky

⁶⁴⁹ Ze'ev Jabotinsky, "By Intellect," *On Literature and Art*, 1934.

⁶⁵⁰ Vladimir Jabotinsky, *Prelude to Delilah* (New York: B. Ackerman, 1945)

⁶⁵¹ Vladimir Jabotinsky, *Prelude to Delilah* (New York: B. Ackerman, 1945)

resurrected the strong New Jew. Haim Nachman Bialik (1873-1934), the prominent early Zionist national poet, praised Jabotinsky's artistic achievements in *Samson* and his ability to shape the national myth:

Myth is not just a figure or a portrait from a mythological foundation [...] myth is [...] vision in its realistic presence!!! Note well: in its reality [*mamashuto*] and not in its realization [*hagshamato*] [...] Have you ever seen a vision that is realized? Such things never happened. The power of [...] a myth [...] is in its reality by virtue of its very existence and its mysterious influence [...] and this Ze'ev did not simply shape a wonderful story about a mythological portrait from the Bible [...] He created a myth! A myth in its reality! Because he created what he created in the image of the vision of redemption.⁶⁵²

Indeed, the vision of Zionist redemption was about regenerating physical strength on the soil of Palestine. When the Philistines thought they had captured and defeated Samson, he was, through divine intervention, provided with a final chance to prove his strength. Out of this national myth of Jewish power, came the redemption of the Jewish people.

Zeev Jabotinski propagated the image of a proud, generous, and fierce “super Jew” through the several military units he would set up to colonize Palestine. The ambition to prove Jewish worth to the British materialized when Jabotinsky pitched the idea of a Jewish Legion within the British Army during World War I. If the Zionists were the allies of the victors, it would be the first time in modern history that a Jewish army conquered territory, and not any territory for that matter.

In 1915, a “Zion Mule Corps”, mainly made up of mostly Russian Jews deported from Palestine (the British deported all Russian nationals from their territories during WWI as enemy citizens) participated in the fighting on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Commander of the Gallipoli campaign, General Ian Hamilton was impressed by Jabotinsky and his men who had “done extremely well” and demonstrated “a more difficult type of bravery than the men in the front,” as they had to endure enemy fire without the opportunity to return it.”⁶⁵³ We notice

⁶⁵² Cited in Natan Bistrizky, “Tirgum ke-yetsirah mekorit: ‘Al tirgum ‘Shimshon’ me- et Ze-ev Jabotinsky be-yadai Itzhak Oren,” *Maariv*, September 23, 1977, 35.

⁶⁵³ JI 6-1K. Ian Hamilton to Ze-ev Jabotinsky, November 17, 1915.

here the surprise element or the emphasis by a Christian officer on the possibility of courage and bravery by Jewish bodies. Colonel John Henry Patterson, a Zionist Protestant dedicated to the “restoration” of the Jewish people in the Holy Land, would note: "Many of the Zionists whom I thought somewhat lacking in courage showed themselves fearless to a degree when under heavy fire, while Captain Trumpeldor actually revelled in it, and the hotter it became the more he liked it."⁶⁵⁴

After the dispersal of the Corps in 1916, Jabotinsky renewed his efforts, in cooperation with Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann, who conducted the negotiations leading to the Balfour Declaration of November 1917, for Zionist participation in General Edmond Allenby’s Palestine Campaign. Arthur James Balfour’s support for Zionism, like many of his time, was traced back to his Christian upbringing rooted in the Old Testament.⁶⁵⁵ The idea of the Jews as a special people and the ideal of “restoring” them to their ancient land was transmitted to him from an early age.⁶⁵⁶ The idea of the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine since the Protestant Reformation (i.e. the cleansing of European Jewry) was well grounded in English Protestant thought. Lloyd George’s government in 1917 had established its plan to conquer Palestine from the Ottomans, which led eventually to the recruitment of a Jewish regiment.

What’s in a name?

The debate that erupted between assimilated British Jews and Zionists about the creation of a specifically Jewish Legion illustrates the cooption of Judaism by Zionists for a political cause of their own. With a total Jewish population in the United Kingdom in 1914

⁶⁵⁴ John Henry Patterson, *With the Zionists in Gallipoli* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1916).

⁶⁵⁵ Kenneth Young, *Arthur James Balfour; The happy life of the Politician, Prime Minister, Statesman, and Philosopher, 1848-1930* (London, G. Bell, 1963), 257 and Max Egremont, *Balfour: a life of Arthur James Balfour* (London: Collins, 1980), 296, 340.

⁶⁵⁶ Egremont, *Balfour*, 18.

between 275,000 and 300,000, Jewish men responded with great fervor to the call to arms in August 1914. Around 41,500 British Jews fought in the First World War, of which roughly 10,000 enlisted as volunteers. This means that between 14-15% of Britain's Jewish population enlisted in the army.⁶⁵⁷

British Jews saw no reason for the creation of a separate Jewish legion and chose to serve in the same army units as their British peers during the war. Emphasis was given in the Anglo-Jewish press to the fact that Jews were enlisting for military service in almost every regiment as a token of loyalty, with the *Jewish Chronicle* establishing an 'Honour Record of Enlistments', that documented Jewish soldiering and incorporated also a 'Casualties List.'⁶⁵⁸ At the beginning of October, the *Jewish Chronicle* printed the following notice in English and in Hebrew:

Since the days of Oliver Cromwell Great Britain has meted out the fairest treatment, politically, socially and in every way, to Jews. Now it is time for Jews to reciprocate and show that the old spirit of the Maccabees is not dead.⁶⁵⁹

The Maccabean model of the Jewish warriors would become an integral part of the modern Hebrew repertoire, on both ends of the spectrum, as it served as a symbol for an active and assertive Jew who "stands up for himself".⁶⁶⁰ While assimilated Jews would refer to it as their affirmation of their patriotic identification with Great Britain as their nation, which also carried a sacrificial component; Zionism would make use of the same Jewish symbols and transference of the Christian-European model of the Maccabees to Modern Hebrew culture to demonstrate how the New Jew with "manly honor" refuses to surrender to any kind of enslavement or humiliation even at the risk of death.

⁶⁵⁷ Vivian D. Lipman, *A History of the Jews in Britain since 1858* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), 140

⁶⁵⁸ Richard Mendelsohn, 'The Jewish Soldier. Anglo-Jewry at war, 1899 – 1902,' *Jewish Affairs*, 54 (1999), 14

⁶⁵⁹ The Jewish Chronicle, 2 October 1914, 13

⁶⁶⁰ For further reading that describes the complexities of the relationship between the practice of Judaism and assimilation into European society, see J. Frankel and S. Zipperstein (eds), *Assimilation and Community: the Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1992).

British Jews emphasized their rejection of the Zionist separatist approach by requesting not to add a “Jewish” element to the name of the to-be-created legion. The Zionists wanted the new unit to be explicitly Jewish in name, whether “The Jewish Legion,” the “Maccabean Regiment,” or the “Jewish Battalion” in order to boost Jewish courage and Jewish alliance with the British army.⁶⁶¹ However, assimilated Jews were not enchanted by the idea of referencing Judaism in the formal title of the units, which led to a fierce debate. Colonel John Henry Patterson, who was once more charged with the recruitments of Jewish soldiers and who chronicled his experience at war in *With the Judeans in the Palestine Campaign*, would note his surprise to this unexpected rift among Jews:

We had hardly begun to move in the matter of recruiting for the Jewish Regiment, when I became aware that in certain quarters of influential English Jewry there was violent hostility to Zionist aspirations, and also to the very idea of a Jewish Regiment. I was, of course, aware that there was somewhat of a cleavage amongst the Jews on this question, but the bitterness and hostility shown was quite a revelation to me. I could not understand how any Jew could fail to grasp this Heaven-sent opportunity and do all in his power to further the efforts of the British Government on behalf of the Jewish people. (...) Dr. Weizmann gave a slashing reply to the Sanballats from the Zionist point of view which cut the ground from under their feet; and Jabotinsky, in his address for the cause he had at heart, lifted the debate to a level immeasurably above the point of view of his opponents.⁶⁶²

Sir Marcus Samuels (1853-1927), a prominent oil magnate and Lord Mayor of London, was part of the influential English Jewry referred to and remarked that calling the units a Jewish Regiment would “cause immense harm to British soldiers who profess the creed of Judaism.” Samuels questioned why there ought to be a Jewish Regiment since there is “no Mussalman or Roman Catholic or Wesleyan Regiment,” this to him “savours too much of the Ghetto”.⁶⁶³ The ‘assimilationist delegation’,⁶⁶⁴ as Jabotinsky referred to them, which also included Major Lionel de Rothschild, Vice-Chairman of the Jewish War Service Committee, who recruited

⁶⁶¹ Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The story of the Jewish legion* (New York: B. Ackerman, 1945), 98

⁶⁶² John H. Patterson, *With the Judeans in the Palestine Campaign* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1922), 20.

