

International Research Network

First Workshop, **May 30, 2013, 15:45 – 19:00**

Maastricht University,
Grote Gracht 80-82, the Spiegelzaal

Gender, Sexual Nationalism, Antisemitism and Orientalism in European Identity Discourses

Taking our lead from new theoretical perspectives on “sexual nationalism,” neo-Orientalism and contemporary body politics, this workshop will start with a discussion of current debates about the comparability of Antisemitism and “Islamophobia.” Secondly, it will concentrate on historical constructions of Jewish identity from the perspective of colonialism and Orientalism. How did the stereotypes of the external and the internal Other intertwine? What role did/do gender and processes of sexualization and ‘aesthetic formations’ play therein? The first workshop aims at a state-of-the-art overview of gender and postcolonial studies approaches to intersections of new and old Orientalism, pre-Shoa Antisemitism, and the ambivalent trope of an ‘inner Orient,’ as can be seen, for example, in the figure of the “beautiful Jewess.”

Program & Schedule Public Part

Thursday, May 30, 2013

16:00- 16:30 **Ulrike Brunotte** (Maastricht) *Welcome and Introduction*

Session A, Chair: Ulrike Brunotte, Respondent: Jay Geller

16:30-17:00 **Juliane Wetzel** (Berlin): *Towards a comparability of Antisemitism and Islamophobia*

17:00-17:10 Q&A

17:10-17:40 **Achim Rohde** (Marburg): *Inner Orient: Antisemitism and the (Self-) Orientalization of the (German) Jews*

17:40-17:50 Q&A

17:50-18:00 **Break**

18:00-18:30 **Axel Stähler** (Canterbury, UK): *Constructions of Jewish Identity and the Spectre of Colonialism*

18:30-18:40 Q&A

18:40 -19:00 Respondent’s comments, open discussion

Registration: please send an e-mail to **Ulrike Brunotte**, u.brunotte@maastrichtuniversity.nl.



Abstracts of the Program

Thursday, May 30, 2013, the Spiegelzaal

Juliane Wetzel (Berlin): Towards a comparability of Antisemitism and Islamophobia

The comparison of structural similarities and differences of stereotypes, resentments and often sexualized phantasies towards minorities is the fundamental basis of research on prejudices against ethnical or religious groups, which are culturally seen as "the others" and therefore excluded from or stigmatized by the major society. In recent years, public and media debates have been primarily sparked by a comparison of Antisemitism and Islamophobia. Based on the findings of research on Antisemitism, dedicated to Europe's oldest and most enduring prejudice and racism, the paper will try to illuminate a number of similar patterns, phantasmatic and often body-focused tropes which earmarked Antisemitism in the 19. century and are the potential basis of current Islamophobic affects and discourses. The paper will give an overview of current European research, present the findings of different researchers and try to approach the comparability of Antisemitism and Islamophobia in various European countries.

Achim Rohde (Marburg): Inner Orient: Antisemitism and the (Self-)Orientalization of the (German) Jews

This paper looks at German-Jewish history between the 18th and the early 20th centuries. It focuses on public debates concerning the emancipation and integration of the Jewish minority into German society and on the development of both Christian German and Jewish German self-perceptions. At the same time, this study deals with aspects of the history of German Oriental Studies as an academic discipline, and it explores the *longue durée* of the discursive othering of Jews as Orientals, including the linking of Judaism and Islam in Christian thought. Furthermore, the paper demonstrates the gender dimension inherent in this particular and often ignored facet of Orientalism.

Axel Stähler (Canterbury, UK): Constructions of Jewish Identity and the Spectre of Colonialism

Early Zionist discourse was ripe with constructions of a new Jewish identity. Discussing responses to the so-called Uganda plan of 1903–5 and notions of Jewish colonisation in Africa and elsewhere, the paper investigates demarcations of Jewishness from, and identifications with, 'blackness' in the early twentieth-century German Zionist press and literature and their impact on the Zionist imaginary *vis-à-vis* the colonial paradigm. Particular attention is given to Max Jungmann's 'Briefe aus Neu-Neuland', published in the satiric journal *Schlemiel* between 1903–7. It is argued that with his fictitious account of the Zionist settlement of East Africa (which historically never happened) and with the creation of the black African Mbwapwa Jumbo and his conversion to Judaism Jungmann articulates an intricate and critical response to colonial aspirations, Jewish or otherwise, and formulates a scathing but highly perceptive commentary on the convergence of Zionist, racial, and colonial discourses.

