

The Politics of Masculinity in the (Homo-)Sexual Discourse (1880 to 1920)

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'Oh ye men, be men! Then we will again have a manly, even a humane culture!'
Eduard von Mayer (1903)

That the state was an exclusively masculine domain was a common topos in the discursive system of the long nineteenth century. It was part of the bourgeois order of the sexes to associate women with the private domestic sphere and men with the public sphere. In the Wilhelmine empire, a strong, militarily powerful state was a sign of healthy and Germanic masculinity. By contrast, national degeneration was connected with sexually abnormal, racially 'deviant', and 'feminized' men. So this division was tied not only to an unequal division of political and social privileges and rights between men and women, but also to a hierarchization of men and masculinities. The establishment or preservation of social hierarchies in the modernizing society of the Kaiserreich was no longer legitimized primarily through caste and corporate privileges, but rather through newly 'discovered' biological–sexual differences. In the wake of the rise of the natural sciences, sexuality became a dominant means of explaining social behaviour. With the aid of this concept, contemporary scientists and anthropologists not only attempted to decode the personality of the individual, but also to thoroughly work out his biologically based, gender-coded ability to forge a bond with family and the collective. The sexual–biological attachment to others functioned increasingly as the measure of social worth and social integration, as this article shows using the example of the discourse of masculinity. And alternately, the attachment of the individual to society, his productivity and utility, was increasingly tied to the nature of his sexuality.

The unusually broad debate in the German Empire regarding male homosexuality can be read, therefore, as an instance of the fundamental 'biologization' of the political. That is to say, the power conflict between different masculinities and between the sexes not only became a subject of parliamentary debates, but was also carried out in the field of medicine and the new sexual

sciences. The broad discussion of male homosexuality also posed, of course, the question of 'normal' masculinity.¹ This subject was particularly controversial because it touched upon the bases of patriarchal society and raised questions regarding socially recognized forms of masculinity.

This essay uses the example of the masculinist discourse of the homosexual emancipation movement to examine these connections between sexuality and social order. The turn of the century saw the emergence of qualitatively new discourses of masculinity and virility, inspired by complaints about the erosion of traditional gender roles and the concomitant levelling of gender characteristics. The hitherto unquestioned characteristics of the generic subject were fundamentally challenged and in need of explicit redefinition. Since the late eighteenth century, only women had been considered gendered beings (especially in a middle-class context); the generic, autonomous individual had been implicitly thought of as male.² As the focus of academic discourse, masculinity was only thematized when it deviated from middle-class norms, in conceptualizations of crime, masturbation, perversion, or homo-sexuality.³ As a result, the discursive construction of sexuality in the nineteenth century initially produced definitions of deviant, sick, or perverse forms of masculinity, with 'healthy' masculinity as a constant, implicit field of reference.⁴ At the end of the nineteenth century, however, the increasing public presence of women led to a discursive questioning of 'normal' masculinity.

An important part of that discussion was the attempt of men marked as deviant to write themselves into the discourse of hegemonic masculinity in new ways. The 'masculinist'⁵ tradition is one example of such an attempt to describe homosexual men as virile men, who could be considered particularly useful in a national context. This attempted self-integration into the discourse of hegemonic masculinity was an expression of resistance to widespread discrimination; but it was also one that maintained and supported the very structures of hegemonic masculinity on which such discrimination was founded.

¹ See Jürgen Link, *Versuch über den Normalismus. Wie Normalität produziert wird* (Opladen, 1996), pp. 51–53, 185–312; I am using Link's definition of 'normality' here.

² Sabine Mehlmann, 'Das vergeschlechtlichte Individuum—Thesen zur historischen Genese des Konzepts von männlicher Geschlechtsidentität', in Hannelore Bublitz (ed.), *Das Geschlecht der Moderne. Genealogie und Archäologie der Geschlechterdifferenz* (Frankfurt/Main, 1998), pp. 95–118, esp. p. 97.

³ Andrea Dorothea Bührmann, 'Die gesellschaftlichen Konsequenzen der Wissensproduktion. Zum Verhältnis von (Sexual-)Wissenschaften und gesellschaftlichen Normalisierungsmechanismen', in Ursula Ferdinand, Andreas Pretzel, and Andreas Seeck (eds), *Verqueere Wissenschaft? Zum Verhältnis von Sexualwissenschaft und Sexualreformbewegung in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Münster, 1998), pp. 213–28, esp. p. 222.

⁴ Michel Foucault, *Sexualität und Wahrheit*, vol. 1: *Der Wille zum Wissen* (Frankfurt/Main, 1976), pp. 58, 123, 126–28; Mehlmann, 'Das vergeschlechtlichte Individuum', p. 96.

⁵ I am adopting American literary critic Andrew Hewitt's usage of the term 'masculinist'. Andrew Hewitt, 'Die Philosophie des Maskulinismus', *Zeitschrift für Germanistik, Neue Folge*, 9 (1999), pp. 36–56, esp. pp. 37–38.

This essay will discuss, in chronological sequence, the ideas of three masculinist thinkers: Gustav Jaeger, Benedict Friedlaender, and Hans Blüher. It will focus especially on the significant shifts and ruptures in strategies for legitimizing male-male relationships, as well as historically variable strategies of differentiation *vis-à-vis* women and Jews.