⁶⁶³ WO 32/11353. Sir Marcus Samuels Speech, Transcript of August 30, 1917 Deputation to Lord Derby.

⁶⁶⁴ Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The story of the Jewish legion* (New York: B. Ackerman, 1945), 99

Jews to serve in the British military but opposed Zionists and their belief that Jews constituted a separate nationality, requested to present their objection to the name in person to Lord Derby.

Lionel de Rothschild co-founded the *League of British Jews*, an Anglo-Jewish anti-Zionist organization which listed its objectives as upholding "the status of British Jews holding the Jewish religion," to "resist the allegation that Jews constitute a separate nationality," and "to facilitate the settlement in Palestine of such Jews as may desire to make Palestine their home."⁶⁶⁵ In a letter of protest regarding the name of the regiment, Rothschild stated that there is "an insuperable objection to its being called the "Jewish" Regiment as it is not a regiment representative of all the Jews."⁶⁶⁶ At the meeting with Lord Derby, who served as British Minister of War from 1916-1918, Rothschild insisted that he has "been opposed to a 'Jewish' Regiment from the first moment it was suggested in 1914." Henry S. Q.

Henriques, who was also a member of the Deputation to Lord Derby, was more explicit in his protest:

The only specious reason which I have seen put forward for this new departure in British Military Organization is I think founded on a total misconception of Jewish sentiment and psychology. The great mass of the Jews no doubt look forward to their restoration to their own land of Palestine in God's good time; which some think near at hand; but no Jew worthy of the name, has ever cherished the idea that that restoration is to be brought about by means of a Jewish military force consisting not of volunteers but of conscripts impressed into the service by the compulsion of an alien law and directed by the authorities of a foreign nation in pursuance of that nation's political aims. Such a conception seems to me to run counter to every shade of Jewish sentiment and feeling.⁶⁶⁷

Jabotinsky and Weizmann insisted on the reference to Jewishness in the units' names as a token of valor and courage. The military abilities of Jews were the core of this debate, as Zionists wanted to group Jews, including all of Anglo-Jewry, under the Zionist flag, without

⁶⁶⁵ Thomas Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942-1948* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 17

⁶⁶⁶ WO 32/11353. Letter from Lord Lionel de Rothschild to Lord Derby, August, 22, 1917

⁶⁶⁷ WO 32/11353. Mr. Henry S. Q. Henriques Speech, Transcript of August 30, 1917 Deputation to Lord Derby.

considering how their performance might be perceived by the British public. If, as presumed, the Jewish conscripts failed in their duty within a unit that was specifically referenced as Jewish, the public would further stereotype Jews as cowards. In Anglo-Jewry's minds, such a result would have been disastrous to any advancement they had accomplished in fighting popular stereotypes of Jews and would probably prompt fresh outbreaks of antisemitic violence.

Frustrated by Lionel de Rothschild's anti-Zionism and his efforts to counter his request, Jabotinsky, who nonetheless acknowledged Lionel's capabilities as a Major and as a leading figure and hoped to nominate him as the Commander of the Jewish Legion, concluded that Lionel is "no Jew," as "in what sense could they be described as Jews? To me 'Jew' represents an honorable title, not an accident of birth."⁶⁶⁸ The War Office, headed by Lord Derby, was only concerned with the acquisition of military manpower. In a letter to Philip Kerr, Lloyd George's personal secretary and confidant, Derby provided the War Office's perspective, noting that the assimilationists, who have expressed a "howl of indignation," insist:

That we ought not to form any Battalion which is identified with a particular religion, quite forgetting, apparently, that Jews are a Nationality. Further they argue that these Battalions, composed as they are mostly of Russian Jews, are not likely to be of very great military value and will bring no credit to the Jewish Race, many of whom have enlisted voluntarily and done well in all Branches of the Service. It really does not matter in the least to me what they are called (...) Personally, I am ready to call them the Joppa Rifles or the Jerusalem Highlanders, or anything else as long as I get the men. These men are being, of course, enlisted for General Service, and not especially for Palestine...Of course we shall employ them in Palestine, but I don't think they ought to be specially told that that is what they are going to be employed for.⁶⁶⁹

Derby's assertion that "Jews are a nationality" is of particular importance, for it implies that for the British Empire and its yearning for conquest, "getting the men" to advance in the war

⁶⁶⁸ Jabotinsky, *The story of the Jewish legion*, 88

⁶⁶⁹ WO 32/11353, Lord Derby to Philip Kerr, August 22, 1917.

was not all that matters, but that these men are of a different race than the local Arabs and would serve Britain's ends.

Dismissing the protests of the established Anglo-Jewish community, Lord Derby decided that the Legion would be purely Jewish and that it would be sent to Palestine, but, in order to be named 'Jewish', the Zionists had to prove that they are worthy of such honorable description by proving their bravery in action for the British empire:

the honorable description "Jewish" should not be applied to a new regiment which had not yet distinguished itself on the battlefield. Such a name had first to be earned; and he promised that when the Jewish soldiers had displayed their bravery in action, the Regiment would be granted both a Jewish name and a Jewish insignia. In the meantime we should have another honorable name — "Royal Fusiliers."⁶⁷⁰

Derby had no particular respect for Zionists or the cause they were selling, but he wanted the new Jews, who would be transferred to a new geography, to distinguish themselves and transform themselves into brave warriors. Because the structure of honor entails the perception and recognition by an audience of one's worth and physical strength, Zionists firstly insisted that the name of the battalion carry a reference to Jewishness, if not Judaism. Once the 39th Regiment of the 'Royal Fusiliers' was formed, the proud Jabotinsky, who served as a lieutenant in Allenby's battles over the Jordan Valley in the spring of 1918, had to prove his honorability to gentiles:

The Jewish legion, as it was, fulfilled a historic role which shaped the destiny of Zionism. (...) its military significance was that which few battalions can have in a great army. England could have liberated Palestine without us; but she liberated it with us and, moreover, stationed us – as every expert will confirm – at one of the most difficult posts. It is not much, nor little; it is as much as it is. The ancient regiment of 'Royal Fusiliers', whose name our battalions bore during the campaign, was through us given the inscribe on its flag – on which are already inscribed in golden letters, Crimea, India, Sudan, South Africa – a new name: Palestine. And the old British regiment is proud of its achievement. So are Patterson and Margolin, and I.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁷⁰ Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The story of the Jewish legion* (New York: B. Ackerman, 1945), 98

⁶⁷¹ Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, (New York: Ackerman, 1945), 181. The original version was published in 1928 in Russian.

Jabotinsky fused himself with the British officers, as he perceived the Jewish Legion to be an extension of the greater British military; both combining and uniting their resources for mutual benefit. In that logic, he became Patterson and Margolin. This recognition came in the form of a Menorah cap badge, which replaced the regimental Royal Fusiliers cap badge they had worn previously. As General Allenby demobilized his troops after the war, the battalions took on the official title of “the Judeans.” Their wartime distinction was rewarded by the British Empire; they had to continue on the same path to gain a full distinction of honor.