Introducing the Speakers

Ulrike Brunotte (Maastricht) joined the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the *Center for Gender and Diversity* of Maastricht University as Associate Professor in January 2010. In 2008 she became adjunct Professor at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She studies the intersection of gender, religion and race in colonial discourses: the role of masculinity, race/Antisemitism and homosexuality in German nation-building processes. Secondly, the Puritan colonial construction of Judaism, its Self-perception as *New Israel* and the intersection of religion, gender and proto-racism in colonial New-England-discourses. Her last research project focuses on the history of (religious) knowledge, gender and performativity in the work of Jane E. Harrison. Her publications include: *Das Wissen der Dämonen. Gender, Performativität und materielle Kultur im Werk Jane E. Harrisons*, Ergon Verlag, Würzburg März 2013; *Masculinities and Modernity* (Hg. With Rainer Herrn) *Männlichkeiten und Moderne. Geschlecht in Wissensdiskursen um 1900*, transcript Bielefeld, 2008; *Zwischen Eros und Krieg. Männerbund und Ritual in der Moderne*, Wagenbach Verlag, Berlin 2004; *Puritanismus und Pioniergeist. Zur Faszination der Wildnis im frühen Neu-England*, RGVV, De Gruyter, Berlin /New York 2000. *„Holy War“ and Gender. „Gotteskrieg“ und Geschlecht. Gewaltdiskurse in modernen Religionen*. Hg. together mit Christina von Braun/GabrieleJähnert, Gabriele Dietze u.a., Lit- Berlin 2006.

Jay Geller (USA, Nashville) is Associate Professor of Modern Jewish Culture at Vanderbilt University. He is the author of *On Freud's Jewish Body: Mitigating Circumcisions* (Fordham University Press, 2007) and *The Other Jewish Question: Identifying the Jew and Making Sense of Modernity* (Fordham, 2011). His workshop presentation is part of his current research project. Tentatively entitled "Pictures at an Exhibition: (Un)Natural Histories of the Jews," it seeks to answer the musical question: "Given the long history of the deployment of animal figures to debase and dehumanize Jews (and others), what's going on when Jewish-identified Germanophone individuals (e.g., Heine, Kafka, Freud) write animal stories?" Combining training in History of Religions and discourse analysis with a cultural studies agenda (in Stephen Greenblatt's terms: "to illuminate the conditions of [the text, image, object] making, to disclose the history of [its] appropriation and the circumstances in which [it] come[s] to be displayed"), his work explores the identifications— and their contestation—by which the post-1750 "West" (chiefly Germanophone) has engaged its persisting gendered, sexed, raced, and ethno-religious proximate others.

Achim Rohde (Marburg) is a Middle East historian. He studied in Hamburg, Birzeit, and Tel Aviv and received a PhD in Islamic Studies from the Free University, Berlin. Rohde is currently coordinating the research-network "Re-Configurations" at the Philipps-University Marburg (<http://www.uni-marburg.de/cnms/forschung/re-konfigurationen>). He is the author of *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq. Facing Dictatorship* (London/New York: Routledge 2010). His research interests also include the history of Oriental Studies in Germany.

Axel Stähler (Canterbury, UK) is Senior Lecturer in Comparative Literature in the School of European Culture and Languages at the University of Kent, Canterbury. His particular research interests are in intermediality and the literary construction of identities. He has published widely on Jewish writers from the Anglophone and German-speaking diasporas and from Israel as well as on fundamentalism and literature, the eighteenth-century novel and early modern festival culture. Among his most recent publications are a monograph on literary constructions of Jewish postcoloniality, *Literarische Konstruktionen jüdischer Postkolonialität* (2009), and edited collections of articles on *Anglophone Jewish Literature* (2007) and on *Writing Fundamentalism* (with Klaus Stierstorfer, 2009). He is currently editing a special issue of *Symbolism* on Jewish magical realism (2013); a monograph on *Modernism and Fundamentalism* and *The Edinburgh Companion to Modern Anglophone Jewish Fiction* (with David Brauner) are forthcoming. His current research concentrates on the convergence of Zionist, racial, and colonial discourses in early twentieth-century German-Jewish literature and culture.

Juliane Wetzel (Berlin) is an historian; she received her PHD at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich in 1986. From 1986–1991, she has been a researcher at the Institute for Contemporary History, Munich. Since 1991, Wetzel is senior researcher and academic staff member of the Center for Research on Antisemitism, Technical University Berlin. She is member of the German delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA; former ITF) and chaired its Academic Working Group for four years. She is also a member of the Board of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute. As member and co-ordinator of the German Parliament's (Bundestag) Expert Board on Combating Antisemitism she has together with the other experts published a 200-pages report on today's Antisemitism in Germany. Wetzel has published various books and numerous articles on contemporary Antisemitism including anti-Jewish hate crime on the Web. Other research interests include Jewish persecution and emigration during the National Socialist era, solidarity and help for Jews in Italy during Nazi occupation, Antisemitism in Italy since the 1930s, and Jewish displaced persons in Germany after World War II.