These men were part of a distinctive masculinist tradition that has not been the subject of sufficient scholarly attention. Most works on the homosexual rights movement in Germany have focused on the work of Magnus Hirschfeld and his associates in the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee (*Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee* or WHK), which was founded in Berlin in 1897 largely in order to agitate for the repeal of §175 of the criminal code, which punished homosexual acts between men. Most men in the WHK supported the so-called ‘third sex’ theory, which held that some people had male bodies but female souls. While this position was dominant within the broader homosexual rights movement, from the outset a number of men articulated a different vision and program, which it is useful to refer to as masculinism. Gustav Jaeger’s research on male homosexuality helped to lay the groundwork for this masculinist position in the 1880s; Friedlaender’s publications gave it a more coherent theory after the turn of the century; but it was Blüher’s work that popularized it during and after World War I.⁶

I: Gustav Jaeger—A Male Affair: ‘Normally Sexual’ or ‘Monosexual’?

Confronted with medical discourses that constructed the homosexual male as useless, sick, and effeminate, in the 1880s the physician and naturalist Gustav

⁶ On the history of the homosexual rights movement in general and these three men in particular see James D. Steakley, ‘Iconography of a scandal. Political cartoons and the Eulenburg affair in Wilhelmine Germany’, in Martin Duberman *et al.* (eds), *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (London, 1991), pp. 233–63; Marita Keilson-Lauritz, *Die Geschichte der eigenen Geschichte. Literatur und Literaturkritik in den Anfängen der Schwulenbewegung am Beispiel des Jahrbuchs für sexuelle Zwischenstufen und der Zeitschrift Der Eigene* (Berlin, 1997), esp. pp. 23–166; Claudia Bruns, *Die Politik des Eros. Der Männerbund als Wissens-, Macht- und Subjektstrategie vom Kaiserreich zum Nationalsozialismus* (Diss. Hamburg, 2004); Heinrich Weinreich, *Duftstoff-Theorie. Gustav Jaeger (1832–1917). Vom Biologen zum ‘Seelenriecher’* (Stuttgart, 1993); Ulrike Brunotte, *Zwischen Eros und Krieg. Männerbund und Ritual in der Moderne* (Berlin, 2004); Ulfried Geuter, *Homosexualität in der deutschen Jugendbewegung. Jungenfreundschaft und Sexualität im Diskurs von Jugendbewegung, Psychoanalyse und Jugendpsychologie am Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt/Main, 1994); Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller, ‘Hans Blühers Männerwelten. Fragmente, Widersprüche, Perspektiven’, *Invertito, Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Homosexualitäten*, 2 (2000), pp. 58–84; Andrew Hewitt, *Political Inversions. Homosexuality, Fascism, & the Modernist Imaginary* (Stanford, 1996); Harry Oosterhuis (ed.), *Homosexuality and Male Bonding in Pre-Nazi Germany. The Youth Movement, the Gay Movement, and Male Bonding Before Hitler’s Rise. Original Transcripts from Der Eigene, the First Gay Journal in the World* (New York and London, 1991).

Jaeger (1832–1917) attempted to construct a countervailing model of the sexual health and exceptional virility of the ‘deviant’ male.⁷ For Jaeger, the new standard of healthy sexuality was desire itself, not the ‘right’ (heterosexual) choice of object. He considered any desire healthy that was directed toward another person rather than the self, arguing that all sexual attraction was founded on physiological interactions between the ‘soul substances’ of different individuals. What made a person’s sexual desire normal was not its procreative and familial function, but its function in forging a bond to another human being, and through them to society at large:

The normal *eo ipso*, but also every homosexual person needs another being to become erect and to satisfy their desire ... And this main precondition, this twosomeness, forces them to be interested in another being, causes their egoism to recede. And it is the strong tie, which connects even homosexuals to other members of the human community. Solely the monosexual being needs no one else on earth, merely his own self.⁸

Emphasizing the fundamentally social nature of every object-oriented sexual connection, then, Jaeger integrated homosexuality into the normal—a step which in turn created new but no less categorical divisions between normal and abnormal. In Jaeger’s analysis, the ‘monosexual’—someone who pursued his sexual gratification alone and without an outer-directed desire—appeared as the conceptual counterpart to the normal sexual. Not homosexual bonds but sexual loneliness, social disconnection and disintegration signified moral and societal danger and perversion. Here, the masculinity of the monosexual was denied. Jaeger also, however, considered the monosexual a danger to the state, particularly if he held high political position.⁹ According to the discursive connection developed in the nineteenth century between masculinity, (sexual) freedom of will, and civil rights, all those lacking a virile masculinity also lacked any attachment to the national. In contrast to the socially useless monosexual dangerous to society, then, for Jaeger the homosexual was capable of special cultural and social achievements precisely because of his (physiologically founded) connection to other men.

In fact, in Jaeger’s definition, homosexual men not only met the masculine norm, but even surpassed it:

Among the homosexuals, a most curious kind of men will be found, which I call the *supervirile* ones. They are ... superior to man as such, just as the normally inclined man is superior to the female ... Because he lives exclusively in the male community, and because men submit to

⁷ Gustav Jaeger, *Lehrbuch der allgemeinen Zoologie. Ein Leitfaden für Vorträge und zum Selbststudium, III. Abtheilung: Psychologie. Zugleich: Die Entdeckung der Seele, 2. Aufl. enthaltend A) Gesammelte ältere Aufsätze, B) Neuere Beweise und Aufschlüsse* (Leipzig, 1880), p. 264.