Paving the Path for Honor: One Native Body at the time

The Jewish battalion gained a place in Zionist foundational narratives, while its place in world history remains something of a footnote. Walter Laqueur writes that Jabotinsky was neither a friend nor an enemy of Britain but that he knew that force was not needed to persuade a civilized people like the British to understand the necessity of the Zionist project. However, force was needed to crush Palestinian resistance, in order to gain Britain’s respect: “If we want to be defended against attacks from our enemies,” writes Jabotinsky, “we must provide our own defenders and not ask a Christian nation to take charge of our defense.”⁶⁷²

The use of violence against Palestinians was the only way Zionists could gain their honor in the eyes of Gentiles. For them to win that privilege, they had to instill fear in the native population in order to prove to Gentiles that the Jew in Palestine has finally reached gentile strength. For Jabotinsky, over and over, between the two evils - killing Arabs or losing Gentile respect - he chose what he perceived as the lesser of two evils:

The Latin proverb says, of two evils choose the lesser. When we are in a position where – through no fault of ours- physical force dominates, only one question can be asked: What is worse? To continue with *havlaga*, continue watching Jews being killed and how the conviction grows among the Arabs that our lives are cheap, and among

⁶⁷² Vladimir Jabotinsky to Abraham Racanati, April 14, 1924, Jabotinsky Institute Archive.

the British and the whole world that we are spineless hands-uppers not worthy of being considered as allies at a time of danger?⁶⁷³

After World War I, Jabotinsky expanded his belief in militarism in the conquest of Palestine. He worked on establishing the Betar group in 1923, which was concerned chiefly with reviving the idea of the Jewish legions that had operated during World War I. His *Iron Wall* essays of 1923 espoused the doctrine of iron and blood on which an organized system of Jewish self-defense should be established in order for Jews to rely on themselves for their security. His vision entailed that the Land of Israel should extend over both banks of the river Jordan, reminding us of the words of Rülff, and that Zionist approach to the Arabs should always be from a position of military strength.

The essence of Jabotinsky's Revisionist theory was based on an awareness from his part that there would never be a possibility of gaining the agreement of Palestinians to concede their country to a Jewish majority. Palestine was their national homeland and "Every indigenous people," he wrote in *Iron Wall*, "will resist alien settlers as long as they see any hope of ridding themselves of the danger of foreign settlement. This is how the Arabs will behave and go on behaving so long as they possess a gleam of hope that they can prevent 'Palestine' from becoming the Land of Israel."⁶⁷⁴ Consequently, the only way to take over the land was with the Iron Wall.

Betar, which was named after the last outpost of Jewish opposition during the Bar Kochba Revolt against the Romans in 136 CE, was also an acronym for the Alliance (Berit) of Yosef Trumpeldor — a Zionist settler turned Zionist hero after being killed in 1920 in the Zionist colony of Tel Hai by Palestinians who had organized themselves against Zionist colonization. Betar became the largest Zionist militarized youth movement in Palestine between the two world wars and it provided the strongest base of support for the Revisionist

⁶⁷³ Ze'ev Jabotinsky, "Amen," *The Jewish Herald* (19), 21 July 1939

⁶⁷⁴ Jabotinsky's *The Iron Wall* was first published in Russian under the title "O Zheleznoi Stene" in *Rassvyet* on November 4, 1923. It was published in English in the *Jewish Herald* (South Africa) on November 26, 1937.

movement, led by Jabotinsky.⁶⁷⁵ As mentioned earlier, the development and advancement of Zionist ideology and strategies in Palestine happened in parallel and mostly under the influence of the wider intellectual currents circulating in the interwar period in Europe. The first quarter of the twentieth century witnessed one of the bloodiest world wars in modern human history with power relations and spheres of influence shifting constantly. It also witnessed the rise of violent nationalistic groups and the beginning of modern ideologies of fascism. Eran Kaplan, in his study of Revisionism, argued that the party's notions of geography, aesthetics, politics and gender were inextricably connected to trends in European intellectual life.⁶⁷⁶

Betar members should have "a para-military education, with uniforms, solemn processions, military organization, discipline and training in the use of light arms,"⁶⁷⁷ When Jabotinsky established his party Ha-Tzohar in 1925, not in Palestine but in Paris, he noted that "Revisionism saw itself as the only true heir of the Herzl-Nordau tradition of political Zionism."⁶⁷⁸ His Revisionist party's program embodied militarism. Jabotinsky believed that security was essential to a Jewish future in Palestine. In *Revisionist Principles* (1929), he wrote: "The Jews shall have their share in the defense of the country. The Jewish Regiment, which existed in 1917-1921, shall be reestablished as an integral and permanent part of the Palestine Garrison."

⁶⁷⁵ Most accounts of the Revisionist movement's history written by its sympathizers are embedded within biographies of Jabotinsky. See Shalom Ben Baruch, *Z'abotinsky, lohem ha-umah* (Jerusalem: Sh. Shvarts, 1943); Joseph Nedava, *Z'abotinsky be-hazon ha-dor* (Tel Aviv: Shelah, 1950); Joseph Schechtman, *Rebel and Statesman: The Vladimir Jabotinsky Story* (New York: T. Yoseloff, 1955); Schechtman, *Fighter and Prophet: The Last Years* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1961); Shmuel Katz, *Z'abo: Biografiya shel Ze'ev Z'abotinsky*, vols 1 and 2 (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1993). For histories of Betar and Revisionism written by former leaders of these movements, see Joseph Schechtman and Yehuda Benari, *History of the Revisionist Movement* (Tel Aviv: Hadar, 1970); Chen Ben-Yerucham, *Sefer Betar: korot u-mekorot* vols. 1-3 (Tel Aviv: Hamerkaz, 1969-1973). The most well-known popular history of Revisionism that aimed to discredit the movement is Lenni Brenner, *The Iron Wall: Zionist Revisionism From Jabotinsky to Shamir* (London: Zed Books, 1984).

⁶⁷⁶ Eran Kaplan, *The Jewish Radical Right: Revisionist Zionism and its Ideological Legacy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005)

⁶⁷⁷ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism: From the French Revolution to the Establishment of the State of Israel* (New York: MJF Books, 1972), 360

⁶⁷⁸ Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 347

Betar was actively recruiting settlers to Palestine to accelerate the process of colonization. It is worth mentioning that the British officials deployed to Palestine referred to Palestinians in their communiqués as the ‘people of Palestine’, despite being very condescending towards their ‘backwardness’ and ‘primitivity’. There is much ownership to the land in this designation, while the settlers would be referred to interchangeably as ‘the Jewish people’, ‘the Jewish colonization in Palestine’, ‘the Jewish immigrants’ or ‘the Zionists’.⁶⁷⁹ Despite granting the Palestinians some sort of territorial ownership to the geography of Palestine, the British occupying forces emphasized that due to their policies which were lenient towards to progress colonization, “it may be said that already in 1925 the national Home had developed all the main features which distinguish it today.”⁶⁸⁰ Understanding the political dynamics of nationalism and the necessity of having an independent official state of their own, by the mid-1930s, with Betar at its helm, the Revisionist party was one of the most powerful Zionist movements in Europe and it dominated the Zionist political scene.⁶⁸¹

The Dishonorable New Jew

Given that Jabotinsky’s strong courageous Jew was forged, one that takes up arms and does not fear his Arab enemy, and who chooses to remain loyal to his people, Jabotinsky and other Zionist leaders could now work on gaining European recognition by entering the realm of honor. Honor functions as a fundamental reassessment of one’s worth through the eyes of another, in this case the recognition of gentiles. Zionists had to racialize honor in Palestine within the same logic of Christian Western paradigms that excluded the Jew, in order to reach

⁶⁷⁹ C. 495. M. 336. 1937. VI, League of Nations, 30 November 1937, Report of the Palestine Royal Commission presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the United Kingdom Parliament in July 1937

⁶⁸⁰ C. 495. M. 336. 1937. VI, League of Nations, 30 November 1937, Report of the Palestine Royal Commission presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the United Kingdom Parliament in July 1937, 49

⁶⁸¹ Betar clubs could be found in over twenty-six countries, it was in Poland that the vast majority of the youth movement’s members and leaders lived. The Revisionist movement also competed against non-Zionist Jewish political parties such as the socialist *Bund* and the Orthodox *Agudas Yisroel*.