⁸ Gustav Jaeger, *Lehrbuch der allgemeinen Zoologie. Ein Leitfaden für Vorträge und zum Selbststudium, III. Abtheilung: Psychologie. Zugleich: Die Entdeckung der Seele, 3., stark vermehrte Aufl., Bd. 1* (Leipzig, 1884), p. 263.

⁹ Jaeger, *Lehrbuch der allgemeinen Zoologie* (1880), p. 266.

him, *supervirile man frequently ascends to the highest levels of intellectual development, social standing and male capacity ...*¹⁰

The ‘ladies man’ (*Weiberheld*), Jaeger argued, was an inferior man; a ‘man’s man’ or ‘hero among men’ (*Männerheld*) was a superior one. Confronted with a *Männerheld*, the normal man allegedly behaved like a woman, accepting a passive and subordinate position. Thus, implicitly evoking the Greek tradition of male-male love (a knowledge he could assume among his contemporaries), Jaeger postulated the male homosexual’s special cultural contribution.

Because of his sexual connection with others and his ability to contribute to the good of the nation, the homosexual male was not only sexually and socially normal; he had, in fact, exceptional social potential.

II: Benedict Friedlaender—Renaissance of Men with a Bisexual Dual Function in Nation State and Family

In the early 1900s, inspired by Gustav Jaeger’s theories, Benedict Friedlaender (1866–1908) proposed an expanded theory of ‘physiological friendship’. Friedlaender studied mathematics, physics, botany, and physiology, wrote his doctoral dissertation in zoology, and was influenced by the British biologist Charles Darwin, the zoologist and philosopher of nature Ernst Haeckel, and later the positivist philosopher and anti-Semite Eugen Dühring.¹¹ Friedlaender developed Jaeger’s strategies of normalizing homosexuality further, by postulating friendship among men as a normal drive. While conceding that sexual attraction and repulsion were—as Jaeger had held—physiologically based in ‘chemotactical phenomena’,¹² Friedlaender focused on the social-scientific rather than the natural-scientific, arguing that ‘the “social question” is tightly connected, if not overlapping, with the question of eros’.¹³ Rather than assuming an essential difference between homosexual and heterosexual men, Friedlaender integrated homosocial forms of male-male friendship into his definition of normal sexuality. Friendship between men, he held, was already a kind of ‘love between like sexes’, though of a refined variety.¹⁴ The physical–sensory basis of friendship could not be separated from that of sexuality. On the basis of this insight, Friedlaender, claiming that he was ‘the first among the post-classical authors to break with the myth that only a minute minority, the so-called “third sex”, or “Urnige” or whatever the artificial term might be, could have an

¹⁰ Jaeger, *Lehrbuch der allgemeinen Zoologie* (1880), pp. 265–66.

¹¹ Benedict Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios. Die physiologische Freundschaft, ein normaler Grundtrieb des Menschen und eine Frage der männlichen Gesellungsfreiheit. In naturwissenschaftlicher, naturrechtlicher, kulturgeschichtlicher und sittenkritischer Beleuchtung*, 1904 (Berlin, ²1908), p. 52. Keilson-Lauritz, *Die Geschichte der eigenen Geschichte*, pp. 34–36 and p. 403.

¹² Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, pp. 212 and 241.

¹³ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, p. 311.

¹⁴ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, pp. 106 and 128.

interest in this question', argued that in fact a large proportion of men, perhaps even the majority, were implicated.¹⁵

It is therefore almost certain that there are more bisexuals existing than pure homosexuals; and it is even a quite probable assumption that most men are more or less bisexual ... and that it is only the moral discrimination against same-sex love that leads the majority either to suppress their desires ... or to hide them completely.¹⁶

In Friedlaender's view, this expanded masculinity had profound political implications, because of the potential role of liberated male sexual desire in shaping the nation state and family.¹⁷ The 'Renaissance of Eros Uranios'—the title of Friedlaender's book—would, he held, empower men better to shoulder their responsibility both for biological reproduction and for the nation and patriotic-national duties. In his view, however, men's familial duties were less important than their contributions to the nation. With this argument, Friedlaender countered the assumption of the still-young racial hygienist discourse holding that homosexuals were damaging to the 'life process of the race' because they entirely 'lacked the drive to preserve the species.'¹⁸

According to Andrew Hewitt, Friedlaender's theory of a continuity between homo- and heterosexuality led to the assumption that a fixed *identity* could no longer be considered the basis of desire.¹⁹ This is only partially true, however. Homo- and heterosexual identities were partially dissolved and fused, but the necessity of a *male* identity was still taken for granted. In Friedlaender's theory, specifically homosexual identity politics was superseded by *male* identity politics. There is no mention at all of a comparable continuum of same-sex desire in regard to women. Women fulfilled here the role of lack, of pure negation of maleness and masculinity.²⁰

In comparison to Jaeger's 1880s argument, Friedlaender in fact distinguished his 'new man'—created in an erotic renaissance—not from other men, but from an overly strong female influence and from Christian (female-influenced) priests. His continuum from hetero- to homoerotic masculinity did not locate the new adversary in other men, but in the opposite sex, which was made responsible for the split among men, with 'general, historically and

¹⁵ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, p. xiii.

¹⁶ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, p. 83.

¹⁷ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, p. 176.

¹⁸ See the controversy between the racial hygienist Ernst Rüdin and Friedlaender: Ernst Rüdin, 'Zur Rolle der Homosexuellen im Lebensprozess der Rasse', in *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie*, 1 (1904), pp. 99–109; see also Friedlaender's response: 'Bemerkungen zu einem Artikel des Herrn Dr. Rüdin über die Rolle der Homosexuellen im Lebensprozeß der Rasse', in *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie*, 1 (1904), pp. 219–25; Ernst Rüdin, 'Erwiderung auf vorstehenden Artikel Benedict Friedlaenders', in *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie*, 1 (1904), pp. 226–28.

¹⁹ Hewitt, 'Die Philosophie des Maskulinismus', p. 44.

²⁰ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, p. 265.

geographically unlimited validity.²¹ The construction of a broader, homo-social male community was thus achieved through the radical negation of women and femaleness.

Friedlaender's theory can be understood as a response to contemporary social change. Around the turn of the century, women challenged hegemonic masculinity with unprecedented success: they gained access to institutions of higher education, founded women's clubs and societies, visibly entered the professions, and voiced emancipatory demands.²² The urgency of establishing a clear new differentiation between men and women gave socially and sexually marginal men a strategic opportunity to reposition themselves within the discourse of hegemonic masculinity. Friedlaender sought to offer a secure barrier between the sexes while generating a more flexible norm in regard to male sexual identity. His vehemence in rejecting women's claims is symptomatic: 'Nothing is so overwhelmingly stupid and such a great nonsense', he wrote, 'as the fanatic belief in gender equality, which is cultivated as the so-called women's question.'²³ For Friedlaender, in fact, the differentiation from women became the precondition for male liberation: 'One could say that the women's emancipation should go hand in hand with an emancipation (of men) from women.'²⁴ Accordingly, Friedlaender devalued men's familial roles in favour of their functions within the state. And here, he did explicitly posit a special identity for homosexual men, legitimated by their special national usefulness and capability. 'Same-sex love, as we understand it', he wrote, 'is therefore nearly identical with the social instinct itself.'²⁵ In contrast, he consigned women, as the 'sexus sequior', to the family—a primary social context²⁶ which appeared to him more uncivilized, disconnected, and primitive:

The sense for the family is one of the most primitive desires, shared with animals, that could only be praised by Gynaekocrats [men who wanted to be dominated by women, C.B.]. Love between the two sexes or between parents is not the only kind of love; rather there is also a third type of love that is primarily social. It has nothing to do with procreation, but is the very foundation of the social principle. If one eliminated this third type of love, which exists between male adults, the state would disintegrate into a mass of individual families.²⁷

Women, as the obstacle to love between men (which Friedlaender called *Lieblingminne*),²⁸ were also the natural enemies of the nation state. The antifeminist discourse shows itself here less as something organized around the fear of

²¹ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, p. 19.

²² Gerhard p. 170; Planert pp. 20–32.

²³ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, pp. 46, 74.

²⁴ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, p. 310.

²⁵ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, p. 215.

²⁶ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, pp. 269–71.

²⁷ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, p. 213 (emphasis added).

²⁸ The term *Lieblingminne* was introduced around 1900 by the masculinist painter and writer Elisar von Kupffer. It was supposed to replace older, negatively connotated references of male-male sexuality and could be translated by 'deep loving friendship among men'.

female otherness than as a power structure in which the exclusion of the woman plays a central role for the construction of a hegemonic masculinity and a masculine nation. In the masculinist discourse, the accusation of national and racial degeneration levelled, for example, by the racial hygienist Ernst Rüdin against homosexuals was now directed against the woman: 'A people under these influences [of women] must degenerate into an ochlocracy, a gynococracy, a kleptocracy, and will lose the struggle between the nations. This is one of the few clearly discernible basic laws of the history of nations.'²⁹

III: Hans Blüher—The Social is (Homo-)Sexual: The Nation State as Male Product

Hans Blüher, a sexologist and popular chronicler of the *Wandervogel* movement who later turned conservative–revolutionary,³⁰ started in 1912 to build on Jaeger's and Friedlaender's masculinist positions. Dismissed from the University of Berlin in 1916 without completing his degree, he called himself a 'private scholar of sexual problems', published numerous psychoanalytic articles in Sigmund Freud's and Hirschfeld's journals, and worked temporarily as lay analyst. Making use of Freud's new psychoanalytical theorems, Blüher argued that sexuality was the very foundation of the social. Specifically, he held that suitability for political leadership positions, and for the education of male youth, was based on the degree of a man's sexual attractiveness for men. The more strongly a man was connected to other men, the more exceptional was his capacity for politics and education.

Blüher argued that a people have an originally bisexual disposition, and that the choice of object vacillated during childhood and puberty, until one orientation—either homo- or heterosexual—came to predominate and became 'orgasmic', while the other was suppressed.³¹ A person who could achieve orgasms with both sexes, therefore, was not merely bisexual, but fully potent.³² Homosexuals alone—the 'fully inverted'³³—could become *Männerhelden*, who could then initiate, through erotic attraction, *Männerbünde*, or male bonding groups. These in turn were the origin of the nation state: 'The state-building

²⁹ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, p. 278.