the complete metamorphosis of the Diaspora Jew into an honorable Zionist. Jabotinsky maintained the importance of fostering Jewish national honor precisely because it was lacking among Diaspora Jews; it was as such the basis of his modern nationalism. One of Jabotinsky's watch words was *hadar* (glory), a value that was expressed in a set of new rules of conduct - such as respect, self-esteem and loyalty - that would turn a Diaspora Jew into a nationally conscious one who upholds both his private and national honor. Jabotinsky's New Jew was opposed to the traditional Diaspora Jew, who lived outside history and preoccupied himself with parsing Talmudic texts, which debilitated Jews physically and emotionally stripped its acolytes of self-respect.⁶⁸²

Ironically, Jabotinsky's search for honor could only materialize once acknowledged and attested to by gentiles, as the core of *hadar* was displaying Jewish honor to the non-Jewish world. Anita Shapira explains that, "The element of *hadar* in his educational thinking was a direct continuation of the approaches calling for Jewish action that would engender respect, so that Gentiles would no longer accuse Jews of shameful shrewdness and cunning."⁶⁸³ In "Legion," an article published in Russian in 1924, Jabotinsky emphasizes once more why a strong Jewish military is essential in order to be perceived as real colonizers by the British:

Finally, in a moral context, the status of the Schutzjuden humiliates us and lowers our prestige in the eyes of the English and the Arabs. English, knowing from their own history that real colonizers never use a foreign army, are accustomed to look upon Jews as an element that is not entirely suitable for real colonization, and therefore view our entire work as an artificial, hothouse project. They have formed an impression that is even more humiliating for us.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸² Ze'ev Jabotinsky, *'Al he-Hadar* [On Glory], ed. Moshe Yisra'eli (Tel Aviv: Jabotinsky Institute, 1958)

⁶⁸³ Shapira, *Land and Power*, 180

⁶⁸⁴ Vladimir Jabotinsky, "Legion, stat'ia pervaiia," *Rassvet* 10, (June 6, 1924), 3 cited in Brian J. Horowitz, *Vladimir Jabotinsky's Russian years, 1900-1925* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2020), 201. (Schutzjuden refers to 'Court Jews' or the Jewish intercessor with the government).

Clearly, the feeling of humiliation is a generic one: it involves shame, disgust, and self-contempt, in conjunction with other negative affects such as fear. During the Height of East European anti-Jewish pogroms, the rise of anti-Semitic movements and the social anti-Semitic attitudes in Western Europe and with the subsequent introduction of anti-Jewish decrees in Germany, which gradually eliminated the rights of Jewish citizens, Jews were regularly put down, excluded, persecuted and humiliated.

However, Jabotinsky believed that as long as Zionists did not gain full military control of the entire territory of Palestine where they can proclaim a state of their own, they will remain *Schutzjuden*, ‘Court Jews’ in Palestine. This mediocre function, according to Jabotinsky, granted Jews imperial protection and social benefits in Europe, but to become real colonizers worthy of British respect, Jews had to resort to different means. This duality is striking. Paradoxically, the *New Jew* symbolized the concept of a perceived eternal Jewish inferiority with the penetration of anti-Semitic ideas into Jewish self-perception.

The words of Jabotinsky echo the code of gentile honor, whereas he was constantly seeking the validation of Gentiles to his performances. He had to be up to their standards. Jabotinsky praised Pinkser’s ideology, and it was his colleague Rülff’s ideology that was coherent with Jabotinsky’s beliefs. It is Rülff that had asked the members of *Hoveivi Zion* to colonize Palestine, and not any other country, as the only way for Jews to gain Gentile honor:

Wollen wir uns wieder in den eigenen und fremden Augen rehabilitiren – suchen wir mit aller Macht die Urheimath wieder zu acquiriren, den jüdischen Staat zu etabliren und zu constituiren. Es gibt kein anderes Mittel. Wir werden sonst niemals von fremden Volksgenossen als ihnen gleich und ebenbürtig betrachtet werden, niemals das Odium von uns abwälzen können, als hergelaufene, heimathlose Menschen, concurrenzunfähig zur Erwerbung von Besitz und Recht, von Amt und Würden zu gelten, und alle Gleichstellung auf dem Papier wird daran nichts zu ändern vermögen. Denke man aber nur nicht, daß eine jüdische Colonie und selbst ein Staat etwa in Amerika oder Australien dieselben Dienste leisten werde – ein solcher würde in den Augen der Völker höchstens als Curiosum angesehen werden, nicht aber als berechnigte Staats- und Volksmacht ins Gewicht fallen.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸⁵ “If we want to rehabilitate ourselves again in our own eyes and in those of others - let us try with all our might to reacquire the original home, to found and establish the Jewish state. There is no other possibility. Otherwise we will never be regarded by foreign nations as equal, we will never be able to remove the odium from us as a run-down, homeless people,

Settler colonialism might provide us with a historical continuity, rather than similarity, between past and present stories of conquest. There was an ideological line that was convinced that Jewish honor equals the dispossession of Palestinians. The Zionist land purchase phenomenon of the earlier years, along with the realization of many Arabs that Zionism was planning to establish an independent Jewish entity in Palestine, shaped a strong Palestinian reaction embodied in various political activities between 1908 and 1914. Arab attacks on Jewish settlements, according to Khalidi, were “the result of a real process of dispossession which...can be conclusively documented not in the words of the victims, but rather on the basis of contemporary Zionist sources and recent research based on them.”⁶⁸⁶

The ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians was a process of systematic violence and terror attacks to expel the native Palestinians.⁶⁸⁷ Although the Zionist establishment had initially presented its project as colonial, “it was now presenting itself as a movement of national liberation constituting its project as anti-colonial in nature, albeit one established through colonization but not colonialism.”⁶⁸⁸ This Zionist movement of national liberation was modeled to allow a space for reconciliation of narratives with the British forces, when Zionist militias attacked them to accelerate their departure.

The aim of Jewish settlers was to acquire land for settlement. Whereas on other frontiers in the Arab region, the French in Tunisia and Algeria, the Italians in Tunisia and Libya, settler-colonization was set in motion before the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Jewish Zionist settlers were, like the Italian settlers in Tunisia or the Boers of South Africa,

incapable of competing for the acquisition of property and rights, of office and dignity, and all equality on paper will not be able to change that. But do not think that a Jewish colony and even a state in America or Australia, for that matter, would render the same purpose - such a endeavor would at most be viewed as a curiosum in the eyes of nations, but not as a legitimate state and representative of a people's will.” (My Translation)

⁶⁸⁶ Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*,

⁶⁸⁷ Ethnic cleansing is defined as “the attempt to create ethnically homogeneous geographic areas through the deportation or forcible displacement of persons belonging to particular ethnic groups.” In the modern era an international consensus has emerged that ethnic cleansing is a war crime and a crime against humanity.

⁶⁸⁸ Joseph Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question*. 2006, 14

not officially dispatched by a European government, even if European colonial organizations and subsequently Britain officially sponsored their colonial project. Prior to the fall of Palestine in the hands of the British forces, Menachem Ussishkin, one of the central eastern European Zionist leaders, asked rhetorically in 1904:

In order to establish autonomous Jewish community life—or, to be more precise, a Jewish state—in Eretz Israel, it is necessary, first of all, that all, or at least most, of Eretz Israel's land will be the property of the Jewish people. Without ownership of the land, Eretz Israel will never become Jewish ... and Jews will remain in the very same abnormal situation which characterizes them in the diaspora. They will be without a recognized status. But, as the ways of the world go, how does one acquire landed property? By one of the following three methods: by force—that is, by conquest in war, or in other words, by robbing land of its owner; by forceful acquisition, that is, by expropriation via governmental authority; and by purchase with the owner's consent.⁶⁸⁹

Ussishkin and other Zionist leaders recognized that the duel in Europe was embedded in militarism, nationalism, race and masculinity; so would the Zionist quest for honor in Palestine become a story of militarism and conquest. This chapter challenges the studies that look at the violence used by Zionist settlers in Palestine as a mode of self-defense or studies which acknowledge the violence but analyze it through the psychoanalytical lens of displacement, a self-defense mechanism which when locating conflicts in a new situation, displaces the negative emotion from its original source to a less threatening recipient.⁶⁹⁰ Menachem Begin would explain that these attacks were necessary to prove to the British that Jews were capable of colonization on their own now:

The revolt sprang from the earth (...) The renewed strength which came to us, and especially to our youth, from contact with the soil of our ancient land, is no legend but a fact. The officials of the British Foreign Office had no conception of this when they made their plans (...) They assumed that in Eretz Israel, too, the Jews would continue to be timid supplicants for protection. (...) But those unforeseen forces (...), demolished the British assumption. Vladimir Jabotinsky appeared, educating a whole generation to resist, to be ready to sacrifice, for revolt and for war. (...) With our return to the land of our fathers our strength was restored.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸⁹ Menachem Ussishkin, *Sefer Ussishkin* (Jerusalem: Havaad Lehotzat Hasefer, 1964), 105.

⁶⁹⁰ For more on displacement as a psychoanalytical mechanism, see: Peter B. Neubauer, "The Role of Displacement in Psychoanalysis," *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, Volume 49, Issue 1 (1994): 107-119.

⁶⁹¹ Begin, *The revolt*, 77-78

By breaking gentile assumption of Jewish weakness, Zionism entailed the construction of a settler state on Palestinian land, a practice that seeks to repair a historical injustice but perpetuates others in its eliminatory drive for land. Here, Wolfe's concept of *permanence* as a threat to settlers can be applied to the Palestinians. Indeed, for Zionists, Palestinians caused a problem of permanence. Zionist settler-colonialism thrives on the elimination of the natives and the constant quest for more land; as the creation and viability of a Palestinian state would make the indigenous population permanent. To answer this contradictory process, Wolfe explains how settler-colonial society sets up legal channels and regulation to benefit the dominant race and dispossess and marginalize the natives and the unwanted. Hence, Wolfe claims that settler-colonialism has genocidal tendencies, which are racially predetermined.

Honorable Pogroms in Palestine

Led by General Allenby, British troops entered Jerusalem in December 1917, ending Ottoman rule and shifting the faith and history of Jerusalem and Palestine evermore, as the transition from Ottoman to a British military rule led to a dramatic and radical change in the socio-political configurations of the country. According to historian Roberto Mazza's study of the Nabi Musa uprising that erupted in Jerusalem three years after the occupation of Jerusalem, the structural changes and restrictions that the British occupying forces implemented, alongside with their pro-Zionist policies, pushed Palestinian Arabs, who were calling for national rights, to revolt:

British policies, such as the aforementioned confessionalization of the Old City, which eventually ended with the division of the Old City into four communities – along with street naming, the demolition of the Ottoman clock tower, the regulation of buildings (colour and shape of the stones), the regulation of businesses inside/outside the Old City and the regulation of public transportation – catalysed the shift from communalism characterized by shared spaces to nationalism based on ethnic and religious identity characterized by the absence of shared space. (...) Nationalism as an ideology, already fostered by the Ottomans, played a major role; the war and British

support for Zionism through the Balfour Declaration also proved to be a strong impetus to nationalist mobilization.⁶⁹²

According to the report of the Palestine Royal Commission presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the United Kingdom Parliament in July 1937, the tide of Jewish immigrants to the Mandate was gathering momentum in the first quarter of the twentieth century, stimulated by the Balfour Declaration:

The result was that the Jewish population, which was reckoned at about 55,000 in 1918, had risen by March, 1925, to 108,000. This increase meant more than a difference in numbers: it meant a difference in character.⁶⁹³

Palestinians condemned Britain's pro-Zionist policies and demanded the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration. On 4 April 1920, Aref al-Aref (1892-1973), a Palestinian journalist, historian and politician spoke alongside prominent figures in the Palestinian nationalist movement, Haj Amin al-Husseini and Omar al-Saleh al-Barghouthi, at a public rally that was attended by hundreds of people on the first day of the Nabi Musa festival in Jerusalem. The rally soon led to violent clashes between Palestinians and Zionists, with a large number of dead and injured on both sides.⁶⁹⁴ The British authorities called for the arrest of those inciting violence in both camps and set up a trial.

The Palin Commission was the first British Commission of Inquiry on the question of Palestine. It was sent to Palestine in May 1920 by the British government to examine the reasons for the Jerusalem riots. The Commission had three members, Major General Sir Philip Palin, who presided, Brigadier General E. H. Wildblood, and Lieutenant Colonel C. Vaughan Edwards. It examined 152 witnesses in eight languages (English, French, Arabic, Hebrew, Yiddish, Jargon, Russian and Hindustani), making it a lengthy process. The Palin

⁶⁹² Roberto Mazza, "Transforming the holy city : from communal clashes to urban violence : the Nabi Musa riots in 1920," in *Urban violence in the Middle East: changing cityscapes in the transformation from empire to nation state*, edited by Ulrike Freitag, Nelida Fuccaro, Claudia Ghrawi, and Nora Lafi (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 186

⁶⁹³ C. 495. M. 336. 1937. VI, League of Nations, 30 November 1937, Report of the Palestine Royal Commission presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the United Kingdom Parliament in July 1937, 46.

⁶⁹⁴ Five Jews and four Palestinian Arabs had been killed (including a young Palestinian girl)

Report states that the Zionist Commission was legally represented while Arab Palestinians lacked interest and rarely attended the court. Though the British authorities labeled the event as a 'riot', which is a disturbance of public order associated with spontaneous eruptions of violence, the Palin Report noted that Jewish representatives persisted in describing the events as a "pogrom," and as a consequence,

This mission was subsequently enlarged by the addition of the words (received by cable dated 22nd April 1920 from General Headquarters) "and as to the extent and causes of *racial feelings* that at present exist in Palestine". In consequence of this enlargement of the scope of the Inquiry, the Court found themselves committed from a comparatively simple investigation into the circumstances of a local outbreak to a far-reaching investigation of racial upstirrings arising out of recent historical events in the Near East.⁶⁹⁵

By insisting on adding a racial element to the riots, Zionists wanted to transfer a racially loaded European history of anti-Semitism to Palestine, while the Palin report stated that "Whatever may be alleged against Turkish rule, one fact stands out quite clearly from the evidence. Up to a very recent date the three sects, Moslems, Christians and Jews lived together in a state of complete amity (...) No serious attack on the Jewish population is recorded since the time of Ibrahim Pasha in 1840."⁶⁹⁶

Weizmann understood the power dynamics of such transference on the British Authorities, which are very familiar with anti-Semitism and sympathetic to a narrative that would portray the native Palestinians as aggressors. In 1919, in his introduction to Nahum Sokolov's *History of Zionism*, Arthur Balfour, who provided British support for "a national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine had this to say: "If it (Zionism) succeeds, it will do a great spiritual and material work for the Jews, but not for them alone (...) It is a serious endeavor to mitigate the age-old miseries created for western civilization by the presence in

⁶⁹⁵ Foreign Office file FO/371/5121 – The Palin Report, 1920, British National Archive, 83 (Emphasis added)

⁶⁹⁶ Foreign Office file FO/371/5121 – The Palin Report, 5

its midst of a body which is too long regarded as alien and even hostile, but which it was equally unable to expel or absorb.”⁶⁹⁷

Balfour’s support for Zionism, like many of his time, was traced back to his Christian upbringing rooted in the Old Testament.⁶⁹⁸ It seems likely that the idea of the Jews as a special people and the ideal of restoring them to their ancient land was transmitted to him from an early age⁶⁹⁹ as the idea of the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine since the Protestant Reformation (i.e. the cleansing of European Jewry) was well grounded in English Protestant thought.⁷⁰⁰ This fear of the anti-Semites has propelled a certain Zionist political project that materialized in a shared understating based on a commonality of interests and goals between anti-Semites and the leaders of the Zionist movement, leading to a combining of efforts through which the initial fear of anti-Semites as enemies was flipped on its head through the understanding that anti-Semites were in fact the friends and allies of Zionists. Thus, the initial fear of gentile anti-Semites led to an alliance with them as allies, while the cultivated fear of the subsequent victims of Zionism subsumed the gap between morality and the violent consequences of settler-colonialism, with its structure, politics and governmentality of ongoing colonialism and the dispossession of indigenous lands and bodies.