³⁰ Blüher was both member and controversial chronicler of the *Wandervogel* movement in Berlin. Later, he was in contact with the *Herrenklub* of the conservative revolution around Heinrich von Gleichen. See Bruns, *Politik des Eros*; Hergemöller, 'Hans Blühers Männerwelten', pp. 58–84; Jürgen Plashues, 'Hans Blüher—Ein Leben zwischen Schwarz und Weiß', *Jahrbuch des Archivs der deutschen Jugendbewegung*, 19 (1999–2001), pp. 146–85; Stefan Breuer, *Ordnungen der Ungleichheit—die deutsche Rechte im Widerstreit ihrer Ideen, 1871–1945* (Darmstadt, 2001), pp. 256–58.

³¹ Hans Blüher, *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen. Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnis der sexuellen Inversion* (Berlin, 1912), p. 69.

³² Hans Blüher, *Führer und Volk in der Jugendbewegung* (Jena, 1917), p. 24.

³³ Following the early Freud, Blüher preferred the term 'inversion' over 'homosexuality' in order to emphasize that 'only the object of love is different, not the behaviour'. Blüher, *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen*, p. 31.

forces are male, a result of the male society and the *Männerbünde*, centered around the masculine hero and his homoerotic attraction.³⁴

Blüher's *Männerbund* was thus, at its very core, homosexually oriented. On the other hand, it was only the *Männerheld's* capacity for sexual sublimation that established the basis for his attractiveness and, as a result, the constitution of the group itself.³⁵ In regard to its lower ranks, the *Männerbund* was open to normal, heterosexually active men, as long as they were not exclusively fixated on women and families. Strategically, this reversed the situation of the normal man.³⁶ Now he, rather than the homosexual man, had to prove his capacity to build relationships (with other men), because the nation state was based on homoerotic connections between and among men. At the same time, this concept also left much space for normal men to adopt the idea of the *Männerbund* for themselves, since Blüher's assumption that everybody was innately bisexual explained how men could be both heterosexual and still more closely bonded with other men than with women.

Thus, while Friedlaender had posited a dual function for men in family and state, Blüher argued for exclusive national contribution of the 'superior' man. This idea of a fundamentally homosocial, state-supporting *Männerbund* was widely discussed—initially in the *Wandervogel* movement, which Blüher interpreted as a homoerotic phenomenon, and then also within medical–psychological and political–cultural discourses.³⁷ The differentiation from women no longer required radical negation (as in Friedlaender's work, where even familial reproduction was a male-dominated field), but through the assignment of an inferior, complementary, female role in the private–familial sphere and the antifeminist demand to exclude women altogether from the political arena:

Every woman is a kind of family-being and *only* this. It is absolutely wrong to claim that the state is a family on a grand scale. Animal species which are organized in families can only build scattered herds, not states. To build a state a different social principle is necessary, of which women are *not* a part.³⁸

³⁴ Hans Blüher, 'Eine Kulturschande' (1912/13), in Hans Blüher-Archiv Berlin (ed.), *Studien zur Inversion und Perversion. Das uralte Phänomen der geschlechtlichen Inversion in natürlicher Sicht* (Stuttgart-Schmidlen, 1965), pp. 161–71, esp. p. 164.

³⁵ For a more detailed discussion of Blüher's ambivalent concept of *male-male* relations between eroticism and sexuality, see Claudia Bruns, 'Subjekt, Gemeinschaft, Männerbund. Hans Blühers Wandervogelmonographien im Wilhelminischen Kaiserreich', in Gabriele Boukrif *et al.* (eds), *Geschlechtergeschichte des Politischen. Entwürfe von Geschlecht und Gemeinschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Münster, 2001), pp. 107–39.

³⁶ Blüher explains the different types of male–male attraction in *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen*, pp. 74–75.

³⁷ Ulfried Geuter, *Homosexualität in der deutschen Jugendbewegung. Jungenfreundschaften und Sexualität im Diskurs von Jugendbewegung, Psychoanalyse und Jugendpsychologie am Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt/Main, 1994), p. 114, pp. 161–62 and pp. 171–85. Bernd Widdig, *Männerbünde und Massen. Zur Krise männlicher Identität in der Literatur der Moderne* (Opladen, 1992), p. 32 and 54.

³⁸ Hans Blüher, 'Der bürgerliche und der geistige Antifeminismus', in Hans Blüher (ed.), *Philosophie auf Posten. Gesammelte Schriften 1916–1921* (Heidelberg, 1928), pp. 97–124, esp. p. 103.

VI: Hans Blüher—The New Man between the Appropriation of the Feminine and the Rejection of Jewish Masculinity

In fact, Blüher's vision of the new man no longer excluded the female/feminine as radical difference, but rather appropriated the feminine-erotic as a part of masculinity. Blüher connected the attempt to integrate homoerotic desire into normal object relations with the domination, formation, and creation of Woman as image in the male imaginary. The specific construction of Blüher's alloeroticism³⁹ can be understood as distinct from Freud's idea of successful and unsuccessful object choice, in which the normal man's healthy connection with the mother was contrasted with a 'narcissistic' homosexual identification.⁴⁰ While Freud's model of male development presupposed a heterosexual desire that used the image of the mother as orientation, Blüher understood a successful alloerotic connection as the total typification of the mother within the imaginary. Such a transformation of the mother into an image made it possible to expand the understanding of heterosexual desire to include same-sex objects. Instead of the mother image, the male-hero image could equally be desired, because the alloerotic quality of the relationship rather than the right choice of object guaranteed, according to Blüher, the normality of the sexual relationship.⁴¹ And yet Blüher distinguished between the imaginatively desired image of the masculine hero and the image of the mother/woman. She needed to be created as part of an aesthetic act and defined as part of the male:

[T]he creative talent of Goethe replaced the unattainable Lotte with an ideal Lotte, who, however, was not merely a reflection of the real Lotte serving as an object of desire for the purpose of onanism, but, rather, represents a particular tendency within an objective work of art. ... Thus: the Lotte of Werther is *not* a Lotte out of the realm of imagination; the Lotte of Werther is pure *creation*, wrung from the spirit of Eros; ... the literary fantasy stems from the realm of male procreation, is brought forth from within himself in intensive and prolonged labour.⁴²

This model, in which the male overcame the (real) mother by creating her anew within the imaginary, was Blüher's response to Freud's concept of homosexuality. This principle is thus not anti-oedipal, as Hewitt suggests, but shifts the oedipal relationship into the aesthetic-imaginary.⁴³ The imaginary, however, is present not as an empty play of signifiers, but as male domination and appropriation of the female. Born of woman, man posits his imagination as being the origin of the

³⁹ Like Freud, Blüher considered autoerotic sexuality infantile. In contrast, alloeroticism, i.e. object orientation, was assumed to be the guarantee for normal sexuality. Blüher, *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen*, pp. 19–20; Hans Blüher, *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft*, vol. 1: *Der Typus Inversus* (Jena, 1917), p. 22.

⁴⁰ Sigmund Freud, 'Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci' (1910) (Studienausgabe, 10, Frankfurt/Main, 2000), pp. 87–160, esp. p. 125; Sigmund Freud, 'Zur Einführung des Narzissmus' (Studienausgabe, 2, Frankfurt/Main, 2000), pp. 37–68.

⁴¹ Blüher, *Die Rolle der Erotik*, vol. 1, pp. 41–48.

⁴² Blüher, *Die Rolle der Erotik*, vol. 1, pp. 74–75.

⁴³ Andrew Hewitt, *Political Inversions. Homosexuality, Fascism, and the Modernist Imaginary* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 79–129, esp. p. 118.

mother. This act of sublimation thus constitutes his masculinity as omnipotent and androgynous. With implicit recourse to the classical ideals of androgyny that were continued in the romantic ideals of symbiotic love,⁴⁴ the virile man in particular turned out to be a gendered, dual being with superior powers.⁴⁵

Blüher's sexological strategies to legitimize imaginary object relations increasingly corresponded, in the course of the war, with aesthetic formations of male (self-)creation: because of their special ability to think 'in images',⁴⁶ men were considered capable not only of representing intellect and *logos*, but of creating an ideal, aesthetically productive synthesis of matter and idea, feminine *eros* and masculine *logos*. It was this platonic synthesis that constituted a specifically male intellectuality and that Blüher, with reference to the debate about the German 'spirit of 1914',⁴⁷ called a 'secondary sexual characteristic of the male'.⁴⁸ In contrast, women remained tied to the material world, because they could never transcend pure *eros* without losing their femininity: 'women can only reach a certain level of the—basically male—spirit [Geist], not its creative potential'.⁴⁹

Overcoming the modern split of the subject into aesthetic and cognitive rationality was, therefore, an option only for the new man. Only for a man was it potentially possible to become the artist/subject who, in (neo-)romantic thought, was capable of reconciling the mortal, physical characteristics of human beings (*eros*, drives) with ontological universals (*logos*).

In Blüher's thought, aesthetics functioned as a mediator between sexological and political discourses. The products of male imagination included not only men themselves, but also the nation state. Thus, the male leader (*der führerische Mann*) as politicized artist/subject was supposed to possess the ability to create 'the nation', by producing and transforming it within the imaginary:

The people become a people through being chosen by a leader [*Führer*], and only part of the masses unified into a people through allowing themselves to be penetrated by this act of choice ... He knows of the spiritual condition of the humanity which surrounds him and feels pity for them. He knows that people who have been without a leader for a long time are unable

⁴⁴ Malte Stein, "'Frauensönheit will nichts heißen". Ansichten zum Eros als Bildungstreiber bei Winckelmann, Wilhelm von Humboldt und Goethe', in Ortrud Gutjahr and Harro Segeberg (eds), *Klassik und Antiklassik. Goethe in seiner Epoche* (Würzburg, 2001), pp. 195–218, esp. 206–209.

⁴⁵ Cf. Christina von Braun's work on 'masculine femininity' in this period. Christina von Braun, *Die schamlose Schönheit des Vergangenen. Zum Verhältnis von Geschlecht und Geschichte* (Frankfurt/Main, 1989), pp. 51–79.

⁴⁶ Hans Blüher, 'Die Intellektuellen und die Geistigen' (1916) in Hans Blüher, *Philosophie auf Posten. Gesammelte Schriften 1916–1921* (Heidelberg, 1928), pp. 71–96, esp. pp. 73–74.