Zionists implied that had the British Authorities changed course and allowed mass Jewish immigration to Palestine and the creation of a state for Jews, such pogroms would be less likely to happen. After the Nabi Musa riots, Chaim Weizmann congratulated Philip Kerr, Lloyd George’s secretary, “on the first pogrom under the British flag,”⁷⁰¹ as he believed “that

⁶⁹⁷ Nahum Sokolow, *History of Zionism, 1600-1918*; with an introduction by the Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour (London; New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919), xxxiv

⁶⁹⁸ Kenneth Young, *Arthur James Balfour; the happy life of the politician, prime minister, statesman, and philosopher, 1848-1930* (London, G. Bell, 1963), 257, 387 and Max Egremont, *Balfour: a life of Arthur James Balfour* (London: Collins, 1980), 296, 340

⁶⁹⁹ Egremont, *Balfour*, 18

⁷⁰⁰ Regina Sharif explains that Christian Zionism was shaped 300 years before the First Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897: “The tapestry of Zionism took shape during four centuries of European religious, social, intellectual and political history through the interweaving of many different strands of Western culture, but first and foremost religious ones.” Regina S. Sharif, In *Non-Jewish Zionism: its roots in Western History* (London: Zed Press, 1983), 9

⁷⁰¹ Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 259

if we had, say four hundred thousand Jews in Palestine instead of a miserable fifty thousand, such things would be less likely to happen.”⁷⁰² The Zionists in Palestine used the word “pogrom” as a reference to what was going to happen to Jews in Palestine if they did not advance in their colonial project and eradicated Palestinian resistance.

From 1897 until the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, the Zionist project sought to capitalize on the victimization and fear of the Jews of Europe due to the rise of racism in order to bring about their own settler-colonial nationalist project in Palestine. This traveling of the pogrom from a context of a majority East-European Christian society with a history of anti-Jewish violence that held state power attacking a minority of defenseless Jews versus the Palestinian context of colonized Palestinian Arabs without state power or a history of anti-Jewish violence attacking armed European Jewish colonists who were allied with the colonial state in stealing and taking over the Palestinians’ land and country is noteworthy.

I began this section with a focus on Zionism’s relationship with honor, as Zionist leaders over the years have not refrained from formulating and using a language that grasps and incorporates sentiment into the Zionist lexicon. Honor might be rooted in nationalism with modern states attempting to transform passions into interest in a cost-benefit approach, however, in the case of settler-colonial nationalism specifically, passions appear to be generated in abundance rather than subdued in the name of interest and sovereignty. It is therefore imperative to understand this relationship between the workings of the code of honor and the Zionist settler-colonial project, the conditions of its production on Palestinian land, its role in nationalist ideology, its relationship to identity formation and its incorporation of the notion of *displacement*: the oppressors of Jews in Europe are rendered equivalent to the victims of Jews in Palestine, in that they both cause fear and anxiety (i.e. the

⁷⁰² Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 256

Palestinian native becomes the anti-Semitic European), except that the latter has become an ally of Zionist Jews in the meantime.

Weizmann, Jabotinsky and Begin, the main leaders of the different Zionist organizations actively working on the colonization of Palestine during that period, were aware that the Nabi Musa riots were fueled by Arab Nationalism calling for an end to British rule and if successful, it would mean an end to the Zionist project and its goal of creating a state on Palestinian lands. Weizmann noted that:

There was something more to the pogrom than the primitive frenzy of its perpetrators. The instigators, those that had lashed the mobs to blind action, were more farsighted than their illiterate dupes; they knew that within a few weeks there would be held in San Remo, in northern Italy, the Conference of the Allied powers at which the fate of the dismembered Turkish empire would be considered; they knew that the Balfour declaration would then come up for inclusion in the disposition of Palestine; from being a statement of policy it would be converted – if Zionist hopes were realized – into the substance of an international agreement. And they hope by their demonstration of force to prevent this consummation.⁷⁰³

In order to counter the Palestinians' political struggle, Weizmann and others understood that by transposing the notion of pogrom to a different geography, where there is no historical precedent of anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic activity, they will be able to reshape the meaning of pogrom in Palestine and transform the victims of settler-colonialism into aggressors. It seems that it is crucial for the Zionist movement to keep this anachronism alive, to juxtapose the displaced fear from the anti-Semitic European into the newly colonized land as a fundamental part of its very existence. This anachronism brings together two incommensurable logics of power, which are solidified in order to glorify a past (yet still present) fear from the European anti-Semite while the Zionist project is transiting into a new geographical and political era that uses that same code of honor to oppress another people.

When the Kishnev pogrom took place in 1903, Weizmann, who noted that “the wave of indignation and despair which swept over the whole Jewish community, from one end of

⁷⁰³ Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 257

Russia to the other, was augmented by the complex feelings of humiliation and impotence,” reproached Russian Jews that “they had allowed themselves to be slaughtered like sheep, without offering general resistance.” This implies that Weizmann believed that Jews in the Diaspora were capable of carrying arms and defending themselves as he himself proceeded in organizing Jewish defense units:

I proceeded to organize self-defense groups in all the larger Jewish centers. Not long afterward, when a pogrom broke out in Homel, not far from Pinsk, the hooligans were suddenly confronted by a strongly organized Jewish Self-defense corps. Again the military interfered, and did its best to disarm Jews; but at least the self-defense had broken the first wave of the attack, which was not able to gather again its original momentum.⁷⁰⁴

But as a convinced Zionist in search of gentile honor, Weizmann understood that the only way to gain national Jewish honor and gentile recognition was in colonizing Palestine. He noted that at the Peace Conference of 1919, there were European and American Jewish delegations that were representing and calling for the national endeavors of the Jewish communities in Europe who were struggling for cultural minority rights. Weizmann remarked that “the whole fight for minority national rights seemed to me to be unreal,”⁷⁰⁵ as “for one who believed that the Jewish Homeland offered the only substantial and abiding answer to the Jewish problem, their faith in the ultimate restabilizing of European Jewry was a tragedy.”⁷⁰⁶

In *Story of My Life*, Jabotinsky emphasizes the shame he felt when the Kishnev pogrom occurred, though he claims that he has suppressed any feeling except a recognition of Jewish cowardice:

It is a strange thing: I do not remember the impression this event [Kishinev pogrom] made on me, the turning point in our whole life as a nation. In general it made no impression. I was already a Zionist before it happened; I had also thought about it before. Neither was the Jewish cowardice revealed in Kishinev a discovery for me, no more than for any Jew or Christian.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁴ Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 80

⁷⁰⁵ Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 308

⁷⁰⁶ Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 304

⁷⁰⁷ Vladimir Jabotinsky, *Story of my life* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2016), 66

As discussed in the previous chapters, the historic connections of honor and shame and their deployment in modern social practice and usage in nineteenth-century Western societies is at the core of this Zionist construction of the pogrom, as one that elicits shame in Europe and, in contrast, honor in Palestine. Honor and shame were essentially different sentiments and social attributes made about action (or inaction): one needs to be lacking in one to have the other. This would mean that both were felt on the same continuum, and as such shame is not so much the opposite of honor as its lack.