⁴⁷ See Hermann Lübke, 'Die philosophischen Ideen von 1914', in Hermann Lübke, *Politische Philosophie in Deutschland. Studien zu ihrer Geschichte* (Basel, 1963), pp. 173–238; Jeffrey Verhey, *Der 'Geist von 1914' und die Erfindung der Volksgemeinschaft* (Hamburg, 2000); Steffen Bruendel, 'Von der inklusiven zur exklusiven Volksgemeinschaft. Die Konstruktion kollektiver Identität durch nationalpolitische Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg', in Steffen Bruendel and Nicole Grochowina (eds), *Kulturelle Identität. Über den Zusammenhang von Vergangenheitsdeutung und Zukunftserwartung für die Konstruktion kollektiver Identitäten* (Berlin, 2000), pp. 120–35.

⁴⁸ Blüher, 'Was ist Antifeminismus?', p. 87.

⁴⁹ Blüher, *Die Rolle der Erotik*, vol. 1, p. 235.

to immerse themselves in their true essence and ... that on their own they have nothing at all to fill their lives with sense and dignity. ... Thus the man who is a true leader really strives for the happiness of his people; in his *creative imagination* he has, however, already elevated the people to a higher level, which in turn is the precondition for their happiness, whereas by contrast a mere people's representative takes the people 'as they are' and—merely represents them.⁵⁰

Through this political act of creation, man was both able to define himself completely and to claim ownership of his 'property': by appropriating the creative potential, he simultaneously 'birthed' himself, both as male subject and as 'the nation', which was transposed from the (female, material) real into the (male) imaginary. The leader used his imagination to elevate and transform a scattered, female crowd into a structured, male nation. The external sign of this intellectual feat was the transformation of the material crowd into a unit, which was imagined as an extension of himself. This fusion of the nation and its leader completed the central subjective process of self-creation. In this right-wing political theory, the point was not the negation of the individual, but its correspondence with and total participation in the myth of the great, male self.

In this context, Blüher accused Jews of an overly strong fixation on *logos*. Their hostility toward images (*Bildfeindlichkeit*) supposedly deprived them of platonic thinking and thus of true intellectuality (*Geistigkeit*). At the same time, according to Blüher, Jews were suffering from a significant weakness in regard to male-centred social structures (*Männerbundschwäche*), with a concomitantly weak ability to build a nation; this, in turn, was caused by a 'hypertrophy' of family relations.⁵¹ As a man bound firmly into the family, the Jew became the prototype of the effeminate and feminized male, thereby taking on the stigma hitherto ascribed to the homosexual. 'The associative connection between maleness and Germanness', wrote Blüher in 1922, 'and of the effeminate and servile with the Jewish is a direct intuition of the German people, one that becomes more certain day by day.'⁵²

At the same time, the Jew, whose thought Blüher believed to be abstract, rational, and uncreative, embodied the negative characteristics of modernity. As an 'unspiritual' and 'increative' man, who personified rather than overcame the split between *eros* and *logos* in the modern subject, 'the Jew' could not construct bonds with other men, could not join a *Männerbund*, and could not follow a leader. The Jew—too fixated on *logos*, and too tied to the materiality of the family—thus bracketed the ideal of the new German man at both (negative) ends: 'We Germans', Blüher wrote, 'are encircled [*umklammert*] by the type of the Jew.'⁵³

⁵⁰ Blüher, *Führer und Volk in der Jugendbewegung*, p. 5.

⁵¹ Hans Blüher, *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft*, vol. 2: *Eine Theorie der menschlichen Staatsbildung nach Wesen und Wert* (Jena, 1919), p. 170.

⁵² Hans Blüher, *Secessio judaica. Philosophische Grundlegung der historischen Sicht des Judentums und der antisemitischen Bewegung* (Berlin, 1922), p. 49.

⁵³ Hans Blüher, *Deutsches Reich, Judentum und Sozialismus. Eine Rede an die freideutsche Jugend* (Prien, 1920), p. 141.

After 1916, then, the signifier of failed masculinity shifted in the masculinist discourse from the *feminine/abnormal* man as described in the theory of sexual gradations (Hirschfeld's *Zwischenstufentheorie*) to the *Jewish* man of the 'secondary race'.⁵⁴ This tendency intensified when it became clear that the exclusion of women from the political sphere was an illusion and when the lost war made it necessary to restore and redefine male political capacities. The Jewish man was encoded as a 'failure' between the sexes; the fight against him became a means to reinstate both the masculine and the male-defined political order. It is this imperative that explains the appeal of Blüher's ideas, particularly in conservative circles.

V: Conclusion

The masculinists' attempts to include homosexuality in normal masculinity was supported by evolving strategies of exclusion. These strategies covered a wide spectrum—from Gustav Jaeger's construction of a superior virility in comparison with other men, to Benedict Friedlaender's radical negation of the female, to Hans Blüher's partial integration of femininity into the concept of the male subject. On the one hand, homosexual identity as it had emerged in the nineteenth century was adapted and positively redefined, toward a special category of the hypervirile. On the other hand, there were also attempts to undermine the category of the homosexual and to define the constitution of masculinity broadly enough to allow the inclusion of same-sex relationships. These attempts can be seen both in Friedlaender's notion of bisexuality as normal, dually functional male desire and in Blüher's description of the *Männerbund* as homoerotic continuum, with various gradations of same-sex leanings. Masculinity, social integration and normality were linked to form a new argument that also tried to redefine normality itself as masculine/male-centred social principle. The masculinist theorists attempted to legitimize their claim to the status of a useful, valuable and normal member of society through a discursive transformation of the ability to forge a sexual bond into the ability to forge a social bond. Here, political formations such as the social cohesion of a nation were rendered in biological terms—a process Foucault called a 'rewriting of the political discourse in biological terms' or the 'biologization of the political'.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ In the 1920s, as Blüher drifted to the radical political right, his interest shifted from emancipation, sexology, and aesthetics toward religion, focused not on the homosexual *Männerbund* but on the religious bond between the 'Aryan Jesus' and his disciples. See Hans Blüher, *Die Aristie des Jesus von Nazareth. Philosophische Grundlegung der Lehre und der Erscheinung Christi* (Prien, 1921); *Die deutsche Renaissance. Von einem Deutschen* (Prien, 1924); *Deutscher Katechismus des Christentums* (Küstrin, 1930); *Der Standort des Christentums in der lebendigen Welt* (Hamburg and Berlin, 1931); *Die Erhebung Israels gegen die christlichen Güter* (Hamburg and Berlin, 1931).