In 1911, Jabotinsky translated in Russian the poem 'In the City of Slaughter' by Hayim Nachman Bialik, the so-called Jewish national poet of Israel, which he wrote in tribute to the victims of the Kishinev pogrom. Bialik, a convinced Zionist, famously protested against Jewish passivity in the diaspora by rendering the victims of the Pogrom as lives without a cause that died in shame:

Your deaths are without reason; your lives are without cause.
What says the Shekinah? In the clouds it hides
In shame, in agony alone abides;
I, too, at night, will venture on the tombs,
Regard the dead and weigh their secret shame,
But never shed a tear, I swear it in My name.
For great is the anguish, great the shame on the brow

The narrative poem has often been interpreted as a call for Jewish political action. By shaming Jewish communities living in the Diaspora, Bialik demanded they take control of their own destiny and adopt a national consciousness that would honor them. As Svetlana Natkovich showed, Jabotinsky interpreted "In the City of Slaughter" as a lyrical crystallization of Zionist activism.⁷⁰⁸ Jabotinsky accompanied the poem by a long introductory essay, echoing the theme of shame so dominant in the poem:

Bialik threw 'The tale of the Pogrom' ['The City of Slaughter'] in the face of his dishonored brothers and revealed to them a feeling that they did not know what to

⁷⁰⁸ Svetlana Natkovich, *Amongst Radiant Clouds: The Literature of Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky in a Social Context* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2015, Hebrew).

name. The name was shame. More than a day of grief, it was a day of shame: the basic idea of this strike with a hammer is the form of the poem. (...) Kishinev's shame was the last shame. Homel happened in 1904; several hundred pogroms broke out across Russia in 1905: Jewish grief was repeated even more mercilessly than previously, but shame did not return.⁷⁰⁹

In order to transcend their shame in Europe, the Zionists in Palestine had to fight Palestinian anti-colonial resistance as “pogroms” in Palestine. This divergent equation was the basis for Jabotinsky's understanding of Jewish pride. Weizmann used the term pogrom when communicating with British generals Bols and Allenby about the tensions in Jerusalem in order to portray that Zionism had a sense of power that coexisted alongside a sense of fearful victimhood. He, however, flipped the equation: the sense of power was one meant against Palestinians, and not the European gentiles that caused them humiliation and impotence in Europe, and the sense of victimhood was also meant to perpetuate violence against Palestinians. By transposing the pogroms onto Palestinians, he was freeing European gentiles from any guilt they could feel regarding the abuse and oppression of Jews in Europe.

The only way this victimhood could be countered was by establishing military units that would share the same goal as the British occupying forces: eradicating native resistance. Jabotinsky called for a more aggressive approach towards local Arabs and military preparedness as a first step to sovereignty:

The significance of the Legion as a guardian of the peace in Palestine is quite a different matter. I have already said: as long as the five thousand kept guard over Palestine – even during a stormy period when they were on guard almost alone – there was peace. As soon as they disappeared, a series of pogroms broke out: Jerusalem, Jaffa, Petach Tikvah and again Jerusalem.⁷¹⁰

He was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment for his role in the Nabi Musa riots. Mention is made in the Palin report of the formation of the Haganah during the riots and its possession of arms:

⁷⁰⁹ Cited in Brian J. Horowitz, *Vladimir Jabotinsky's Russian years, 1900-1925* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2020), 113

⁷¹⁰ Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, 181

It seems scarcely credible that the fact that these men had been got together and were openly drilling at the back of Lemel School and on Mount Scopus and yet no word of it reached either the Governorate or the Administration until after the riots.

Jabotinsky formed an armed militia by claiming to fear for the safety of Jewish settlers in Palestine. Thus, Jewish victims of anti-Semitism in Europe were simultaneously the perpetrators of settler-colonialism and racism in Palestine.

The Zionists' nationalist project is one wherein racism and discrimination are to be perpetrated against the native Palestinian population; yet this violence elicits *fear* among Zionists of the response of those they colonize and displace and against whom they practice racism. I follow Corey Robin and others in treating fear as a political concept. According to Robin, *fear* should be understood as the product of institutional arrangements than as anomic anxiety.⁷¹¹ Hence, in tracking Zionist expressions of fear, there appears to be two fears in play. One is the fear of European anti-Semites who oppress Jews and victimize them, which has been neutralized by the alliance between anti-Semites and Jews that Zionism is the answer to the Jewish Question; and the other is a fear of the victims of Zionist settler-colonialism and racism, which could only be neutralized if settler-colonialism were reversed. Both function as sources of anxiety for the Zionists for very different reasons, and both seem to be instrumentalized for different purposes. However, once that fear is transposed to a different geography, it transforms into a quest for honor that seeks to solicit European gentile recognition. Fear of the gentile in Europe, becomes accommodative to gain gentile recognition and fear of the native becomes a call for violence against them. By 1948, the infrastructure of the Jewish State in Palestine was shaped out of the Zionist ideology where "the key interest, almost an obsession, was land."⁷¹² The creation of the state of Israel in May 1948 created a Jewish majority by destroying more than 500 Palestinian towns and ethnically

⁷¹¹ Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)

⁷¹² Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 94

cleansing 90 percent of the Palestinians from the territory occupied by Israel in 1948–49. As a result, over 780,000 Palestinians were driven out of their homeland in the parts of Palestine that became Israel.

Conclusion

In the first part of this dissertation, I set out to investigate how Christian French honor was constructed religiously, socially, politically and physically to exclude European Jews. In order to define themselves, their identity, their culture and even their religion, as Europeans and as Christians, French Christians insistently contrasted themselves to Jews, and preoccupied their minds with a system and a structure that attributed foreign inferiority to Judaism and Jewishness. For centuries, the ideas and ideologies that were developed and which centered around the dishonorability of Jews were part of a logic of representation and novelty, and of a structure that would define French Christianity. Out of Christianity, out of being a knight and out of dueling, comes a strong sense of Christian honor.

Honor is a multi-faceted and multi-level construct that includes the self (individual level), the family or other social unit (group level), and gender roles and norms (e.g., female chastity, male agency). Honor involves individual and group-based reputation for integrity, honesty, being true to one's principles and marking place by earning respect, not tolerating disrespect and insults, and protecting oneself and one's family, group or clan from losing face and reputational harm.⁷¹³ Honor became a guiding line for a specific social class, the aristocracy, which used it as a measurement of inclusion and exclusion. Male Christian honor involves potency, including strength, power, and agentive action, all based on toughness, strength, and power to protect oneself, one's property, and one's family from insults and threats. For honor to remain specifically Christian and specifically French and aristocratic, Jews had to lack it.

⁷¹³ Patricia M. Rodriguez Mosquera, Antony S.R. Manstead and Agneta H. Fischer, "The role of honour concerns in emotional reactions to offences," *Cognition and Emotion*, Volume 16, Issue 1 (2002): 143-163; Gary S. Gregg, *The Middle East: A Cultural Psychology*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005).

This dissertation has shown that the impact and influence of the history of Christian Zionism and anti-Semitism in France on the thought and political projects of Herzl and Nordau were considerable. Nordau was juggling complex moves to dispel the shame of his provincial Jewish antecedents, assimilate into a German identity, admire French culture and then reject assimilation by claiming an honorable Jewish identity. This identity quest is quite a familiar one from colonial situations, where the colonized are trapped in a structure of domination and dispossession. Though turning to anti-colonial theorist and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, best known for his analysis on colonialism, might seem out of context when speaking of Jews in Europe as different dynamics of punishment and violence were in place, Fanon does provide us with a strong analysis of how hegemony of the colonized is produced not only through colonial rule and violence, but can also be reproduced through what he calls “colonial subjects”: namely, imposing specific modes of colonial behavior, thought and desire that implicitly or explicitly demand of the colonized to reproduce those modes which are required for their continued dominance.

The colonial intellectual, which at all times, wants to elevate him or herself into new categories of language and cultural identity, gets trapped into a negation of one’s identity and culture. Fanon succinctly summarises that failing to construct an identity outside colonial hegemony would have serious psychological consequences on the colonized intellectual: “There will be serious psycho-affective injuries and the result will be individuals without an anchor, without a horizon, colorless, stateless, rootless.”⁷¹⁴ In some ways, it seems that Zionists perceived themselves as colonized subjects in Europe, who ought to seek freedom and honor, because they had failed to construct an identity independent of European Christian French hegemony.

⁷¹⁴ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 155

What is intriguing about Nordau's Zionism is that he wanted to send the ghetto Jews out of Europe and ask assimilated Jews to claim Jewish nationalism. But what would be their political identity in the various European nations? Given their being thinly spread, they could never be accepted except as minorities. This was, I suppose, an unresolved question in early Zionism.

Settler-Colonialism as a Sentimental Endeavor

My conceptualization of settler-colonialism as a structure of domination predicated on the dispossession of Arab Palestinian lands and political authority drew significantly from the theoretical resources of Patrick Wolfe and scholars of Palestine studies. Settler-colonialism seems to have provided Jewish Zionists with an answer as to how to attain honor and power in an independent state. Envy was at the core of the Jewish Zionist project; however, Zionists were envious of gentile honor and colonization was part of the bigger project of attaining it. Envy, though an emotion, investigates economic and class possibilities for the colonized subject, as Fanon observed, “The colonised man is an envious man.” He eyes what the masters possess and understands that rejection of colonial hegemony does not rule out internalization, appropriation and imitation of the colonial masters' ways of ruling and of life, an attitude that sometimes brings new forms of dependence.

Freudianism is part of a large body of theory founded on envy. In fact, envy is central in the work of Sigmund Freud, starting from the Oedipus complex to “penis envy” and sibling rivalry. Envy seems to be a chief emotion in Freud’s psychic economy as it is also at the heart of sublimation: “The artist gives up power, money, and the love of beautiful women for his art, through which he hopes to win power, money and the love of beautiful women.” One pretends to want something when one secretly envies another: Zionists seemed to have given up on assimilation and Europe altogether for being considered dishonorable, while

secretly, they were seeking a different venue, or a geographical possibility, for them to assimilate and become European and honorable.

Zionists defined themselves as the bearers of a redefined social and colonial morality. But to suggest that they fashioned colonial racism out of a whole cloth is to miss the political chronology within which their project arose. Nordau considered the isolated assaults and humiliations against the dignity of Jewish individuals in diverse European communities as an assault on the dignity of all Jews collectively. He used Christian notions to forge a narrative of a Jewish clan with national pride by setting up distinct hierarchies of power and grids of inclusion and exclusion that privileged Zionists over Diaspora Jews. Though Nordau envisioned the regeneration of oppressed nations and classes, his Zionism duplicated the Western hierarchies of political, racial and socioeconomic power inherent in notions of Christian honor. This approach was used to produce new Jewish subjectivities, and through them, a new Jewish collective. The likes of Nordau and Spire, who called for a mass migration to Palestine based on a metaphorical bond between the Jewish people and their ancient land, refrained from doing so themselves, as only the backward, primitive Jews needed physical and mental regeneration in Palestine.

Colonial violence was at the core of the Zionist project, as Jewish Zionists believed that as long as they did not gain full military control of the entire territory of Palestine where they could proclaim a state of their own, they would remain *Schutzjuden*, 'Court Jews' in Palestine. To elevate themselves into the realm of gentile honor, they had to follow a formula: crush native resistance to gain Gentile recognition and transform themselves into a new race and nation. Colonial Zionist policies in Palestine therefore stipulated from the onset of the project new codes of conduct that emphasized a more segregated use of space.

This dissertation analyzed the discursive history of the notion of Jewish Zionist honor, beginning with the adoption by Zionist Jews of the prevalent European notions of aristocratic and Christian honor, conceding that the idea of the dishonorable Jew was the basis for anti-Semitic contempt, and finally turning around the same idea into that of the honorable and muscular Jew colonizing Palestine and regarding dishonorable Arab Palestinians as deserving the same contempt accorded European Jews by the anti-Semites, only to gain gentile recognition.

In writing this dissertation I also set out to problematize the assumption that the colonial relationship between Palestinians and the Jewish Zionist settlers in Palestine can be reconciled via a liberal politics of recognition and two separate states without tackling the foundational relationship of the Zionist settler-colonial project with gentile honor. Consistent with Western concepts of land as a resource available for human exploitation, Locke's vast wilderness awaiting the improvements of human labor, Jewish settlers, like other European settlers before them, were always after land. In contrast, for Indigenous peoples, Glen Coulthard, who studied the settler-colonial Canadian setting, maintains that land provides "an ontological framework for understanding relationships,"⁷¹⁵ as he argues that land possesses three interrelated meanings: "land as resource central to our material survival; land-as-identity, as constitutive of who we are as a people; and land-as-relationship, as guiding relationships between humans, non-human animals, and the environment."⁷¹⁶

The question that needs to be asked in today's context in Palestine, is what are we to make of a Zionist settler-colonial state which has a structure of domination predicated on dispossession, where violence against the natives still constitutes the regulative norm governing this process of colonial dispossession; as its aim is not only to secure more land

⁷¹⁵ Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 62

⁷¹⁶ Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 60

with less natives, but to gain recognition as a gentile power capable of settler-colonialism. This settler-colonial project will generate violence as long as the regenerated Jews on their ‘ancestral’ land receive gentile recognition of their capacity to inflict colonial violence and are worthy of gentile honor.

Recognition is about the political as much as the social. It is a concept that demands amendments and yet it is embedded in power relations and domination. The concept of honor enables a more complex recognition and theorization of the nature and forms of violence and domination. The process of recognition in Palestine is twofold and embedded in colonial violence. On the one hand, there is the Jewish Zionist need for gentile recognition, which is still immersed in European notions and seeks to identify itself as part of the wider global European project of domination. On the other hand, there is the entire dynamic of a settler-colonial state in the twenty-first century which sets up a dialogue of recognition with the native population in return for security and more land. As Coulthard argues, recognition implements a colonial form of domination that was always first implemented by violence; while state violence is no longer the ‘regulative norm,’ the settler policy remains extinguishment.⁷¹⁷ Thus the dispossession of land remains the goal of settler-colonialism with this same land being at the center of Indigenous place-based practices, both of cultural forms and of political and economic self-determination. Indigenous struggles are based on what he calls ‘grounded normativity’; they are best understood as struggles oriented around the question of land—struggles not only for land, “but also deeply informed by what the land as a mode of reciprocal relationship...ought to teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and our surroundings in a respectful, non-dominating and nonexploitative way.”⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁷ Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 15

⁷¹⁸ Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 60

This brings us to the next main argument of this dissertation: the narrative of honor is part of the engineering modus of settler-colonialism and as such, it does not allow for any form of cultural, political and social co-existence with the native population. Had Jewish Zionists ‘settled’ in Palestine as migrants and refugees and not as ‘settlers’, they would have never been able to regenerate as *new Jews*, given that violence is a crucial component of honor. By using a narrative of honor and coupling it to a Jewish tradition of longing to return to the ancient homeland, Zionism was able to forge a path for a distinctive form of Jewish nationalism. The Zionist refashioned Jewish past and history to propose a new political agenda that would provide an ideological framework for legitimizing and justifying its future violent actions. Honor provided Zionism with a redemptive opportunity: it allowed to fashion settler-colonialism as a sentimental endeavor.

In the celebration of Zionist honor and its social structures, Jewish Zionists emphasized the resemblance of their project to the dominant European ideals, which served as a basis for their political self-definition, including the internalization of anti-Semitic tropes. However, all along this history of Zionist violence, there is also the history and story of the assimilated Jews who did not accept this Zionist claim. There is also the story of the assimilated French Jews, the likes of Armand Mayer, who did not accept this Zionist claim. Despite anti-Semitism, French Jewry was seeking and found a way to remain Jewish and safeguard that heritage while endorsing their French nationality. The Bundist cultural nationalists of the Russian Empire for fighting for that same goal. In this sense, this dissertation has also traced the discursive history of anti-Zionism among European Jews, who remain a significant body of opinion even today among European and American Jews. Their resistance to the Zionist project debunks the myth of Zionist history and help challenge the primacy of Zionist collective memory as produced and reproduced by Zionist historiography.

The most dangerous part of honor remains that Zionism has placed Jews outside the realm of gentile honor, both in Europe and in Israel. What Jewish Zionists have done, is that they have re-written the present of Jews and has deprived them of their past by insisting on representing world Jewry. Judaism, being highjacked by Zionism, will gradually no longer be seen as Europe's unforgivable crime of genocide but will be marked by the persistent and intentional violent dismemberment and elimination of Palestinian lands and bodies, inflicted by Zionists. The Zionist quest of gentile honor in Palestine has become a guided act of faith and principle of Zionist ideology, which can only turn ever more destructive in its perpetual quest for gentile recognition.

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