⁵⁵ Michel Foucault, *In Verteidigung der Gesellschaft. Vorlesungen am Collège de France (1975–1976)* (Frankfurt, 1999), p. 297.

As a strategy of homogenization resting on a binary order this discursive transformation was bound to new exclusions. Political opponents became 'external or internal threats with regard to the population.'⁵⁶ Medical science thereby took on the role of a technology of political intervention which presupposed the existence of permanent pathologies (for example, sexual deviances), but above all constantly produced new ones. The masculinists sought to redirect this discursive process in such a way as to legitimate male same-sex desire; and in doing so they constructed their own distinctive strategies of exclusion. For Jaeger the solitary monosexual, who lacked any object of desire, was sexually alone, socially unattached, disintegrated, sullen, and unmanly: in short, a danger to the population. For Friedlaender the threat was 'an excessive female influence' that had sabotaged every form of masculine eroticism for thousands of years. For Blüher, the danger came, ultimately, from the unmanly Jew, incapable of creativity and of statehood. The 'question of the sexes' which had become so virulent around 1900, in short, opened up the possibility of achieving recognition by means of anti-feminist and racist exclusions in the name of an innovative masculinity. This new masculinity defined itself through devaluation of certain other men, who were marked as asocial, asexual, racially dangerous or politically socialist, and all women (in the process of emancipation), who were alternatively marked as antisocial, hostile to the state, or degenerate.

Among the masculinists, these anti-egalitarian formations were accompanied by a romantic self-understanding that defined German 'culture' and Germanness as a specific form of aesthetic in opposition to French and English 'civilization', which further supported the delimitation from Hirschfeld's informational ideals.⁵⁷ In other European countries as well as in North America, there were similar masculinist strategies within homosexual emancipation movements. Unlike their German counterparts, however these aesthetic models of legitimation (for example, in their idealization of Greece) were not constructed in opposition to democracy and socialism. In England, for example, the authors John Addington Symonds and Edward Carpenter, inspired by Walt Whitman, idealized 'comradeship' among men as a means of radical democratization in their works.⁵⁸

German masculinist ideas were attractive because they carried an aura of progress and theoretical modernity (especially in Blüher's work), but also because they adopted differentiated strategies and historically variable tactics in their attempts to maintain and support hegemonic structures in times of crisis. The joining of virile masculinity and national order linked the (re-)establishment of hegemonic masculinity on an individual level with the (re-)construction of the

⁵⁶ Foucault, *In Verteidigung der Gesellschaft*, p. 296; Thomas Lemke, *Eine Kritik der politischen Vernunft. Foucaults Analyse der modernen Gouvernementalität* (Hamburg, 1997), p. 224.

⁵⁷ Harry Oosterhuis, 'Male Bonding and Homosexuality in German Nationalism', in Harry Oosterhuis (ed.), *Homosexuality and Male Bonding in Pre-Nazi Germany*, pp. 241–44.

⁵⁸ Oosterhuis, 'Male Bonding and Homosexuality', pp. 241–44.

national whole as a steadfast, virile, and superior entity on a collective level. This masculinity was defined not primarily by the production of progeny, but by the transformation of a disunited crowd into a 'racially pure' national whole—through the exclusion of those who threatened the 'healthy core'. This was the beginning of an aristocratic, élitist concept of masculinity that Blüher developed further during the Weimar Republic. This concept not only fascinated many young men of the German youth movement and contemporary writers like Thomas Mann, Kurt Hiller, and Rainer Maria Rilke; it also became influential in the political circles of the 'conservative revolution' around Heinrich von Gleichen, and it achieved an explicitly political profile in the *Männerbund* theories of the 1920s and 1930s.

Translated by Stefanie Sievers

Abstract

Masculinity became an important topic of discussion around 1900, not only as reaction to the growing women's movement, but also a result of new developments in the medical and sexual sciences. In the late nineteenth century medical doctors began to take a sustained interest in same-sex sexual relations between men, giving rise to the concept of the homosexual man as feminized and dangerous to the social order. While the medical concept of the 'third sex' could also be – and was – used for emancipatory purposes by early advocates of homosexual rights, a group of masculinists rejected these discriminatory characterizations by insisting on their masculinity and arguing that state and society were in fact based on male bonding. These masculinist strategies, which sought to integrate male–male sexuality into hegemonic masculinity, represented resistance against discrimination, but they also served to shore up and modernize hegemonic structures that discriminated against women and Jews.
